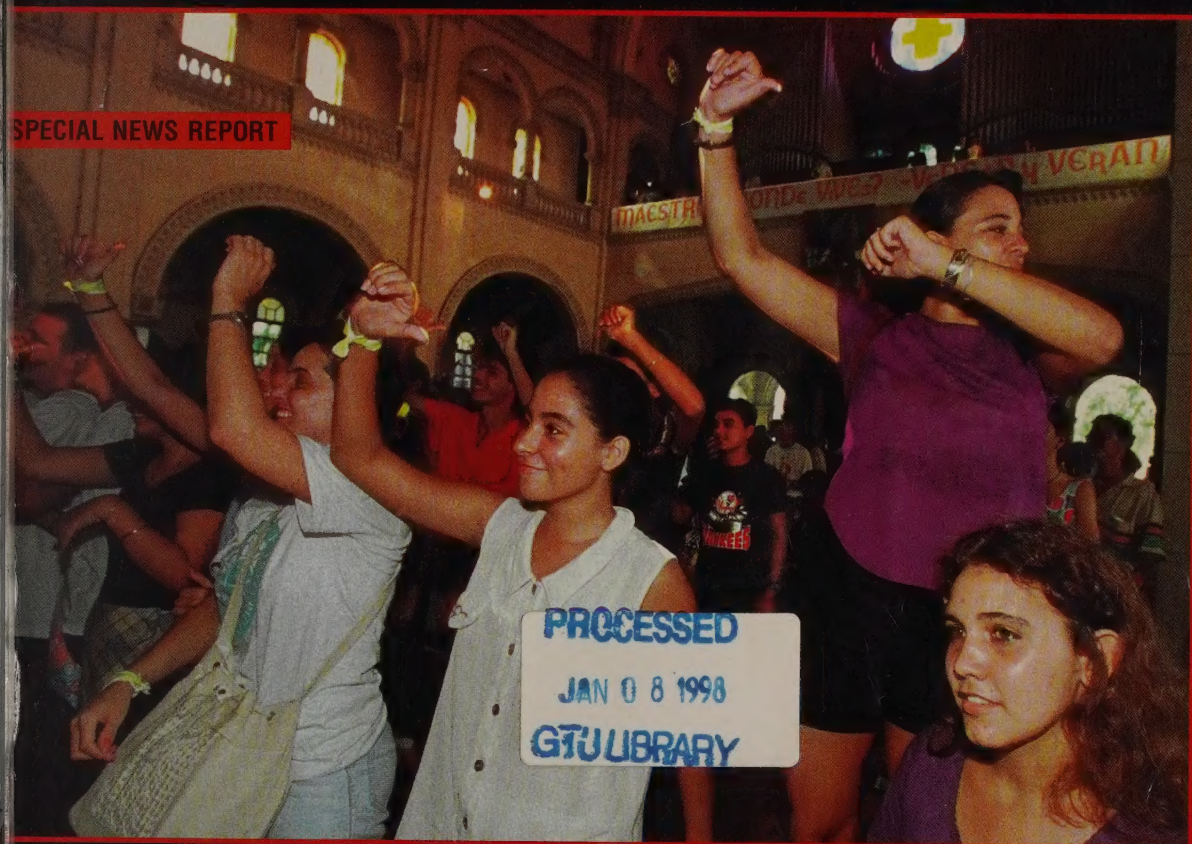


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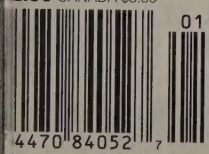
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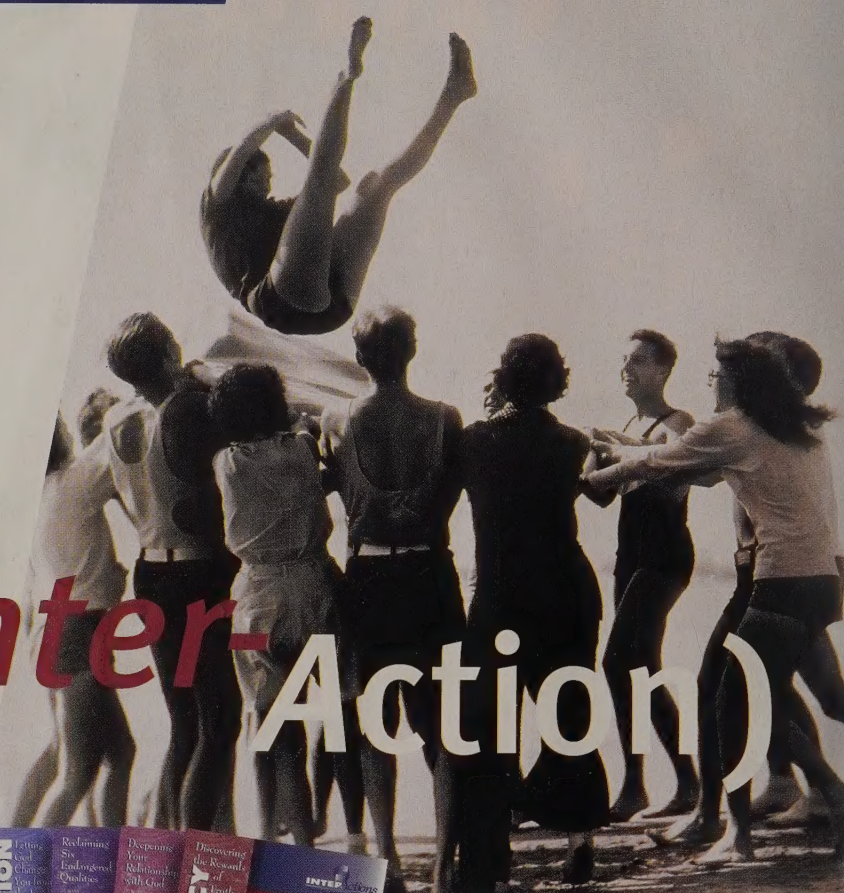
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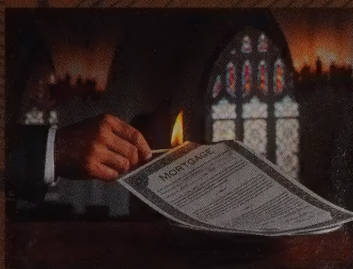
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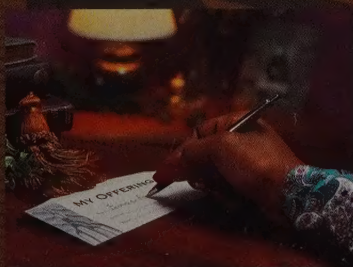
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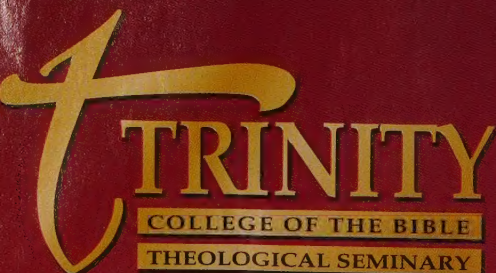
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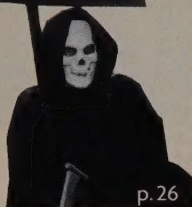
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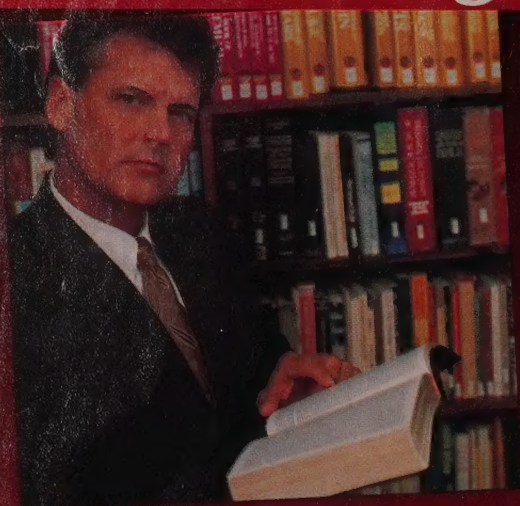
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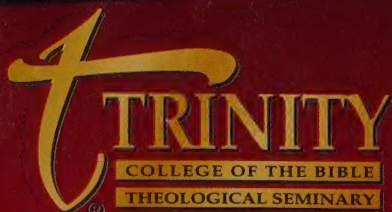
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Michael G. Maudlin,
Managing Editor

How Should We Pray for Cuba?

INSIDE CT

When associate news editor John Kennedy was returning from Cuba, he discovered that his seatmate's experience was an interesting contrast to his own. John was traveling as part of a team of religious journalists sponsored by the Center for International Policy, a Washington think tank interested in promoting democracy abroad. His seatmate's official task had been to deliver \$100 worth of medical supplies to Cuba, which he did.

John went in order to assess the state of the Cuban church. He interviewed leaders and heard their stories of persecution and their plans for the future "after Castro." (See his report, "Cuba's Next Revolution," beginning on p. 18.)

His seatmate, on the other hand, went to have a good time. By bringing in medical supplies, he slipped through the humanitarian loophole in the U.S. prohibition against visiting Cuba. (There is another exception for the press.)

Once inside Cuba, the willing hedonist gets low rates for room, board, and sex; prostitution has become a major growth industry for women hard pressed for hard currency, and many men are "vacationing" in Cuba in order to engage their services.

Which raises the interesting question: How should we pray for Cuba? After the obvious first petition for

the passing of the Castro regime, the rest is not so clear. Before Castro, Cuba was a hedonic paradise where gambling and prostitution flourished. When the Cold War was hot, American Christians passionately supported our government's anti-Communist efforts in the name of freedom. We understood this to mean freedom to worship. But others saw it as the freedom to pursue any pleasure they wanted. If the U.S.'s long-sought dreams come true and Castro falls, should we be thrilled that Cuba will open to satellite TV, McDonald's, and the return of casinos?

John talked to Pastor José M. Vera, a Cuban exile in Miami, who has observed a troubling phenomenon among zealous Christians who are forced out of Cuba and land in the U.S. He says many of these Cubans experience a kind of culture shock from a society that offers beepers, cellular phones, and so many other consumer goods. As a result, Vera has trouble keeping Christians on fire once they reach Miami. Few are interested in any church activity beyond the Sunday morning service.

We will pray that the Cuban church receives the freedom to worship and preach the gospel, that persecution will end, and that the church will flourish. But if that freedom comes bundled with coaxial cables and microwave ovens, we must help them understand how to be disciples in a secular, hedonistic, consumerist society. But have U.S. Christians learned how to do that?

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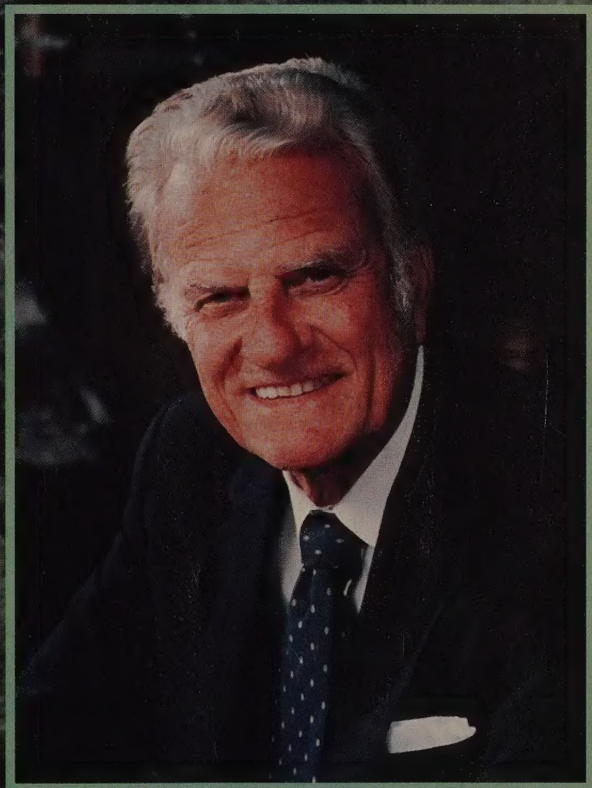
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A HUNDREDFOLD RETURN

Words can hardly express what I felt as I read "100 Things the Church Is Doing Right" in your November 17 issue. I was inspired as I read that real people, who have a strong, vibrant love for others gener-

ated by the Savior's love for them, are all over this sin-saturated planet making a real difference in so many lives! Your cover feature proves yet again that hearing God's message is wonderful, because "faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word"; but it also proves just as certainly that faith comes by *seeing* the message when it's lived by people created in God's image. I find it hard not to weep when I see firsthand the difference a relationship with Jesus can make. There is no better way to reclaim lives than to get the church involved, as you so convincingly show in your contemporary example of the hundredfold return.

*John H. Busser
Malachi Ministries
Minneapolis, Minn.*

■ I especially appreciated the balance of evangelism/social action represented by your choices. In a time when much of evangelicalism seems to be in a defensive posture towards the secular world, these "light" stories provide a much needed reminder that God is still changing the world through his people. My only regret—as a New Englander—is that you didn't manage to locate anything good happening in New England. I assure you that God is working here as well, doing powerful things through the churches in our region.

*Paul Borthwick
Lexington, Mass.*

■ I commend you on a most inspirational issue! It's the first time in years that I've read an entire issue of a magazine from cover to cover in one sitting. I was moved to tears before I got through #1.

*Stella Penner
Edmonton, Alta., Canada*

■ I congratulate you for discovering that God is alive and well in Jackson, Mississippi. Voice of Calvary Ministries is indeed worthy of mention. And Ronnie

Crudup, who sat next to me on many Board of Servant meetings of Voice of Calvary Ministries, is an extraordinary servant of God—as is Thomas Jenkins, chairperson, who also has a vital pastoral training ministry in French West Africa. The church, without these usually unsung heroes, would not be as vibrant as it is in many parts of this country.

*Les Stobbe
Vision New England
Burlington, Mass.*

This letter is written to show my disapproval of "Chuck Singleton, The Abolitionist." I am cognizant of the accusations that Sudan and other African countries have continued with the horrific trade in human beings. If true, such workings are to be actively condemned at all costs. However, one certainly cannot justify the assumption that Islam condones slavery any more than Christianity does. Also, the hinted assumption that Islam condones prejudice is also certainly not correct.

The problem of the Sudan is not unique. Persecution seems to be a growing global trend. The focus is on Christian oppression, but globally, many others are oppressed as well.

*Juan P. Alvarado
Bronx, N.Y.*

WHOSE REPENTANCE?

Although I support Promise Keepers and its mission, I am unclear what the group means when its leaders call for repentance for racism ["Will the Walls Fall Down?" Nov. 17]. If they mean to say that individual members of PK who have harbored racist thoughts or engaged in racist behavior ought to repent, that seems right. However, if they are calling for all members of PK to repent for racism, as if the guilt of some were imputed to all, that cannot be right, since clearly not all men (including both whites and blacks) who attend a PK rally are racists. PK is a wonderful movement whose leaders should clarify exactly what is meant by "racial reconciliation." PK should not be PC.

*Prof. Francis J. Beckwith
Trinity Graduate School, California
Anaheim Hills, Calif.*

■ Author Joe Maxwell's suggestion that a group of one million men made up of 80 percent whites and 14 percent African-Americans is off-balance is ludicrous. What better statistical representation of our national complexion could he have

needed to witness? While we are all created equally in the eyes of our Lord, we are not equally distributed in this nation. A 50-50 split would have been a very sad reflection on the white male population. Thank God it was a representative one instead.

*Rick Rapier
Scottsdale, Ariz.*

I read *Seven Promises of a Promise Keeper*. I told myself I would remember it was a man's book and I would be objective. I prayed I would have an open mind. I hadn't gone 20 pages until I thought, *these men are being led to believe they are "saviors,"* and by 50 pages I was convinced.

I am not a radical feminist or a member of NOW. I am a retired military wife, and we worshiped in an army chapel. We always treasured our worship there. When Promise Keepers came in we couldn't accept their theology, felt uncomfortable, and left. If the church we now worship in is invaded by Promise Keepers, we will again depart.

*Dorothy Van Meter
Leavenworth, Kans.*

WOMEN AS "MORAL LIGHTWEIGHTS"

■ After reading "Men Behaving Justly," by Frederica Mathewes-Green [Matters of Opinion, Nov. 17], I first felt uneasy and later angry. Her assertion that "women need to be tamed by men as well, particularly in moral issues" is demeaning. First, the author suggests that Christian women tend not to hold themselves to as high a moral standard as do Christian men. I cannot think of a more inaccurate generalization. The Christian women I know do not skirt around moral right and wrong or "consider human factors rather than principles of right and wrong in making ethical decisions" as Mathewes-Green argues. Second, the picture presented of male-female relationships is clearly one of the marriage relationship. If it is true that women need men to call them "upward toward the highest moral principles," then where are the single women left? Hopelessly abandoned in the dust of their own moral waywardness?

*Julia Brooks
Ann Arbor, Mich.*

BIBLICAL STANDARDS

■ Thanks for the refreshing interview with Barbara Dafoe Whitehead [Conversations, Nov. 17]. She speaks a message on divorce the church needs to hear. In its passion to be culturally sensitive and rele-

Even when they disagree, Christians should share the same position.



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vant, the church should never forsake its mission to also be prophetic and counter-cultural. Biblical patterns of marriage and family life will preserve the integrity of the church and offer hope to the world.

*Pastor Jim Miller
Lexington Mennonite Church
Lexington, Ky.*

TRUTH IN LABELING

Do inclusive-language Bibles distort Scripture? After reading both sides of the issue [Nov. 17], I am resigned to answer with a firm "yes and no." I agree with Dr. Grudem ("Yes") that accommodation of culture at the expense of accuracy is too high a cost to pay. It is not the Word of God that must become "all things to all people," but the messenger of the Word of God. As to Dr. Osborne ("No"), I would agree with his concern that polarization and name-calling among evangelicals over this issue will not help the mission of the church. We seem to be willing to allow a great deal of latitude in creating missionary translations, so why can we not see our own culture as a mission field?

There is an element of trust missing in

this entire discussion. I, for one, trust that God will preserve his Word, no matter what mere men (that is, humans) try to do with it. It is, after all, his Word. If gender-neutral or inclusive-language translations are not of him, then I am confident that they will end up on the backlist of publishing history. If inclusivist translators disagree, and believe they are truly doing God's work, then let them clearly and confidently identify their "translation theory" on their work. Truth in labeling is the only ethical, honest option for evangelical translators.

*Clay Clarkson
Fort Worth, Texas*

I became a Christian by reading an NIV Bible. I had tried reading the Bible many times but had been mystified by church language and strange idioms. Through the NIV, the Lord became personal and his message understandable. Within a year, I was in Bible college and headed toward a career as a translator overseas.

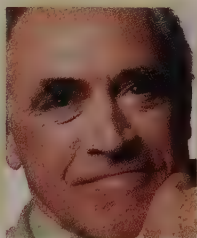
Now in graduate studies, I rarely use the NIV. Nor do most scholars, for it is not literal enough for the exacting world of academia. Though an excellent translation

and model for dynamic equivalence, the NIV is not the Bible of exegetes, but of the masses. Yet by necessity, it is the exegetes and professional scholars who control its contents. This aspect of the current argument I have not heard discussed.

When the scholars tell us we must hold to a specific form of the NIV, or preachers proclaim the KJV as inerrant, our leaders are no better than the pre-Reformation church, which said, "We will tell you which version to read, and we will tell you what it means." Through the years, translation arguments have assumed that the form is somehow sacred, and those who do not understand the form merely need instruction, not a new form. The unbeliever or nominal Christian is left at the mercy of the priest, the preacher, or the scholar, not the Word of God.

[Bruce] Metzger describes translation as "the art of making the right sacrifice." Are we willing to sacrifice the sacredness of the literal form in order to bring God's Word to a generation? Or will we choose to elevate the form and possibly sacrifice the generation? Let us look to these inclusive versions not as a new standard the

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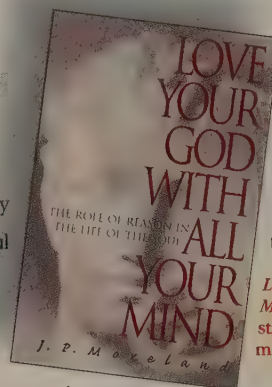
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church must embrace or reject, but as a legitimate method of reaching the lost.

*Donna Williams
Langley, B.C., Canada*

A major part of the problem is the lack of a neutral third person singular pronoun in the English language. I propose this radical solution: let's make one. People are inventing words all the time for various uses, so why not just make one up? My suggestion is *Qe* (pronounced *key*). For one good reason, it will not be confused (in written form anyway) with other words, and it follows the *he/she* form. More importantly, it will give relief to millions of Scrabble players around the world who get stuck with a *Q* and no *U*! So please, language scholars of the world, unite. Go for coffee at your next convention and come up with one lousy word we can all use in place of that pesky *he* (where appropriate, of course). Is that too much to ask?

*Rev. Joell Haugan
Kitimat, B.C., Canada*

The "literal translation" arguments of Wayne Grudem convince me, whereas the "dynamic translation" arguments of Grant Osborne ring hollow. Seeing their reasoning debated side-by-side was what needed to understand all the issues.

Now I wonder, "At what cost to accuracy have I been enjoying the readability of my NIV Bible for all these years?"

*Amy M. Givler
Monroe, La.*

One issue which has concerned me greatly is the attempt by American conservatives to control the publication of Bible translations in the United Kingdom—since they have put pressure on the Bible distributors of the NIVI (which we already have) to withdraw the version from British shelves. I wonder if they do not believe that Christians in the U.K. are spiritual enough or intelligent enough to think, pray, and study for themselves, and so we need the benevolent use of American power to control the Bibles we choose to use. After all, of course, the only serious Bible scholars and theologians in the English-speaking world must be Americans!

Perhaps they are blithely unaware of the offense their actions cause, and of the absolute arrogance it displays when they feel it to be their God-given right to control the walk of Christians in other nations. Perhaps they forget that using their economic clout to dictate to the Inter-

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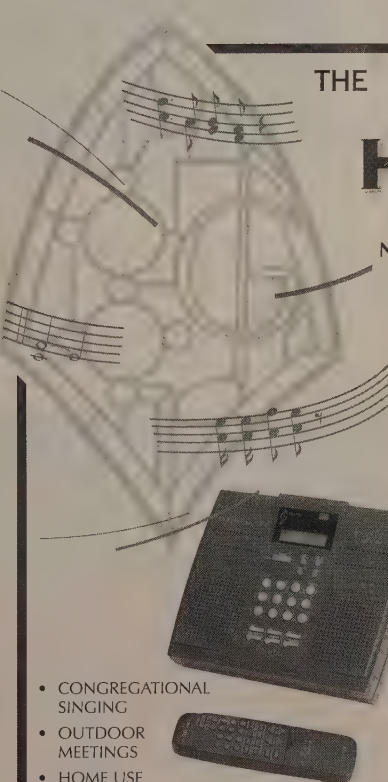
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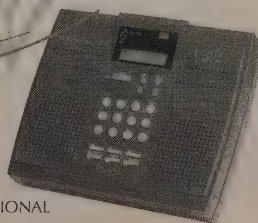
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national Bible Society and others in this way is an absolute contradiction of biblical principles and a denial of the gospel standards they say they seek to promote. Jesus warned us that we could tell the truth of messengers by their fruit.

As for my church? We will continue to enjoy hearing God's Word from the NIVI—for as long as our American brothers and sisters allow us!

Robert Dando
Orchard Baptist Fellowship
Oxford, England, UK

■ I really appreciated your balanced coverage of the gender-inclusive translation controversy. With Grudem's and Osborne's arguments facing each other, it is easier to appreciate the other point of view. I have been reading CT for many years now, and this confirmed my confidence in your reporting.

By the way, I'm curious: Did anyone research the spelling of the vegetable in the title of the article "Your Sins Shall Be White As Yucca" or did some editor with a spell-checker "fix" it? "Yuca" (pronounced *yoo-kah*) is a starchy root that is a staple food all over Peru: as an MK there

I know it well; "yuca" (pronounced yuck-ah) is a desert tree that grows in southwestern U.S.A. There is no similarity other than spelling.

Tom Pittman
Spreckels, Calif.

Was the inspiration of Scripture of God sufficient for all people of all time? Or did the Spirit fail to anticipate the social environment of late twentieth-century Western culture? If he did, is the Lord trying to make up for his error by leading the inclusivists to correct his mistakes? My assumption is the Holy Spirit did not err in using third-person singular pronouns and masculine nouns in so many verses.

The task of the church and its teachers is to lead men and women to understand the biblical revelation. Adapting the text to suit the whims of secular-minded people has the opposite effect. To obscure the intentions of the Holy Spirit creates far more misunderstanding than, as Osborne suggests, leaving number and gender as they are. If we can change them, we might also change case just as easily.

Pastor Edmond Long
Westview Baptist Church
Chattanooga, Tenn.

CORRECTIONS

• The Arts article "Invoking the Celtic Saints" in the November 17 issue (p. 54) identified the band Iona in the subtitle as Irish. The band's members, however, are English.

• The Eden Conservancy, number 79 in "100 Things the Church Is Doing Right" (p. 37), is located in San Jose, California, not Santa Fe.

• The total number of clubs belonging to Christian Business and Professional Women, number 93 in the same issue, also includes Christian Women's Club and After 5 groups, similar but separate branches of the same ministry. The combined groups number 1,851 as of June 30, 1997.

• The Bible published by Thomas Nelson in the article "The Women in Paul's Life" (Oct. 27) is The Woman's Study Bible (NKJV), not The Women's Study Bible.

CT regrets the errors.

Brief letters are welcome. They may be edited for space and clarity and must include the writer's name and address if intended for publication. Due to the volume of mail, we regret we cannot respond personally to individual letters. Write to Eutychus, CHRISTIANITY TODAY, 465 Gundersen Drive, Carol Stream, IL 60188; fax: 630/260-0114. E-mail: ctedit@aol.com (✉).

Teen pregnancy rates double since 70s

First came legal abortions, then rise in child abuse.

Partial-Birth Abortion: The brutal truth

Assisted suicide, a short step from murder

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January 22, 1998, will mark the 25th anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*, the Supreme Court decision that legalized abortion. Not only has 25 years of legal abortion failed to be the predicted "cure" for social problems such as child abuse and teenage pregnancy, it has led to other societal evils no one would have imagined in 1973.

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- THE UNMARRIED TEEN PREGNANCY rate has doubled since 1972.
- THE HIDEOUS PARTIAL-BIRTH ABORTION

procedure has been employed, in which a living, unborn child is pulled, feet first, from the mother's womb until all but its head is exposed. The abortionist stabs the baby through the base of the skull, inserts a catheter, and suction out the baby's brains.

• "ASSISTED SUICIDE" is now a real threat to the ill, the elderly, and people with disabilities.

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Roe v. Wade. Not a solution then, still a tragedy today.

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WHAT REALLY DIED IN OREGON

The state's voter-approved suicide law represents more than an extreme belief in personal autonomy.

On November 4, the Beaver State became the Suicide State. Oregon voters reaffirmed a ballot measure on physician-assisted suicide (CT News, Nov. 17, 1997, p. 64). The last time they considered this issue, it squeaked by with a 2 percent margin, and a judge put the matter on hold. This time the spread was a solid 20 percent, and the court lifted the injunction.

Why did assisted suicide make sense to more voters this time? Perhaps because only the "useful" computes in our pragmatic age, and the value of life—especially one where there is suffering—is no longer self-evident. So why not be *rational* and end it?

What has really died is transcendence, the sense that undergirding our existence is a great, self-existent I AM who provides meaning, coherence, and direction to all that is. It is this religious sense that Michigan's infamous Dr. Jack Kevorkian considers the biggest obstacle to the rational adoption of assisted suicide. "Religious dogma has become part of the marrow of humanity. We can't get rid of it," he protests. "There should be absolutely no connection between medicine and religion, but there is, and it's paralyzing." Does he see no connection? "Going through medical school," he says, "... I knew euthanasia wasn't immoral, because my mind just wasn't encumbered with all this crap, you know?"

Suspicion that religion was contaminating medicine was also a factor in Oregon. The Catholic church, along with other pro-life Christians, fought the measure. The moral protest of religious groups was undermined by the pro-suicide forces, who broadcast scare ads, claiming the Catholic church was trying to control the lives of Oregonians.

When belief in God is gone, the claims of religion are interpreted as the mere exercise of power. Moral guidance from the church is no longer seen as standing for virtue or benevolent concern for the commonweal. Instead, it is



routinely interpreted as the way the powerful oppress the powerless and limit their freedom. The language of civil and human rights is coopted by interest groups eager to secure their piece of the power pie. As Richard John Neuhaus has observed, today you only have rights worth respecting if you can assert them.

THE VALUE OF THE VULNERABLE

While proponents of assisted suicide say they are asserting their right to self-determination (which Dr. Kevorkian labels his "highest ethical principle"), they are actually endangering the vulnerable. Who is more vulnerable to the short-sighted vision of utilitarianism than someone who believes he or she has a degenerative disease, or who is discouraged by an inadequate response from the medical system, or who has not been formed by a community that strives for virtue and godliness, or who is coping alone?

Christians know the vulnerable are valuable because they mark a border that we must defend: for if we protect the vulnerable from the false compassion of those who would relieve our medical system of bearing their expense and purge the tax rolls of their care and the families of their burden and then cleanse the gene pool of their "pollution"—if we protect "the least of these" we have protected all, the greatest and strongest as well.

REPRINTED FROM THE OREGONIAN, WITH THE PERMISSION OF CARTOONIST JACK OHMAN

But the vulnerable are valuable in their own right. Our Lord would not break a "bruised reed" nor extinguish a "smoking wick." He is the one who "had no form nor comeliness that we should desire him." In identifying with the lowest, he who was highest demonstrated their ultimate value. Anything that endangers them should put his followers on alert.

Just how much does assisted suicide endanger the vulnerable? At this point, Oakland County, Michigan, is the main laboratory in which we can observe how it works. There, although the county attorney has assiduously prosecuted Dr. Kevorkian to the full extent of the law, juries and judges have given Dr. Death a relatively free hand. In that laboratory, we can see how patient vulnerability is exploited, and much-touted safeguards disregarded. Like other proponents of assisted suicide, Kevorkian has reassured the public by offering safeguards. But the *Detroit Free Press* has shown that he has violated his own guidelines with impunity. They report:

- Kevorkian says every assisted-suicide candidate must undergo extensive counseling with him. In fact, counseling is often limited to phone calls and brief meetings that include family members and friends.

- Kevorkian says every candidate must be examined by a psychiatrist. In fact, there was no psychiatric exam in at least 19 Kevorkian-assisted suicides.

- Kevorkian says patients who complain of chronic pain should be examined by a specialist in pain control. In fact, there have been at least 17 assisted suicides in which people complained of chronic pain, but Kevorkian did not refer them to a pain specialist.

- Kevorkian says he must make a detailed review of the patient's medical records. In fact, there have been some instances in which he received only a brief summary of the attending physician's prognosis.

- Kevorkian says candidates should be suffering from an incurable affliction or one that cannot be treated without intolerable side effects. In fact, autopsies of three Kevorkian-assisted suicides revealed no anatomical evidence of disease.

- Kevorkian says at least 24 hours should elapse between a patient's final request and death. In fact, at least 19 patients died less than 24 hours after meeting Kevorkian for the very first time.

These reports show that a utilitarian mindset can rationalize any exception to principled safeguards. Such guidelines prove to be mere window dressing for the benefit of those at a distance. Those who become involved in assisted suicide discover a different reality. As Oakland County undertaker-poet Thomas Lynch opines in his new book *The Undertaking*: "Where abortion is available on demand, should we really expect to moderate or regulate assisted suicide?"

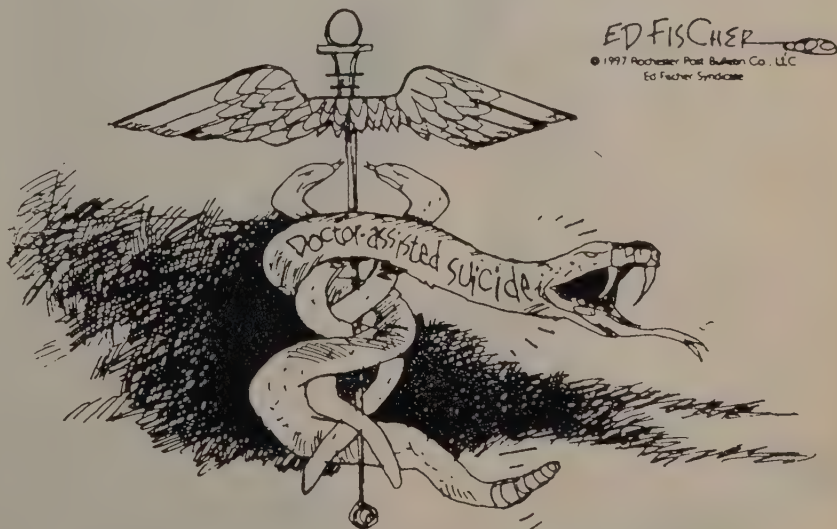
ABANDONED BY THE MEDICAL SYSTEM

The *Free Press* reports show something else: that through our present medical system, we do not adequately care for the vulnerable. In many of the Kevorkian cases, assisted suicide was chosen by people with treatable conditions who were bounced from specialist to specialist without coordinated care: people with chronic illnesses who were not given adequate guidance and aid in coping; people whose pain was not taken seriously; people whose mental-health issues were ignored by those who treated their bodies; and in a few cases, people who were simply misdiagnosed. Several patients said Kevorkian was the first doctor who ever listened to them. These people were not driven to Kevorkian because they were sick; they sought him out because they were set adrift, and he was willing to talk to them and offer them a plan.

Concern for the vulnerable must not stop at opposing assisted-suicide legislation. It must also work for renewal (dare we say revival?) of the patient-centered care that characterized both the Hippocratic and the Christian medical traditions. It must work to preserve medical services in our urban centers, where hospital closings by distant corporate owners are becoming all too frequent. Ultimately, this is a question in which the values of the marketplace are undermining human and divine values. Hospitals will close, doctors will provide minimal care, patients with terminal diseases will be shunned and shunted off, all because the marketplace knows only utility. "Unvexed by the existentials," writes Lynch, "should we not expect the marketplace to take over? The questions devolve from *whether or not to who is entitled to who's going to pay to cash or charge? to do you take American Express?*"

We need a revolution in values—a revolution that cannot be raised without the conversion of many hearts and the care of many loving hands. **CT**

By David Neff. The *Detroit Free Press* book reporting on Dr. Jack Kevorkian is available from the *Free Press*, 321 W. Lafayette Blvd., Detroit, Mich, 48226.



SPECIAL NEWS REPORT

Cuba's Next REVO



First contact: Pope John Paul II (left) greets Fidel Castro at the Vatican in November 1996. The two leaders will meet again this month in Havana.

EVOLUTION

How Christians are reshaping Castro's Communist stronghold.

JOHN W. KENNEDY
in Havana and Miami

In 1994, Cuban secret police arrested Eliezar Veguilla after the pastor organized a Baptist conference in Havana that attracted 5,000 youth. Police charged him with being a counterrevolutionary spy working for the CIA.

Cockroaches crawled over Veguilla's body during confinement in darkness up to 16 hours a day. Authorities told Veguilla that if he refused to confess to being a CIA operative he would be placed in a cell with a ferocious bear, visible through a screen.

Then prison guards threw him into a dimly lit dungeonlike room with a bear. A frightened Veguilla prepared to meet his Maker. "I decided at that moment never to confess anything to the government," Veguilla, 39, told CHRISTIANITY TODAY. But he had been tricked. This was a different bear, declawed and chained.

Two days later, the mind games returned. Moments after hearing gunfire and screams, authorities lined Veguilla up against a wall as a firing squad raised its guns. Ordered to confess, Veguilla, emboldened by the life-changing encounter with the bear, shouted "*Cuba for Christ! Cuba for Christ!*" The rifle triggers clicked, but the firing chambers clinked empty. Veguilla, now a refugee in the Miami area, will never forget the sound of soldiers laughing after his mock execution.

WHEN WILL CUBA OPEN? Although few Cuban Christians are subjected to such terrifying experiences, church leaders are keenly aware of the state's ruthless exercise of power under Fidel Castro. Soon after seizing power in 1959, Castro implemented hard labor and so-called re-education programs for those he considered the dregs of society: drug addicts, prostitutes, homosexuals—and pastors. Nearly 40 years later, the re-education camps are gone. But physical beatings and other ill treatment of prisoners remain potent weapons of the Communist regime.

"As long as Castro is alive he will be

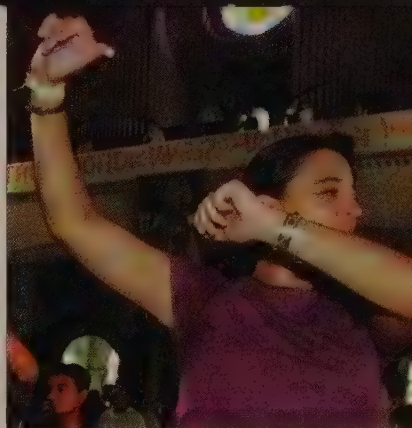
able to maintain control," says 53-year-old church historian Marcos Antonio Ramos, a Baptist pastor who is dean of the South Florida Center for Theological Studies in Miami. "Sooner or later, Cuba will open. When is the \$64,000 question."

As Castro, 71, this month begins his thirty-ninth year as dictator, Cubans sense that their island's next revolution has already begun.

The Vatican, the Cuban exile community in southern Florida, the U.S. government, Castro loyalists, and Cuban minorities—including evangelical Protestants—are all vying for an influential role in Cuba's future.

Some hope that this month's visit of Pope John Paul II will be the catalyst to bring a swift conclusion to the Castro era. The pope's presence spurred on the collapse of communism in heavily Catholic Poland in the 1980s. "This could be a watershed event that galvanizes change, either peaceful or revolutionary," says Nina Shea, director of Freedom House's Washington, D.C.-based Puebla Program on Religious Freedom.

In the short term, Christians hope the papal visit will open the gates to addition-

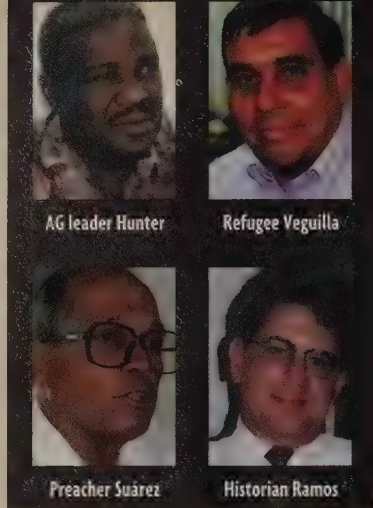


al religious liberties. But some are wary, believing it could spark religious persecution of an intensity not seen since the early days of the communist revolution.

The pontiff will celebrate open-air masses in Havana, Santa Clara, Camagüey, and Santiago. The Cuban Council of Churches will distribute 100,000 Bibles as gifts during the papal visit, and Protestants are hoping to be in the crowds to worship outside their church walls for the first time in nearly four decades.

In June, Havana's archbishop, Cardinal Jaime Ortega, 61, conducted the first





outdoor service permitted in the country since 1961. Since then, the government has permitted door-to-door visitations in which Catholic volunteers distributed photos of the pope and invited residents to church. Large outdoor banners declaring "John Paul, messenger of truth and hope, welcome" are on display.

After months of wrangling, the Cuban government in November finally authorized the January 25 docking in Havana of a Miami cruise ship of 1,200 Catholic faithful to see Pope John Paul II. With U.S. State Department approval, Miami's Roman Catholic archdiocese is sponsoring the cruise 90 miles off the Florida coast as a likely last opportunity for parishioners to see the 77-year-old pontiff. The move has caused deep division among Cuban exiles in Miami, many of whom denounce it as inappropriate as long as Castro still rules.

In Cuba, some Protestants fear a potential backlash from the papal stay if the Catholic church becomes cozy with the government. "I hope the visit means a greater freedom of religion," says Richard Luna, Miami regional director for Open Doors with Brother Andrew. "But if this turns out to be a meeting between two heads of state, each with a specific constituency that does not include the evangelical church, it could be very harmful for evangelical Christians."

Ortega himself believes euphoria generated by the papal stopover will not last after John Paul II returns home. "There is great openness in anything that has reference to the pope's visit, but not in other areas," Ortega, who had been forced to work in a military camp in 1966, told CT. "We have more frequent dialogue with the state now, but many of the problems have not been solved."

"We expect only trouble out of the

pope's visit," says Assemblies of God (AG) national superintendent Héctor A. Hunter, who is concerned about a new wave of oppressive restrictions on Protestants. Unlike the blocklong compound that serves as Catholic diocese headquarters in Havana, Hunter's unadorned office is in a simple house in a poverty-stricken neighborhood.

SECULARIST PARADISE? Before Castro came to power, Cuba was the most secularized Latin American country, with only 6 percent of the population regularly attending church. Unlike most other Spanish-speaking Latin American countries, Cuba does not have a history of Catholic dominance, and that could hinder the impact of John Paul II's tour. "The pope is not visiting Poland; the pope is not visiting Mexico; the pope is visiting Cuba," says Ramos, author of *Protestantism and Revolution in Cuba* (University of Miami, 1989). "One single event won't change Cuba. It's a controlled society, a secular society, and the church in Cuba is not that strong."

Early on in Castro's reign, a few religious leaders inserted themselves into social movements, figuring cooperation with the Communist government would be the only way to secure vehicles or building materials. But most clergy went on the defensive, and some spent time in prison. There had not been a tradition of ecumenism in Cuba. When Catholic priests and Protestant preachers found themselves in the same prison camps, seeds of cooperation took root. Today, about 40 percent of the population has been baptized Catholic—including Castro, who was raised Catholic and attended Jesuit schools.

After nearly four decades of unrealized communist dreams, Cubans are ripe for change. There is a spiritual hunger in the land, a void that Marxism has been unable to fill. Out of a population of 11 million, the number of active Christians is approaching 1 million, the most ever.

Castro realizes Christians now represent a potent force. He met with 70 representatives from 31 denominations, primarily members of the Cuban Council of Churches, in a nine-hour meeting on November 24. Castro asked the religious leaders to pray for the

nation's economic problems, including decreased sugar production, declining foreign investments, and a dearth of international credit.

The dictator is willing to bend in order to preserve his revolution—and his power. In 1990, as the Soviet Union came apart, Castro faced fresh demands for reform and decided to allow religious meetings in homes. Previously, Christians had not been allowed to build new churches or repair existing cramped, crumbling structures because of shortages in everything from cement to nails.

But the response caught the government off guard. Now at least 3,000 Protestant house churches are active, spurring an ongoing revival that has affected virtually all Protestant denominations as well as the Catholic church.

A house group of Camagüey AG evangelist Orson Vila grew to more than 1,500 people, 80 percent of them young professionals disillusioned by economic hardship and ideological emptiness. Two-thirds of the AG's 50,000 adherents meet in house churches. The denomination had only 7,000 followers a decade ago. "It is the Spirit of God moving among the young people," the AG's Hunter told CT. "There is a spiritual hunger for God."

Other denominations report similar growth, both numerically and in enthusiasm. "God has his time to do his work, and now is his time in Cuba," says Roy Ruiz, president of the Council of Methodist Churches in Cuba. Attendance at Methodist churches has tripled to 40,000 since the authorization of house churches.

"This is the most important moment in



New freedom: Cardinal Jaime Ortega (holding cross) leads the first open-air religious service in Cuba in more than three decades at Havana's cathedral last June.

our evangelical history," says Western Baptist Convention of Cuba president Leoncilo Vegaulla, Eliezer's father. "People are coming to church without invitations. Every church is packed in each service."

The revival has a Pentecostal bent, not only among traditional charismatics, but also among many Methodists, Presbyterians, and Baptists (CT, April 25, 1994, p. 19). Yet denominations have retained their distinctives. "Our service is very lively and experiential," says Hector Mendez of Havana's First Presbyterian Church, which has grown from 60 to 400 since he became pastor in 1991. "But we are within the Reformed tradition."

THE COST OF COOPERATION: Yet, more unity existed in the 1960s when people of faith faced communism as a common enemy. More freedom has brought more squabbling over how—or whether—to cooperate with government authorities and with one another.

For example, the government has designated the Cuban Council of Churches as the only agency to be allowed to import and distribute Bibles. Since the decade began, the council says, an average of 100,000 Bibles has been imported each year, an annual amount equal to the number of Bibles imported during the previous 20 years.

But the council of churches has only 25 out of 54 denominations as members. Bible distribution is supposed to be prorated according to church membership, but some American evangelicals complain the Bibles do not reach their intended destination through the council of churches. Thus, many denominations have resorted to bringing in Bibles and videos through foreign tourists and Americans on government-sanctioned religious visits.

"We have never been a member of the council of churches, and we hope we never will," says AG superintendent Hunter. To be ecumenical in Cuba, Hunter says, is to be too closely identified with the government.

Raúl Suárez, pastor of Ebenezer Baptist Church in Havana and director of the Martin Luther King, Jr., ecumenical center, has not only chosen to cooperate with the government, he is part of it. Six years ago he became one of the first three Christians elected—unopposed, as is the case of all representatives—to the national Communist legislature. As such, he has been able to secure food, medicine, medical equipment, and school buses from the United States for different churches.

But Vicente Calvo, a Baptist who is also a human-rights activist, blames Suárez for politicizing the church. Calvo criticizes Suárez for defending the government's human-rights record and denying that the government ever placed restrictions on Bible distribution. Suárez admits to being

Brothers to the Rescue Pawn in Policy Discord

Even though the United States has failed to oust Fidel Castro from power after nearly four decades, most Cuban Americans support U.S. policy efforts against the dictator. But not 57-year-old José J. Basulto, president of Brothers to the Rescue, an organization that conducts humanitarian searches for refugee rafters in the Florida Straits.

His ministry has seen the inert side of U.S. policy firsthand. On February 24, 1996, Cuban jet fighters without warning shot down two unarmed Cessnas in the Florida Straits, killing four Brothers to the Rescue volunteers: Mario de la Pena, 24; Pablo Morales, 29; Carlos Costa, 29; and Armando Alejandro, Jr., 45. Basulto later found out that U.S. radar had been tracking the Cuban MiGs for nearly an hour, but federal officials did nothing to warn Brothers' pilots.

Cuban Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson Rafael Céspedes told CT in Havana, "We had our reasons. They had violated our territory 25 times." But Basulto contends the planes were over international waters.

"They had been practicing to kill us," says Basulto, who flew a third plane and eluded fire before he returned safely to Miami.

Rather than apologize for failing to warn the pilots, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) revoked Basulto's pilot's license for violating Cuban airspace. He sued the FAA, spending \$75,000 in legal bills in an effort to get the license back. A judge ordered the license to be reinstated after 150 days, but the FAA has continued to enforce the revocation in what Basulto believes are political motivations to keep him from provoking Cuba.

But Brothers to the Rescue flights continue at least weekly because Cubans are still fleeing on crudely constructed rafts. The pilots drop food, potable water, and medicine to keep rafters alive. Those picked up by the U.S. Coast Guard are returned to Cuba and face up to five years in prison.

With a core group of 70 pilots, observers, and volunteers, Basulto founded Brothers to the Rescue in 1991. "Our people were dying," Basulto recalls. "Some wars are won not by killing people but by saving people."

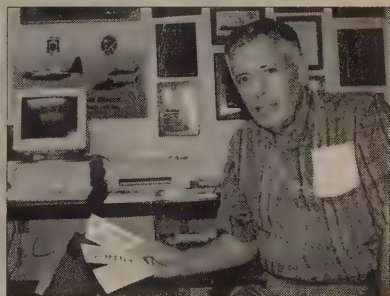
Brothers to the Rescue has conducted more than 1,800 aerial search missions and has been directly responsible for saving 4,200 lives. Yet as many Cubans in search of freedom die as are rescued. They drown in storms, wither in the scorching sun, or are maimed by sharks.

Since the early 1960s, Cubans have been forbidden to emigrate from the island. In 1994, President Clinton announced that Cubans, who had traditionally been allowed automatic entry into the United States if they escaped, would be returned. The United States ended its open-door policy of accepting boat people after 30,000 refugees wound up at Guantanamo Bay and eventually were resettled in the United States by World Relief (CT, April 3, 1995, p. 92).

"The U.S. government is culpable by neglect," says Basulto, who has criticized U.S. policy since the Bay of Pigs. Basulto joined the underground against Castro in 1959 and participated in the failed 1961 invasion after being recruited by the CIA. These days, Basulto, a Catholic, has pictures of peacemakers in his modest Miami office: Jesus, Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr.

Unlike most Cuban Americans who are apprehensive of criticizing Castro, Basulto holds the dictator directly responsible for the deaths of his fellow pilots.

"Castro can kill me," Basulto says. "I'm living on spare time. I have been dead since 1996." The eyes of the father of five mist as he remembers his dead colleagues. "They were like my own sons."



Rescue effort: Basulto has dropped leaflets over the straits urging Cubans to keep up their faith and hope.

By John W. Kennedy in Miami.

a proponent of liberation theology and identifying with the social-justice element of Castro's revolution.

"Between Christianity and the revolution there is no contradiction, but neither is there identification," Suárez says. "There are more elements in socialism that coincide with my faith than elements of capitalism. Marxism is a Latin American concept that emerged from poverty and misery. It's important not to just think about faith, but live among the poor."

While Cuba and the United States are worlds apart on many matters of faith, there has been upheaval over the same doctrinal differences that divide Christians in the United States. For example, Western Baptists in Cuba, who have ties to U.S. Southern Baptists, booted out Suárez over political and theological differences, such as women's ordination.

CHURCH RELIEF EXPANDS: The granting of limited religious freedom reveals Castro's pragmatism, not a change of heart. He has consented to churches taking the lead in humanitarian aid efforts in part because it saves the government money. After the collapse of Soviet aid beginning in 1991, Castro has, out of desperation, sought foreign investment, permitted limited self-employment, and allowed the U.S. dollar as a parallel currency.

Caritas Cubana in Havana, one of the few independent nongovernmental organizations, is a Roman Catholic agency that dispenses \$5 million a year in relief aid. "The government is suspicious that any organization like this offering humanitarian aid is undermining the government," says Rolando Suárez Cobián, director of Caritas Cubana. "There is always a political interpretation for any humanitarian action."

The government allows Caritas Cubana to monitor U.S. supplies that have been approved for sale in government-run hospitals, such as x-ray film, pacemakers, and prescription drugs. Caritas, which has 6,000 volunteers, must certify that the supplies are not being used to help soldiers. "This is the only way the Cuban government can buy low-priced medicine," Cobián says.

EMBARGO HINDERS MINISTRY: The United States has enforced a full trade embargo against Cuba since 1961, when Castro nationalized all U.S. property. The embargo, defended vigorously by the powerful Cuban expatriate community in southern Florida, limits what ministry can be conducted on the island.

Some Cuban officials see the papal visit as a means to weaken American resolve for the embargo and expose the U.S.

embargo to papal criticism.

"The visit will show not only the strength of the revolution but our willingness to improve relations with the church in Cuba," Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson Rafael Céspedes told CT in Havana. "If the pope calls directly for an end to the U.S. embargo, the U.S. Congress would have to listen. The pope, of course, is a moral authority."

Other church leaders have tried but failed to weaken the embargo. Pastors for Peace in Brooklyn, New York, has circum-



Marketplace communism? Wood carvings of revolutionaries Fidel Castro and Ernesto "Che" Guevara are for sale outside Havana's Catholic cathedral.

vented the embargo but has been ineffective in forcing the government to re-evaluate it. "The U.S. is pathologically obsessed with the need to force Cuba under its control," asserts Lucius Walker, a Baptist pastor who heads Pastors for Peace. "The blockade is a violation of international law to use food and medicines as weapons." Walker questions why the U.S. government is providing famine relief for its Communist enemy North Korea, but refuses to do the same for nearby Cuba. Walker's group has shipped 1,500 tons of medical equipment, bicycles, medicines, toys, and school supplies to Cuba, all without U.S. government approval.

"The embargo is contrary to the gospel," Walker told CT. "We stand under condemnation from our faith if we say that the way to help children is by starving them. As nonsensical as it seems, we cannot deliver a cup of cold water from a U.S. port." Americans may not enter Cuba without going through a third country, such as Mexico, Canada, or the Bahamas.

While the United States has prohibited trade with Cuba since President Kennedy's first year in office, the Helms-Burton Act in 1996 has further tightened the embargo. The measure passed both chambers of

Congress less than two weeks after the 1996 Brothers to the Rescue shootdown (See "Brothers to the Rescue Pawn in Policy Discord," p. 21). Critics contend Helms-Burton will cause more disease and malnutrition as supplies of everything from bandages to syringes dwindle.

"The Cuban people are suffering a lot because of this policy," says government affairs spokesperson Céspedes. He calls Helms-Burton a "brutal policy" that is "trying to destroy Cuba."

Among the staunchest supporters of the embargo is Republican congressional representative Lincoln Díaz-Balart of Miami. He says the embargo has prevented "complicit slave labor" that exists in China, where U.S. corporations are investing heavily in enterprises but workers never see the money. Other foreign firms are deterred from trading with Cuba because U.S. business interests have no access to the Cuban market, says the 44-year-old Díaz-Balart, in Congress since 1993.

RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION: Although Christians are a minority and unorganized, Castro sees the church as his primary rival.

Subsequently, any religious activity—from the pope's outdoor mass to a small congregation's purchase of pencils—requires extensive bureaucratic approval.

Historically, if certain congregations have experienced too much growth or seem too influential, the Castro regime devises new restrictions. Rules implemented in October prohibit churches from buying electrical goods such as fax machines, computers, and photocopiers. The new rules also prevent religious charities from buying diapers, cribs, cooking utensils, and soap.

"Castro is the law of the country," says 63-year-old Miami pastor José M. Vera, who had been national Open Bible superintendent before fleeing in 1961. "He allows Christians a certain amount of freedom, but they are always like fish on a line."

"The government hasn't changed toward religion and always sees Christians as the main people against the government," says Alexander Pons Palaez, a 26-year-old refugee resettled by World Relief in July in Carol Stream, Illinois. He had been incarcerated for three years beginning at age 15 for erecting "Down with Fidel" posters. "Fidel can't accept that Cuban people love God more than the state."

Government spokesperson Céspedes disagrees. "We have never been antireligious," he asserts. "We had some problems early on with certain religious leaders, but in 1991 we opened our party to religion. Atheism has been dropped as the official creed of the party."

JOHN W. KENNEDY

UNCERTAIN BOUNDARIES: Yet, constraints that limit Christian expression are formidable. Religious literature distribution outside church buildings is illegal. Airing Christian television or radio programs is banned. Praying for God to heal the sick is considered an illegal practice of medicine. Denominations cannot operate elementary or secondary schools.

"There are restrictions on how churches can organize, raise money, evangelize, and proselytize," says Freedom House's Shea. "People are uncertain where the boundaries are. Everything is a privilege, not a secure right." The constitution declares that no freedoms are allowed that are "contrary to the decision of the Cuban people to build socialism and communism."

Despite criticisms that he is too sympathetic to the government's policies, Suárez is responsible for the biggest threat to the regime: In 1990 he convinced Castro to permit Christians to meet in homes.

"In one sense he is cooperating with the government," says Sam Williams, a Cooperative Baptist pastor from Richmond who has visited Suárez's church four times. "But he has been instrumental in the government loosening restrictions on Christians practicing their faith and dropping the requirement that one must be a practicing atheist to be in the government."

Nevertheless, many house churches keep meeting underground. "The state has been acting prudently in the face of illegal house churches," Suárez says. "If

they close them, there will be an international scandal."

Castro learned a lesson from what happened to Camagüey evangelist Vila in 1995. Government officials presented Vila, a regional AG director, a list of 85 house churches to be closed immediately. He refused, and four months later 30 police officers arrested him. The same day, Vila received a 23-month hard labor prison sentence for allowing "illicit meetings." Vila's wife, Naomi, also a licensed AG pastor, took over supervision of 200 cell groups that continued to thrive. Meanwhile, in prison, Vila's preaching converted hundreds.

Despite theological differences with the AG, the Cuba Council of Churches intervened to free Vila, even though council leaders felt he had disobeyed the government's order. Catholic hierarchy also protested on Vila's behalf. He ended up serving nine months in prison.

The new freedom of religious expression exists in tension with state control. "There is a great opening, but it's happening hand in hand with the greatest oppression since the early 1960s," says Open Doors' Luna, who discovered firsthand in 1995 that repression still occurs. Plainclothes officers told Luna they had files of photographs and signed affidavits to prove he had been a CIA agent "involved in espionage, sabotage, and blowing up bridges and electrical plants." Luna's real mission had been smuggling

Bibles. Officials expelled him from the country immediately after interrogation.

PASTOR SHORTAGE: Most Cuban denominations are short of pastors and resources for theological education. There are a dozen small seminaries and Bible schools for Cuban Protestants. Enrollment is limited, largely because denominations cannot afford to provide books, food, class space, and scholarships for more than a few dozen students.

In the Baptist Convention of Western Cuba, for instance, there are only 63 pastors for 310 preaching sites. There are only 41 students enrolled in ministerial courses at Baptist Theological Seminary of Havana, although 150 are on a waiting list.

Seminary training is especially important now as young professionals flock to the faith, most of them from non-Christian backgrounds. Churches have managed to grow through local lay-leadership training programs.

Some of the best Cuban seminary professors and pastors, including 90 percent of Methodist ministers and two-thirds of Presbyterian clergy, fled when the revolution showed its socialist face, often leaving untrained teenagers to replace them. Virtually all 250 U.S.-based missionaries had fled or been deported by 1961.

"The Cuban church has proven it can survive and develop without the help of missions and foreign missionaries," says Ramos, who immigrated to Miami in 1966. "They lost along the way many of

Santería Holds Cuba in Thrall

The most widespread form of religion in Cuba today is neither Protestant nor Catholic, but a syncretistic belief system called *santería*—"way of the saints."

Santería is the largest of the Afro-Cuban religions brought by slaves as a way to trick slave owners. While publicly confessing Catholic saints, the slaves privately venerated animistic gods and goddesses of their homeland. Believers worship these African gods, *orishas*, through plant, food, and animal sacrifices offered during chants and dancing initiations.

Santería worship is conducted in homes, and as many as 3 million Cubans may be involved. Some Catholic priests welcome it as a way to attract parishioners to Christian teachings while others see it as demonic. Though evangelicals believe *santería* is evil, the movement has found its way into mainline Protestant denominations.

Pablo Odén Marichal, vicar general for the only Episcopal diocese on the island and head of the Havana-based Cuban Council of Churches, sees no contradiction in mixing the be-



Altar of the orishas: A *santería* priest prays to some of the 400 deities.

liefs, goat and chicken sacrifices notwithstanding.

"Why should I view *santería* as a threat?" Marichal asks. "In one of my Episcopal congregations, three *santería* people come with [ceremonial] dresses and preach."

There are more *santería* priests in Havana than Catholic priests in all of Cuba. But with no hierarchy or centralized leadership, the religion has never been a threat to

Castro. *Santería* has spread throughout the Caribbean and to the United States, where there are an estimated 800,000 devotees of different nationalities.

In the United States, the Supreme Court in 1993 struck down a city ordinance and ruled that live animal sacrifices in religious rites are constitutionally protected. Residents in the Miami suburb of Hialeah had complained about the stench from animal sacrifices at the Church of Lukumi Babalu Aye. **CT**

Bittersweet Cuban Memories



One Cuban who does not miss his native land is Noble Alexander, a Seventh-day Adventist youth pastor from a Havana suburb who spent 1962 to 1984 in nine Cuban prisons.

Two armed G-2 agents, the Cuban equivalent of the KGB, arrested the 28-year-old Noble after he preached at a service in February 1962. His crime? A sermon about original sin.

Prisoners would be his congregants the next 22 years. Many fellow Christian prisoners submitted to Castro-style re-education, which included renouncing faith in

Christ. Alexander refused. He received a sentence of 20 years of hard labor for conspiring to assassinate Castro, aiding and abetting the flight of counterrevolutionaries, and distributing opium—that is, Christianity—to the people of Cuba.

Throughout his incarceration, Alexander endured physical and psychological torture. His cellmates included rats, cockroaches, snakes, and lizards. Prison authorities slapped Alexander so hard he still hears ringing in his ears. He suffered food poisoning from eating maggot-ridden gruel. He lost consciousness being dunked in an icy lake while bound. He passed out three times from the pain of being whipped with electrical cables. He sustained gunshot wounds in his hand, leg, and thigh.

"No one can be truly certain of his faith and endurance until he is forced to test them," Alexander says.

Despite the abuse, Alexander organized underground churches in prison. "Baptist, Seventh-day Adventist, Presbyterian, Methodist, Catholic—our fellowship recognized no boundaries," Alexander writes in *I Will Die Free* (Pacific Press, 1991). "Though chained by hatred and deprivation, our pitiful group of Christian brothers declared themselves free in Christ."

When uncovered, his religious activities brought further punishment. Possession of a Bible resulted in a 90-day sentence inside a coffinlike box where he could barely move. After being caught possessing a hymnal, he was forced to stand in a showerlike stall for 42 days with water dripping unceasingly on his head and nails protruding from the floor at his feet.

For refusing to work on the Sabbath, Alexander was dunked into a cesspool of rotting debris and putrid excrement for three hours. Officials reclassified him as a "dangerous religious fanatic" and moved him to a section with psychotic murderers and the mentally ill.

But Alexander says the worst agony he experienced involved his Christian wife, Yraida, who divorced him in 1965 in order to marry a Cuban army captain. When he went to prison, he and Yraida had been married three years and had a two-year-old son, Humberto. Slowly Alexander recovered from his despair, and the prison church became his new bride.

When his scheduled release date came in 1983 authorities told him he could go—as soon as he submitted to the government re-education program.

Meanwhile, Alexander's mother and sister in Salem, Massachusetts, enlist the support of their Methodist pastor, Willis P. Miller, to organize a prayer group and public campaign for his release. Tom White of the Voice of the Martyrs, a fellow prisoner for 18 months, convinced Jesse Jackson to seek Alexander's freedom when Jackson met with Castro. Cuba deported Alexander to the United States in June 1984 as a "humanitarian gesture."

Many of Alexander's dreams have gone unfulfilled, and he has bittersweet memories of Cuba. His son, now 36, remains a Communist stalwart. Ex-wife Yraida has rededicated her life to Christ and begged—and received—Alexander's forgiveness.

Alexander and his Puerto Rican wife, Carmen, have been married four years. At age 63, he is pastor of Hispanic Seventh-day Adventist churches in Cambridge and Chelsea, Massachusetts. His first sermon in the United States dealt with the origin of sin, the topic that he had preached as a free man in Cuba. Alexander has learned that God is his sustaining joy.

"I have no plans for retiring," Alexander says. "Preaching is my life."

By John W. Kennedy.

their finest leaders and a good portion of their resources. But new leaders have risen to the cause, and lost resources have been replaced by a new quota of local and personal sacrifice."

U.S. missionaries or pastors can enter Cuba if they are invited by a denomination and they obtain a religious visa that includes a detailed itinerary. In 1994, Cuban authorities ousted several U.S.-based missions organizations, including Campus Crusade for Christ, Open Doors with Brother Andrew, and Youth With a Mission (YWAM). Many U.S. groups bring in not only Bibles, tracts, and Christian videos, but also medicine, clothes, hygiene products, even auto parts. The Bartlesville, Oklahoma-based Voice of the Martyrs (VOM) takes materials—which are sometimes confiscated—to Cuba on a weekly basis through tourists entering via Mexico and Costa Rica.

Tom White, now U.S. director of VOM, is not afraid of being caught. He spent 18 months in a Cuban prison after his plane crashed on the island in 1979. White, 50, had tossed thousands of packets containing the Gospel of John from planes for seven years. White's book, *God's Missiles Over Cuba*, now in its fourth printing, describes his 24-year sentence for counterrevolutionary activities and his confinement with rats and in refrigerated prison cells. Castro released him after international pressure, which included a personal plea from Mother Teresa.

SPIRITUAL IMPERIALISM? While appreciative of the relief flowing to Cuba from humanitarian Americans, religious leaders in Miami hope there will not be a deluge of overbearing missionary activity when Cuba opens again. "It's important for people to go in to help people, not to manipulate them," says Humberto Cruz, a 60-year-old Baptist pastor in Miami who immigrated in 1967. "The leaders are already there. They don't need Cuban-American imperialism."

But San Antonio evangelist Sammy Tippitt says he goes not out of any colonialist ambitions but because he is invited by Cubans hungry for Bible teaching. He makes an annual trip in conjunction with an Eastern Baptist Convention retreat for pastors. Tippitt's ministry, God's Love in Action, finances the trip because Cubans simply do not have the money. The government offered no explanation when it canceled his scheduled journey in November.

American evangelicals, mindful of how cults invaded post-Communist Russia, also want to make sure that materials sent have sound doctrine. "Christian leaders in Cuba

have a heart to disciple young people, but they don't have tools available," says YWAM's Steve Tackett of Nashville. "They can't go to a Christian bookstore and buy discipleship materials. When the government falls, we don't want there to be a vacuum like there was in the Soviet Union."

Barry Owensby, president of World Street Evangelism in Jacksonville, Florida, has made two dozen trips to Cuba following invitations from churches. "We are strategically set because I have established contacts with 100 pastors," he says. "As soon as freedom comes, I will move in a matter of days to set up outdoor crusades with various pastors."

While acknowledging that U.S. missions agencies must be aware of their own paternalistic tendencies, Gregory C. Wallace of Overseas Council of Indianapolis says Cubans must have financial assistance to keep training new Christians. Overseas Council is facilitating the theological education of 45 students at New Pines Seminary in Placetas. The six professors are Cuban, but the financing is American, including money for constructing student apartments and a dining hall.

Although there are no Christian media on the island, residents are able to hear Christian broadcasts from other countries. A 500,000-watt Trans World Radio signal north of Venezuela beams 32 hours of Spanish language programming to the island each week, including U.S.-based shows such as *Back to the Bible* and *Our Daily Bread*. The various programs receive an average of 200 letters per month from Cubans.

POST-CASTRO BLOODBATH? As Cuba enters its season of transition, Castro continues to reiterate long-held tenets.

In October, Communists convened their first party congress in six years and made it clear that further reforms will not happen any time soon. The dictator also reaffirmed that his 66-year-old brother Raúl, who is head of the armed forces, will be his successor.

Amid turgid praise of the one-party socialist system beneath a banner with portraits of Ernesto "Che" Guevara, Karl Marx, and Vladimir Lenin, the platform declared "the party is in a better position today than ever to perfect its role as society's guide."

The embargo will prove its worth when Castro loses power, Rep. Díaz-Balart be-

lieves. He says that with no access to the American market, Castro's successor will be forced to accept U.S. conditions for lifting the embargo: legalizing political activity and providing for free elections. "The embargo is the only reason the provisional government will respect the Cuban people," Díaz-Balart says.

"There is a huge thirst for knowing God, and this will help in ushering in a democratic transition," says Palaez, the recent refugee.

Renovating Cuba physically will very likely be easier than renewing the country

sonnel of Cuban origin has intercessory prayer as its first line of defense.

The council's goal is a peaceful transition to democracy, which will include assisting Cuban military leadership in the post-Castro era to become answerable to a government freely elected by Cubans. "This goal must and will be accomplished free of hate or revenge and in the spirit of understanding, reconciliation, cooperation, and justice," says the 65-year-old Oliva, who graduated from the Cuban Military Academy in 1954 and came to the United States in 1960 to assist in military operations against the Castro government. He participated in the Bay of Pigs as the second-in-command of exile invasion forces.

"Through faith in Jesus Christ, and with his grace and peace, reunification can be achieved in Cuba," Oliva says. "We consider the Cuban armed forces the only element that can accelerate the transition of democracy in Cuba."

PRAYING FOR THE DAY:

Many exiles are praying for that day. "I don't want to die before I see Cuba free again," says Miami pastor Vera. "I am ready to go back to Cuba to preach the gospel."

Regardless of whether the transition is peaceful or swift,

Cuba's Christians will be in a stronger position than when Castro ushered in the 1959 revolution.

Despite economic distress, international politics, and domestic repression, evangelical Protestants are proving to be faithful.

After his encounters with a bear and a mock firing squad, Eliezer Veguilla is in the United States working with Baptist World Alliance, Trans World Radio, and Open Doors with Brother Andrew. His 67-year-old father, Leoncilo—who spent nearly six years in prison beginning in 1965 as one of 48 Baptist pastors indicted for alleged ties to the CIA—is now president of the Western Baptist Convention of Cuba and Baptist Theological Seminary in Havana. "I'm not afraid anymore of prison," Leoncilo Veguilla told CT. "I remain in Cuba because God is with me to the end."

Missionaries who are ready to mobilize when the country opens need to remember that persecution has a way of vitalizing faithful believers. "We don't need to take Christ to Cuba," says Open Doors' Luna. "Christ has been there all along."



Full house: The tight quarters of the Church of Paul at the Assembly of God congregation in Sagua de Tanámo in eastern Cuba is a common sight because most new congregations must meet in residential buildings.

spiritually. Vera says Cubans have suffered profound damage inside their souls, and much bitterness and hatred extend toward the Castro regime: 50,000 people have been killed by firing squads for refusing to conform to communism; 500,000 have been religious or political prisoners.

"When Castro falls from the scene there will be a bloodbath," predicts exiled Seventh-day Adventist pastor Noble Alexander (see "Bittersweet Cuban Memories," p. 24). "There are lots of people with pent-up anger. I know thousands who have been killed."

In a real sense, what happens with the military could determine Cuba's future. While secret police and neighborhood Communist committees are "deeply involved in daily oppression," Díaz-Balart says the armed forces have remained aloof from the repression.

The Cuban-American Military Council in Washington, D.C., is trying to support any efforts of Cuban armed forces to break ties with Castro. Founded last year by retired general Erneido A. Oliva, the organization of nearly 1,000 military per-



STOP ALL
ABORTION

CHOICE
LIFE!

Face It

Alto a
TODOS los
Abortos

Face It
Abortion Kills!

Face It
Abortion Kills!

It
Abortion Kills!

Stop
Abortion

Stop All
Abortion!

WANTED:

A New Pro-life Strategy

Twenty-five years after Roe, and 37 million abortions later, we have to admit we are losing the fight.

FREDERICA MATHEWES-GREEN

January 22 marks a grim anniversary: 25 years since *Roe v. Wade* legalized abortion. A generation has passed since the first wave of unborn children fell, and the accumulation of each year's toll totals nearly 37 million. During those years one child was aborted for approximately every three born. Their names would fill the Vietnam Veterans' Memorial wall over 700 times.

Abortion has been a disaster, first for the children who died and second for those who survived to grieve a lost child, grandchild, or sibling. It has damaged us all. How can we even measure the spiritual cost levied on a country that pronounces the killing of its own children a celebrated right? It is tempting to avoid thinking about it, and when we do think of it, it is tempting to stew in helpless fury.

Avoidance and fury—neither response has pushed us forward. As a movement, the pro-life cause has stopped. We are stuck, mired, at an impasse. We have had small gains and small losses, but the bottom line is the same: 1.5 million abor-

tions a year. I suggest we use this morbid anniversary as an opportunity to reassess our strategy.

BECOMING LISTENERS

The pro-life movement has succeeded in keeping people uncomfortable with abortion but not in translating discomfort into a firm will to oppose it. That is why I have adopted the unconventional approach of *listening* more carefully to the objections to our cause.

I have a personal interest in conversation between the opposing sides: I myself have championed both positions. Back in my college days I was your basic bad-tempered, male-bashing, hairy-legged women's libber, actively pro-abortion. Abortion, I believed, was essential to liberation. Women would not be able to enjoy the same success as their male counterparts

Time for a new face to protest? A pro-life approach that insists "It's a Baby!" answers a question no one is asking.

ABORTION MAKES
YOU THE MOTHER
OF A DEAD BABY



unless they, too, could be unhampered by pregnancy and childrearing.

Then, in 1976, a few years after *Roe*, I read an essay in *Esquire* magazine titled "What I Saw at the Abortion Clinic." In it surgeon and essayist Richard Selzer described watching a 19-week abortion by an injection procedure no longer in use. He described the abortionist sliding the needle of the syringe into the woman's belly, and then, he writes, "I see something other than what I expected here . . . it is the hub of the needle that is in the woman's belly that has jerked. First to one side. Then to the other side. Once more it wobbles, is tugged, like a fishing line nibbled by a sunfish."

The image horrified him, as it did me. I had never considered that the being in the uterus was more than a blob of tissue, that it could be a human life that wanted to go on living. Selzer concludes his essay: "Whatever else is said in abortion's defense, the vision of that other defense will not vanish from my eyes. And it has happened that you cannot reason with me now. For what can language do against the truth of what I saw?"

The truth of what he saw affected me deeply. I could no longer say that abortion was right—and yet, somehow, I couldn't jump on the anti-abortion bandwagon. I knew that unplanned pregnancy could wreak havoc in a woman's life. The dilemma seemed irresolvable.

I eventually worked my way out of this dilemma, but that is why we must *listen carefully* to pro-choicers in order to understand their reasoning and, we hope, break through the deadlock.

For several years I have participated in pro-life/pro-choice dialogues, and I now serve on the national steering committee of an umbrella organization that unites grassroots dialogues, the Common Ground Network for Life and Choice. A dialogue usually will begin when members of a community grow weary of miscommunication and hostility and want to get people together on neutral ground just to talk. More ambitious goals may emerge after trust has been built up, but in many cities, "just talking" is all that is accomplished. Thus, Common Ground (CG) is not for every temperament; many will find the lack of concrete action frustrating.

Those who enjoy it, however, will reap several benefits. In a typical small group, moderated by a trained facilitator, a pro-lifer can describe what she believes and why, and what life experiences have formed that belief. Pro-choicers may ask clarifying questions, and then they are

asked to restate what the pro-lifer believes to assure that the sentiment has been properly understood. They are not permitted to criticize or try to convince her that she's wrong.

In return, the pro-lifer assumes the same role as listener to pro-choicers and gains new insight into the thinking behind this position. For example, I have learned that while most people are pro-life because of the central conviction that abortion kills babies, pro-choicers can harbor a broad range of reasons for their belief. For some it is the fear that "unwanted" children will be abused; for others it is the specter of deaths from illegal abortion; still others may be concerned about overpopulation. I learned that a pro-life approach that insists "It's a baby!" may be answering a question none are asking and missing the questions they are.

In either case, knowing that they have been truly heard is a healing experience.

CG gives an opportunity to hear and be heard, educates pro-lifers on the real concerns that need to be addressed, and demystifies the "bad guys," turning them into real individuals. If these "bad guys" are our enemies, CG gives an opportunity to love our enemies in a safe and respectful setting.

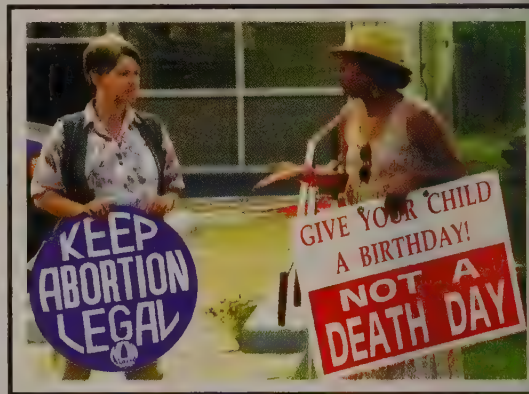
Formal dialogues like these are not intended to be opportunities for persuasion. Nor is CG aimed at negotiating a compromise, though there is always a hope that unexpected areas of agreement may emerge—like the unexpected consensus that resulted in a position paper issued jointly soon after CG's founding, supporting increased awareness of adoption.

Both sides of this debate are plagued with distorted impressions of what the other side believes. This venue helps overturn those assumptions. One pro-choice friend recently said, "I always thought pro-lifers only wanted to shore up the patriarchy and oppress women, but sometimes I think you *really* do care about babies." I was shocked; I thought pro-choicers believed we *only* cared about babies (arguing that we didn't support pregnant women). Likewise, I've found the caricature of pro-choicers as child-sacrifice devotees to be wildly off-base. Many are deeply troubled about the death of the unborn but fear some worse catastrophe if abortion is outlawed. The CG dialogues help clear away misunderstandings. They don't promise we will

agree, but they help us arrive at genuine, even respectful, disagreement.

BECOMING PERSUADERS

After we listen, then we persuade. *Persuasion* needs to become the main strategy for pursuing the pro-life cause. While CG serves to advance the discussion between warring camps, it does little to persuade advocates on either side to "cross over." That is better suited for when you have coffee with a friend over your kitchen table.



The first step in adopting the *persuasion* model may sound surprising: Put the question of making abortion illegal on the back burner. I believe abortion should be illegal because it is violence against the smallest members of our human family. But one of the reasons we're stuck in a deadlock is because political posturing has overwhelmed the moral discussion. The abortion issue has become something like a football game where yards gained by one side are by necessity yards lost by the other, and neither side is ever going to be willing to give up the fight. This polarization makes it less likely that we can arrive at a resolution; and without resolution, consensus, and peace on this issue, there will be no lasting protection for the unborn. Even a great victory, like an amendment to the Constitution explicitly protecting unborn life, would immediately be attacked by our opponents. They would not rest until they tore it down, just as we haven't rested in combating *Roe v. Wade* for 25 years. A deeper agreement must be reached before legal justice can be permanently won.

These are my recommendations for advancing a pro-life position that *persuades*.

First, the pro-life side has had but one simple message: "It's a baby!" In season and out of season, through weeks and years and decades, we have persisted in

saying that the life in the womb was a human child, showing sonograms, repeating that the heartbeat begins at 21 days, declaring that every third child dies from abortion.

This is an effective message. It is the message that converted me. It is the most significant argument we have to convince and galvanize, and for that reason I uphold it as the primary factor in a persuasion stance. But it carries a cautionary proviso: The "It's a baby!" message, used alone, can backfire.

WHAT WOMEN WANT

When reiterating that "It's a baby!" the listener is likely to balance the scale: Yes, but women still want abortions. So the second point to make in the *persuasion* model is to challenge that line of argumentation, asserting, instead, that abortion *hurts* women.

It is important to press the point—in what sense does a woman want this? No one saves up, hoping one day to have an abortion. It costs hundreds of dollars, money anyone would surely prefer to

found it difficult to cope with daily life. "They told her that it would give her control of her body," he wrote. "But what kind of tradeoff is that, to gain control of your body and lose control of your mind?" The cruel irony is that abortion has been presented as something that would set a woman free.

This brings to mind the gypsy in Verdi's opera *Il Trovatore*. Outraged by the count's cruel injustice, she stole his infant son and, in a crazed act of vengeance, flung him into the fire. Or so she thought. For, in turning around, she discovered the count's son lay safe on the ground behind her; it was her own son she had thrown into the flames. Abortion can present itself as glittering liberty, a defiant way to cast off the shackles of injustice. That illusion lasts only until you realize who it was that you threw into the flames.

So the second point to make when trying to persuade is that abortion hurts women; it does not deliver on its promise to liberate them.

THE PRACTICAL QUESTION

Once we get people to recognize that abortion both kills babies and hurts women, we can then pose the practical question: How could we live without it?

Abortion is part of a complex machine of interlocking social realities, linked to expectations about women's sexual availability, men's freedom from responsibility, and women's duty to be economically self-supporting. The pressure of these social forces cannot be minimized: they create a demand for 4,000 abortions every day, making it the most frequently performed medical procedure.

Pro-lifers need to think beyond the single goal of making abortion illegal. People "in the middle" on this issue imagine that, if all the clinics were padlocked tomorrow, we'd just see 4,000 women pounding on the doors and crying. What needs to change in order for this ravenous demand to be quelled?

Speaking very broadly, there are two problems to solve to advance the case that we can live without abortion. The first is preventing unplanned pregnancies in the first place, and the second is giving women support when they do become pregnant so they will opt not to abort.

Our friends on the other side are also very interested in preventing pregnancy, and so they put much faith in contraception. Contraceptives became broadly available in the early sixties, and forms of "sex education" appeared even before that. Contraception is not a new idea. The

I've found the caricature of pro-choicers as child-sacrifice devotees to be wildly off-base. Dialogues help clear away misunderstandings.

In the first place, the unhappily pregnant woman who hears us describing her beautiful precious baby might stir up vestiges of childhood sibling rivalry: "They like the baby better than me." She gets a pretty clear picture: she and her baby are at odds, and we're on her baby's side. Who's on her side? Abortion advocates. When she turns to the embrace of those sympathetic arms she takes her baby with her.

Also, the "It's a baby!" message alone strikes the muddled middle as failing to take seriously the woman's plight. Our apparent willingness to dismiss those difficulties as "inconvenience" strikes many as either callous or wildly naive.

Additionally, our opponents interpret this appeal as personal attacks on them. When we say, "Abortion is an immoral choice because it kills a baby," they hear, "People who favor abortion are immoral people." I had long wondered why, at debates, I would attack abortion, and my opponent would not defend abortion but attack me.

I came to realize that the "It's a baby!" message, important as it is, does not offer all the solutions we'd hoped it would, and in some instances, creates more misunderstanding. It *is* a baby, and that ought to be the first point in presenting the pro-life position persuasively. But the conversation needs to move beyond that point.

spend elsewhere. The procedure itself is physically unpleasant, humiliating, and often painful. Do we really believe that women want this?

Beyond that, the procedure does not heal a physical problem but subverts a healthy, normal process. We get confused by the fact that doctors perform it; usually doctors are called in when a natural process goes wrong. But just as our bodies are made to breathe and digest food, women's bodies are designed to sustain a pregnancy and deliver a baby. It is a delicately balanced ecology, and when something disrupts it as violently as abortion does, it is not surprising that damage can result.

Some studies have shown the rates of postabortion miscarriage, ectopic pregnancy, and sterility rising sharply. More recently, connections have been suggested between abortion and breast cancer.

Women don't *want* abortions. They are expensive, awkward, humiliating, painful, and potentially dangerous. And we have not yet considered the most compelling effect: abortion breaks a woman's heart. At some level, she knows it is her own child who is dying, a son or daughter who looks as much like her as any she will carry full term.

I once received a letter from a man whose wife had an abortion; afterward, he said, she drifted into depression and

use of condoms, in particular, has been touted as nearly a patriotic act. People are neither ignorant about contraception nor unaware of where to get it. Yet the rate of abortion remains near 1.5 million a year. Whatever else all this educating and contraceptive-pushing is doing, it's not bringing down the abortion rate.

When sex occurs between two people who have no lasting commitment to each other, a resulting pregnancy is likely to be "unwanted." Recovering an ethic of commitment-based sexuality will mean rediscovering the value of chastity before marriage. The True Love Waits movement is a good example of how this new sexual ethic can be held up and encouraged.

But for the woman who is already pregnant, vows to work for sex education, contraception, and chastity before marriage offer cold comfort. When I was writing *Real Choices: Listening to Women, Looking for Alternatives to Abortion* (Conciliar Press, 1997), I spent a year studying the problems of pregnancy, seeking to discover the reasons most women choose abortion. I expected to find practical problems heading the list: financial needs, child-care woes, pressure to drop out of school. Yet after reviewing several studies and conducting my own, no clear pattern emerged.

But when I spoke with groups of postabortion women, a nearly unanimous consensus appeared. Women had abortions, in nearly every case, because of relationships. Most often it was to please the father of the child, who was pressuring for abortion. (In a couple of cases, the woman spoke of lying on the abortion table praying her husband would burst in and say, "Stop, I changed my mind!") The second most common reason was pressure from a parent, most often the girl's mother.

In the vast majority of cases, I found a woman is most likely to choose abortion in order to please or protect people that she cares about. Often she discovers too late that there is another person to whom she has an obligation: her own unborn child. The grief that follows abortion springs from the conviction that, in a crisis, this relationship was fatally betrayed.

Supporting women with unplanned pregnancies means continuing what pregnancy-care centers have been doing all along: providing housing, medical care, clothing, counseling, and so forth. But we should also be paying attention to becoming a steadfast friend (this is more important than any material help we can give) and to doing whatever we can to

repair relationships in the family circle.

Rather than dismiss the baby's father as a cad, we should explore whether marriage is a possibility. He is, after all, the one appointed by God to provide for and protect mother and child. "Shotgun" marriages have a higher rate of success than expected: in one study, 50 percent of black teen marriages to legitimize a pregnancy were still intact 10 years later. (With a national divorce rate of 50 percent, their batting is average.) White teen couples did better: 75 percent were still together 10 years later. If a marriage fails, there is the financial benefit of child support from the father. Sixty-four percent of divorced and separated mothers receive child-support payments; for women who never married, that rate is only 20 percent.

At a recent conference of crisis-pregnancy centers I was told that there is no brochure a counselor can give a prospective dad that challenges him to accept the responsibility of fatherhood. This time next year I'd like for there to be a dozen.

Pregnancy-care centers can also help improve relationships with parents. The Pregnancy Aid Center in Greenbelt, Maryland, will go with a girl to break the news to her parents, meeting them on neutral ground, like a restaurant. If adoption is one of the options included when parents are involved with the girl in discussing abortion alternatives, the girl is six times more likely to make that choice.

In thinking about the best resolution to unplanned pregnancy, care-center staffers must avoid the temptation to encourage the girl toward single-parenting. This may appeal to her emotionally, but the overwhelming evidence is that it is devastating to children, contributing strongly to poor school performance, delinquency, and another generation of unwed mothering. The mother also finds herself in financial troubles that she may never fully rise above; she is less likely to finish school or to marry. The mother should be encouraged to consider either marriage to the baby's father or adoption.

AGAINST THE LAW?

These three points—abortion kills babies, it hurts women, we can live without it—summarize an approach to the abortion debate that can be effective and persuasive. It is important to note that none of these arguments mentions God. None uses religious or biblical citations to carry its point.

I find that it is nearly always ineffective to use religious arguments with peo-

ple who are not religious. When you say, "God says abortion is wrong," they don't slap their foreheads and exclaim, "By golly, you're right! I never thought of that!" Instead, they think, "Oh—you're one of those." Whatever you say next will be dismissed.

When these three points are covered, listeners will often say, "I agree with you; I just don't think it should be illegal."

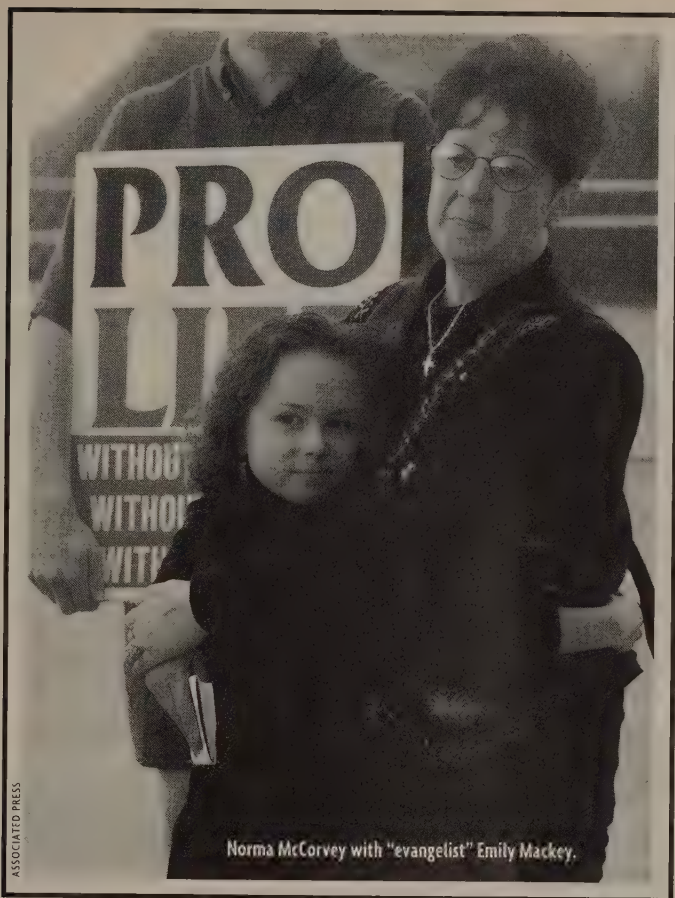
Since there is no present opportunity to make abortion illegal anyway, when the topic does come up, let's avoid the temptation to let the conversation get hijacked into a polarizing discussion that offers no practical application. A more realistic goal for pro-life advocates is to bring about, through both active listening and gentle persuasion, a gradual dawning of the conviction that we *can* live without abortion. Eventually that may result in a cultural consensus to make it illegal once more.

So our ultimate goal, in all of this reevaluation, remains the same: to end legal and social acquiescence to this atrocity. In America there is an irreducible core of laws that we could not live without, without which we would have barbarism. These are the laws against violence—child abuse, rape and murder, spouse-battering. These laws are sometimes the only thing that stand between the small and weak and the strong and powerful. And abortion laws are that kind of law. Unborn children are the smallest members in our human family, and they deserve that protection.

We have 25 years of evidence of what happens when legal protection is repealed: these children are being killed at the rate of 4,000 a day. Humanitarianism, goodwill, and compassion are not bubbling up from some mysterious source to protect them; only the force of law can do that. It will do it imperfectly, to be sure; but these children deserve whatever protection we can win them.

Opponents of abortion laws tend to envision a perfect society where women are empowered and free, arguing that a few legally permitted abortions (37 million?) is the price we must pay to get there. But can a just society really be founded on the death of children? How many deaths can we tolerate in pursuit of this utopian vision? 

Frederica Mathewes-Green is a commentator on National Public Radio and the author of Real Choices: Listening to Women, Looking for Alternatives to Abortion (Conciliar Press).



ROE v. MCCORVEY

What made "Roe" betray the pro-choice cause?

GARY THOMAS

Norma McCorvey could outcuss the crassest men; she could outdrink many of the Dallas taverns' regulars; and she was known for her hot temper. When pro-lifers called her a murderer, she called them worse. When people held up signs of aborted fetuses, Norma spit in their faces.

She had a reputation to protect, after all. As the plaintiff in the infamous Supreme Court case *Roe v. Wade*, Norma's life was inextricably tied up with abortion.

Though she had never had one, abortion was the sun around which Norma's life orbited. She once told a reporter, "This issue is the only thing I live for. I live, eat, breathe, think everything about abortion."

Then the fiery pro-life group Operation Rescue moved in next door.

AN UNLIKELY FRIENDSHIP

Operation Rescue has had a tumultuous history. Founded by Randall Terry, OR made international headlines in the late eighties by staging "sit-ins" at abortion clinics across the country. Almost imme-

diately, the pro-life movement was split between those who supported OR and those who thought they were doing more harm than good. A few people stood in the middle, but not many.

Terry stepped down from OR in 1990, and his successor, Keith Tucci, followed suit a few years later. Flip Benham became director in 1994. By this time, federal legislation and extreme penalties for a first-time offense made the well-attended rescues largely a thing of the past. OR's influence was clearly on the wane, but their move next door to Norma's abor-

tion clinic, A Choice for Women, would change that overnight.

Norma called Flip Benham, the brash and bold OR leader, Flip "Venom." Flip called Norma "responsible for the deaths of 35 million children." They were supposed to be sworn enemies, but due to the persistence of a local real estate agent, they became next-door neighbors whose offices shared a common wall in a building off the LBJ highway in the Lake Highlands area of North Dallas.

After OR moved to this location, the Dallas police settled down to an almost hourly routine. The bleep-bleep of a police siren and flashing blue lights could be heard and seen several times a day for the next few months as the two sides clashed out in the parking lot.

Occasionally, the clashes would collapse into conversation. During one friendly exchange, Norma goaded Flip, "You need to go to a good Beach Boys concert."

"Miss Norma," Flip answered, "I haven't been to a Beach Boys concert since 1976."

The innocuous response shook Norma. "All at once," she says, "Flip became human to me. Before, I had thought of [Flip] as a man who did nothing but yell at abortion clinics and read his Bible. The thought that he was a real person—a guy who had once even gone to a Beach Boys concert—never occurred to me. Now that it had, I saw him in a new light." As they chatted outside on the bench between their offices, however, Flip began sharing some stories of his past, and out of this vulnerability an unlikely friendship was born.

Other OR volunteers also began reaching out to Norma. In return, Norma explained her crystals and book of Runes. It wasn't exactly Elijah and the prophets of Baal, but in both minds it was clearly a case of "may the true God win."

A MOTHER'S HEART

As Norma's mind was challenged to consider the truth of the gospel, God began working on her heart through a seven-year-old girl named Emily, the daughter of OR volunteer Ronda Mackey. Quite understandably, Norma had difficulty relating to children. She had given birth to three, all of whom had been placed for adoption (one of them against Norma's will). And because she worked in an abortion clinic, Norma was fearful of bonding with anyone so young. "It was part of my denial," she explains. "When you know what is happening to the children behind closed doors, it's difficult to become attached to them outside."

Emily's blatant affection, frequent hugs, and direct pursuit disarmed Norma. The little girl's interest was all the more surprising considering Emily made it very clear that her acceptance of Norma wasn't an acceptance of Norma's lifestyle. Early on in their relationship, Norma explained to Emily, "I like kids and wouldn't let anyone hurt little kids," to which Emily responded, "Then why do you let them kill the babies at the clinic?"

This childlike innocence cut open Norma's heart. Norma wasn't won over by compelling, intellectual arguments. While the OR adults targeted Norma's mind, Emily went straight for the heart. Over time, Emily began to personify the issue of abortion—especially when Ronda broke down and told Norma that Emily had almost been aborted.

Ronda was engaged when Emily was conceived, and nobody was very happy about the pregnancy. Ronda's future in-laws, her mother, and her fiancé all pressured her to get an abortion during the first trimester. Ronda admits that she gave abortion serious consideration, at one point even saying she would pursue it. Yet memories of a high-school friend's emotional devastation following an abortion strengthened Ronda's resolve to let Emily live.

Shortly after Ronda told Norma this story, the two were shopping with Ronda's girls. Norma, who has a decidedly mystical bent to her nature, was stunned when she saw Ronda's bumper sticker, "Abortion Stops a Beating Heart," which has a vivid, red heart on the side.

Norma saw Emily's heart in that sticker; it just about destroyed her when she realized that "my law" (as she once fondly referred to *Roe v. Wade*) made it legal to snuff out young Emily's life. Norma asked to be taken home immediately, but later that afternoon she spent over an hour on the phone with Ronda and their deep friendship was solidified.

Norma was forever changed by this experience. For her, abortion was no longer an "abstract right," because it had a face in a little girl named Emily.

BLUE COLLAR, IVY LEAGUE CLASH

Emotionally, Norma was ready for a change. Her alienation from the abortion movement was practically legendary, even before she became a Christian. Most of the abortion advocacy movement was afraid of her blue collar, tough talking, and unrefined ways. Norma was raised as a poor Louisiana girl who spent a good

part of her childhood in reform schools. She ran away from home when she was ten and spent several decades supporting herself with odd jobs—as a carnival barker, a waitress, a bartender, apartment cleaner, construction worker, and the like.

Norma spoke her mind, and the abortion movement's leadership kept as wide a hedge around her as possible. Norma wasn't asked to address the huge 1989 march in Washington, nor was she even invited to the 1993 twentieth anniversary celebration of *Roe v. Wade*.

Such a blatant snub had understandable roots. She frequently caught abortion clinic directors off guard by openly questioning the morality of some (particularly late-term) abortions. And she had experienced a raucous falling out with her attorney, Sarah Weddington, whom Norma believed had "dumped" her.

The falling out with Weddington hurt Norma the most. Explains Norma, "I was chosen [to sign the affidavit] because Sarah Weddington needed someone who would sign the paper and fade into the background, never coming out and always keeping silent. Ideally, in their minds, I would have just stayed quiet, gotten on with my life, and quietly suffered, eventually committing suicide. I would have been much more useful to them, not to mention famous, if I had died young. As long as I was alive, I was a danger. I might speak out. I could be unpredictable. And I was."

As Norma's friendship with Benham drew national attention, Norma started receiving even more ridicule from her abortion advocate "friends." She soon found herself in the uncomfortable situation of being increasingly alienated from those on her side of the issue and befriended by her alleged enemies. Before long, Norma started coming to work simply so she could talk to the rescuers. She was scheduled to work just two days a week, but, she says, "I couldn't wait that long to get one of Emily's hugs."

Norma felt torn apart by the fact that four days a week she and Ronda—not to mention the other rescue volunteers—were best friends, while on the other three days—when abortions were actually performed—they were bitter enemies.

During one abortion-day confrontation, Norma charged up to Anne Hollacher, an OR volunteer who was holding a picket sign, and yelled, "You can't park on the same place you're picketing. Move the car!"

"No, I'm not moving my car," Anne responded. "This is our parking lot, too."

Norma called Anne every name she could think of, which was usually enough to make the toughest protesters wilt, but Anne maintained her composure. When Norma saw that Anne wouldn't budge, she spit in her face.

Anne smiled.

Norma was furious. "How dare you look at me like that?" she screamed. "How dare you smile at me?"

Anne politely wiped the spit off her face with her sleeve. "Jesus loves you, and so do I," she said. "And I forgive you."

It would have taken several clinic workers to pull Norma away from Anne except that Norma suddenly experienced severe chest pains and had to remove herself from the scene to catch her breath.

Five minutes later, Ronda and the girls showed up, the girls eager to give Norma a hug, and Norma was overwhelmed by such a generous display of love after she had nursed so bitter a hatred.

The confusion inside Norma became intense. She couldn't stand the thought of losing Ronda's friendship, and she wasn't about to let Emily be taken out of her life. But how long could they maintain a friendship when abortion stood between them?

THE LITTLE EVANGELIST

"Miss Norma," Emily cooed one afternoon, "it would be so-o-o cool if you would come to church with us."

Norma didn't want to disappoint Emily directly, so she answered, "Well, Emily, we'll have to be cool another time. I can't go to church with you this weekend."

If Norma didn't want to offend Emily by an abrupt denial, she needn't have worried. Not about to give up, Emily kept asking Norma to come with her to church.

Finally, Norma said yes—not out of a sudden need for God in her life, but because she was tired of telling Emily no.

Ronda was skeptical, but when they went to pick up Norma, she was dressed and ready to go. One sermon was all Norma needed. Pastor Morris Sheats of Hillcrest Church ended his sermon with a compelling evangelistic call, asking, "Is anyone here tired of living a sinner's life?" and immediately Norma felt overwhelmed by her need to respond.

"How could I say no?" Norma recalls. "I had been tired of it for years, but it was the only life I knew!" Norma cautiously

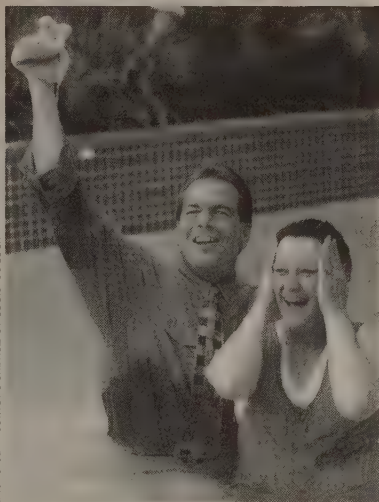


PHOTO OF MCCORVEY'S BAPTISM BY LOUIS DE LUCA

**"I no longer felt the pressure
of my sin pushing down
on my shoulders,"
Norma remembers.**

raised her hand, then opened her eyes "and looked up to see if that really was my hand raised up high. It was. I couldn't believe it."

Ronda recalls Norma repeating over and over, "I just want to undo all the evil I've done in this world. I'm so sorry, God. I'm so, so sorry. As far as abortion is concerned, I just want to undo it. I want it all to just go away."

Finally, Norma stopped crying and broke into the biggest smile of her life. "I no longer felt the pressure of my sin pushing down on my shoulders," she remembers. "The release was so quick that I felt like I could almost float outside."

When Norma's conversion became public knowledge, she spoke openly to reporters about still supporting legalized pregnancy termination in the first trimester. The media were quick to use this to downplay the seriousness of Norma's conversion, saying she typified the "general ambivalence" of our culture over abortion.

But a few weeks after her conversion, Norma was sitting in OR's offices when she noticed a fetal development poster. Explains Norma, "The progression was so obvious, the eyes were so sweet. . . . It hurt my heart, just looking at them."

Norma ran outside. "Finally, it dawned

on me. 'Norma,' I said to myself, 'They're right.' I had worked with pregnant women for years. I had been through three pregnancies and deliveries myself. I should have known. Yet something in that poster made me lose my breath. I kept seeing the picture of that tiny, ten-week-old embryo, and I said to myself, 'That's a baby!' It's as if blinders just fell off my eyes and I suddenly understood the truth—that's a baby!"

Norma felt "crushed" under the truth of this realization. "I had to face up to the awful reality. Abortion wasn't about 'products of conception.' It wasn't about 'missed periods.' It was about children being killed in their mother's wombs. All those years, I was wrong."

A NEW LIFE

Two years after her conversion, Norma left Operation Rescue. After a grueling 11-day encounter in San Diego in 1996, she began having serious reservations about whether she was "cut out" for the intense confrontations that often

face rescue volunteers. She also had a difficult time operating under Benham's leadership, eventually believing that they made better friends than co-workers. Because of her loyalty and affection for the people involved in rescue, however, it took her until the early summer of 1997 to complete the break.

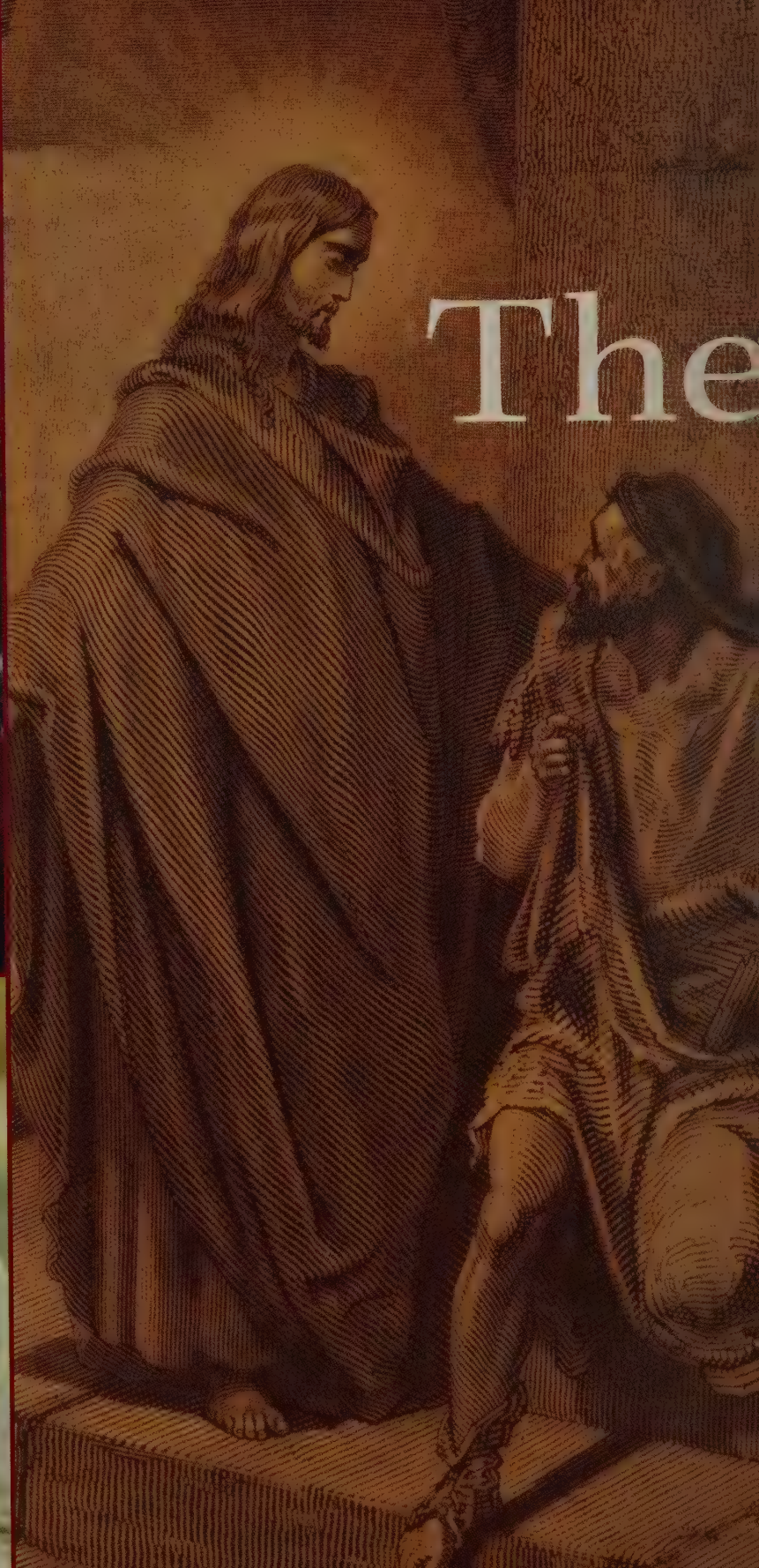
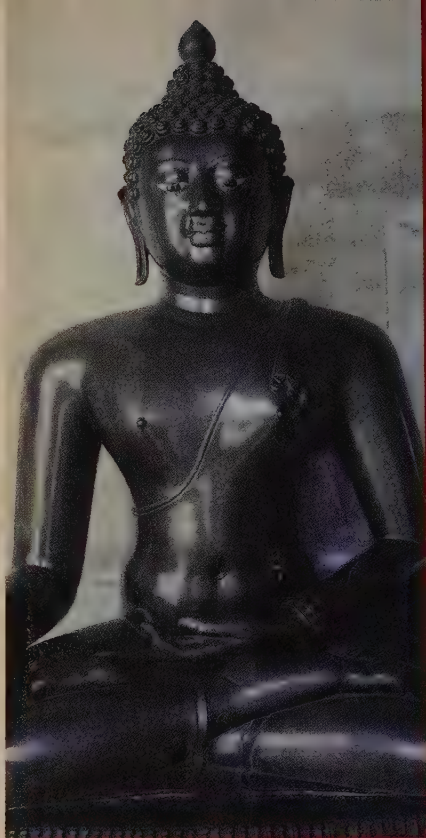
Ronda Mackey has joined Norma in leaving OR, and the two women have set up a ministry to handle Norma's increasing invitations to speak and appear at pro-life events. Instead of being under the OR umbrella, Norma now reports regularly to the pastors at Hillcrest Church.

Norma's conversion is one for the ages. The timing was precise—OR was next door to Norma's clinic for less than a year, but it wasn't until Norma had a regenerated heart that the truth of what abortion does could find a place in her intellect. Once that truth took hold, there was no turning back.

"I'm one hundred percent sold out to Jesus and one hundred percent pro-life," she likes to say. "No exceptions. No compromise."

CT

Gary Thomas is a coauthor with Norma McCorvey of Won by Love, the story of Norma's conversion, published this month by Thomas Nelson Publishers.



Only Way

Answering the argument that all religions are more or less true.

DANIEL B. CLENDENIN

Will my mother be in heaven?" ten-year-old Lexi asked her adoptive parents. Lexi wanted to know whether her birth mother, who was from India and had died without ever having heard the gospel, would be saved. Lexi had an obvious personal reason for asking this question, but it is one that most Christians encounter at some point: Can anyone be saved who has not heard and accepted the gospel?

Recently I attended a meeting at my son's middle school where parents were introduced to sex-education materials for our children. There are students in this school from over 30 countries, composing a mosaic of the world's religions. It occurred to me that most of those people from other religions who sat beside me that night maintain high sexual standards that are far closer to my own views than are those of the "average" secular American. I felt strangely positive about and even grateful for the presence of believers of other faiths in my community.

These two encounters with other religions pose two different challenges—one theological, the other political. Lexi's question poses the issue of theological pluralism and is religious in nature: Is there truth in other religions? Can an adherent of a non-Christian religion be saved? Lexi's question is foreboding, for the very heart of the gospel is at stake in how we answer.

The other challenge of world religions is cultural pluralism, and the issues raised are political: How can people of widely

divergent faiths live peacefully together in society? My sex-education experience filled me with gratitude about the presence of non-Christian, religious allies on a crucial moral issue.

How do we sort out these questions?

MANY GODS, MANY LORDS

A smorgasbord of religions is not new. It is precisely what we find in Scripture. The radical monotheism of Israel (Deut. 4:35) developed amidst Egyptian polytheism. Who could forget Elijah's fiery encounter on Mount Carmel with Jezebel's prophets of Baal and Asherah to determine the one true God (1 Kings 18:17–40)?

In the New Testament era, Paul proclaimed that Christ alone provided the only true gospel (Gal. 1:6–9); he alone was the only worthy Lord among the "many 'gods' and many 'lords'" (1 Cor. 8:5, NIV) of Greek and Roman polytheism. At Ephesus, home to the cult of the goddess Diana, Paul provoked a riot when he declared that "'gods made with human hands are not gods'" (Acts 19:23–26, NRSV).

Yet, while the idea of a cornucopia of human religiosity is very old, our awareness of its challenge to Christian faith is rather new. We are in a fundamentally different religious environment from what our grandparents or even our parents encountered. We can no longer think and speak in terms confined to Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish categories. The world we live in has changed.



One reason is immigration. In 1994 there were about 22.5 million foreign-born people in America. In my home state of California, for example, one-quarter of our residents are foreign-born. My son's middle-school teacher had 11 nationalities in a class of 30 students. While America has always been a nation of immigrants, what is new is where today's immigrants come from. More and more they come from culturally non-Christian nations, and they bring with them the religions of the world. Our nation is becoming less and less a religiously homogeneous country. Islam will replace Judaism as America's second-largest religion in about 20 years; already 3 to 5 million Buddhists live in America; and Hindu temples dot the landscapes not only of Chicago and New York, but also of Aurora, Illinois, and Springfield, Virginia.

Living in religious isolation is almost impossible. Most people can name colleagues they work with every day who are of other religions. Through this interaction we discover that people of other faiths are very much like us. They laugh at weddings and cry at funerals, are as moral as we are, and carry the same hopes, fears, and dreams as we do.

The evangelistic efforts of some world religions have also heightened their visibility. Who has not been approached by a Hare Krishna devotee passing out literature in an airport? At a Stanford University meeting of campus ministers, we were asked to identify our intended audience and scope of activity—to which a Muslim campus minister responded with a bashful chuckle, "the entire world."

Over the last hundred years, many departments of theology and philosophy have encouraged nonjudgmental attitudes toward other religions, precluding the judgment that one faith is superior to another. Some people now insist that "right action" (ethics) is the criterion of "true religion," whereas "right doctrine" (orthodoxy) is divisive. And so adherents of other religions are viewed as potential partners in actions of ethical goodwill rather than as lost people who need to be saved.

Radical relativity has invaded our cultural consciousness. Any absolute claim is disdained as idolatrous, illusory, and bigoted. Choice in and of itself is deemed good, and the only choice that cannot be tolerated is one like ours: namely, that some beliefs are true and good while others are false and wrong.

Pressure to rethink the relationship between Christianity and the world religions poses some very painful questions. A main one is the suspicion that one's religious identity is really an accident of geography, so that people of Kuwait are primarily Muslim, those in Japan Shinto, people in India Hindu, and so on. Are we not Christians simply because we were born and raised in America where, until recently, the Christian faith has dominated?

The vast majority of people who have ever lived and are living

today are not Christian. Does it make sense, therefore, to believe that God wants to save people only through Christ? Exact figures are hard to come by, but even rough estimates are disturbing. In A.D. 100, about a half percent of the world population was Christian, in A.D. 1000 about 19 percent, and today—after 2,000 years of missionary effort—only about 30 percent of the world identifies itself as Christian. What can we say about the eternal destiny of this vast horde who never named the name of Christ?

Taken together, these factors help to explain our new awareness of a very old challenge: The vast diversity of world religions pose competing claims and offer "gospels" other than that of Christ alone as Savior and Lord.



DAVE BARTRUFF

Only about 30 percent of the world is Christian. What can we

BEDROCK TRUTHS

With this pluralistic, religious context in mind, we can begin to craft a Christian response to the world religions by reminding ourselves of five important truths. However we respond to Lexi's question and my public school experience, we must hold fast to these clear truths of Scripture:

First, all God's work is perfect, void of even the faintest tinge of unfairness (Deut. 32:4; Zeph. 3:5). Christians can be absolutely confident about the character of God when we deal with the problem of religions. While denying that all religions are equally valid or that all people will be saved, we remain utterly confident that God will treat every person with perfect love and justice. Elihu stated this most eloquently: "Far be it from God to do evil, from the Almighty to do wrong" (Job 34:10, NIV). For the Christian, it is unthinkable that God will treat any person of any time, place, or religion unfairly. So to Abraham's ancient question, "Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Gen. 18:25, NIV), Christians respond with a resounding yes!

Second, Jesus Christ is the definitive and fullest revelation of God. All three major branches of Christianity—Orthodox, Catholic, and Protestant—affirm, in the words of the Nicene-Constan-

tinopolitan Creed (A.D. 374), that Jesus Christ was “the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all ages, Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten not made, of one substance with the Father, through whom all things were made.” Our doctrine of natural or general revelation allows us to affirm that God has partially revealed himself in creation, in conscience—and perhaps even in some non-Christian religions. Yet, God has fully and most definitively revealed himself in Christ, who alone will judge all other claims of revelation.

Third, there is no other means to salvation apart from what God provided through Christ’s vicarious and sacrificial death on the cross. As evangelicals we remain committed to the necessary and all-sufficient atoning work of Christ on the cross. This is unquestioned. What is debated among some Christians, including evangelicals, is whether Christ’s atoning work of salvation can be efficacious for people who have not known and accepted this provision of salvation, such as people who lived before Christ, infants who die, mentally challenged people who do not have the intellectual capacity to understand the gospel, and people who have no opportunity to hear the gospel. More on this later.

Fourth, whereas God is infinite and beyond comprehension, we humans are finite and sinful, often far too quick, theologically speaking, to speak of things we don’t understand (Job 42:3). We need to cultivate a measure of theological humility. Humility is not skepticism, agnosticism, or even the refusal to argue for a bold position. Rather, it is the recognition that “as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts” (Isa. 55:9, NIV). Paul was reduced to doxological humility when he marveled at “how unsearchable are his judgments and inscrutable his ways!” (Rom. 11:33, NRSV). It is natural and even good to long for definitive answers to life’s most difficult questions, but some of

character of God, the fullness of God’s self-revelation in Christ, the sufficiency of Christ’s atonement for humanity’s sin, and theological humility about what we do not or cannot know, we add the criterion of practical obedience to what we do know—the evangelistic imperative.

How should Christians respond to the world religions? These five affirmations should help us steer a path between saying too much, which could lead to a needlessly harsh position that drives people into radically pluralistic viewpoints, and saying too little, which could lead to denying the uniqueness and normativeness of the gospel.

THE PLURALITIES OF PLURALISM

The term *pluralism* can function in a variety of ways, and it is important to keep them straight. At one level, *pluralism* can describe simple demographic facts, the way things are. In this sense, Stanford University is “pluralistic” since there are 24 religious groups on campus that work under the auspices of the university’s Memorial Church. Or again, Singapore is “pluralistic” since it is roughly 41 percent Buddhist, 18 percent Christian, 17 percent Muslim, 17 percent secularist, and 5 percent Hindu. It is a demographic fact that the United States, once a religiously homogeneous country, is rapidly becoming more “pluralistic.” This is simply the way things are.

There are two other meanings of *pluralism* that have to do with world-views. One of these is theological pluralism, the belief that all religions are more or less able to provide salvation. This is theologically destructive and needs to be refuted.

The other is the belief that political or cultural pluralism (social diversity) is an ideal. I considered my school experience of cultural pluralism as socially positive, good, and to be promoted.

Learning to distinguish between theological and cultural plu-

ut the eternal destiny of this vast horde who never named the name of Christ?

our questions will go unanswered—at least in this life.

Even our reading of Scripture gives us cause for theological humility. Evangelicals rightly insist that Scripture is God’s normative self-revelation, but this does not mean that it answers every question we have. The Westminster Confession (1.7) observes that not all things in Scripture are equally clear, nor equally clear to all believers. But through the “due use of ordinary means” (study, prayer, the counsel of others, etc.) we can attain a sufficient if not perfect understanding of all that is necessary for salvation. Although it is sometimes frustrating, we need to remind ourselves that while the Scriptures are infallible, our understanding of them is not, and that a high view of inspiration does not automatically lead to accurate interpretation. Hence, there is reason enough for theological modesty, especially about a matter as nettlesome as the relationship between Christianity and the world religions.

Fifth and finally, we remain under the mandate of the Great Commission to make disciples among every people and nation. Christ himself issued this command four different times (Matt. 28:19–20; Luke 24:45–48; John 20:21; Acts 1:8). Evangelicals must guard against any loss of nerve in proclaiming unapologetically the truth of the gospel. Thus, to confidence about the

ralism is essential to developing a Christian view of other religions. All too often we merge and confuse the two. An excellent example of this comes from the Hindu Swami Vivekananda (1863–1902), a prominent participant at the 1893 World’s Parliament of Religions, who proclaimed that he was “proud to belong to a religion that has taught the world both tolerance and universal acceptance. We believe not only in universal toleration, but we accept all religions to be true.” Promoting political toleration and universal suffrage for people of any and all religion is one thing, even a good thing; but believing that all religions are true and lead equally to salvation is quite another matter.

Now we are ready to return to Lexi’s question. To answer her we need to hold two biblical principles together: one, God desires that no one should perish, but rather that every person be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9); and two, Christ alone is the only way to the Father, the only name under heaven by which we can be saved (John 14:6; Acts 4:12).

So are all people not of the Christian faith eternally lost? Here we seem betwixt and between. To answer yes, when roughly 70 percent of today’s world population is non-Christian, seems to cast a dark shadow of doubt over the first truth.

To answer no apparently contradicts the equally clear truth of the second point and cuts the nerve of the missionary imperative to make disciples of all nations (Matt. 28:19–20).

Three centuries ago John Bunyan (1628–88) admitted in his classic autobiography, *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*, that the Devil assailed him with questions like these:

How can you tell but that the Turks had as good Scriptures to prove their Mahomet the Saviour, as we have to prove our Jesus is; and could I think that so many ten thousands in so many Countreys and Kingdoms, should be without the knowledge of the right way to Heaven . . . and that we onely, who live but in a corner of the earth, should alone be blessed therewith? Everyone doth think his own Religion rightest, both Jews, and Moors, and Pagans; and how if all our Faith, and Christ, and Scriptures, should be but a think-so too?

Bunyan's language may sound quaint, and Lexi's question to her parents full of childlike innocence, but the force of their perplexities hits us like a karate chop to the back of our theological necks. How should evangelicals who believe that Christ alone is the only way to God respond to the wildly divergent truth claims of the world religions?

In general, Christians have adopted one of three basic paradigms to answer this question, which I will call pluralism, exclusivism, and inclusivism.

THEOLOGICAL PLURALISM

For two hundred years, Christians have defended their worldview against the attacks of atheism that argued all religions are false. How ironic that we now face the opposite extreme, a theological pluralism that claims all religions are true. Theological pluralism is not entirely new, nor is it a single position, although it has been vigorously championed in the last decade by a growing number of prominent scholars. The pluralist agenda has been set by Paul Knitter's landmark volume *No Other Name?* (1985) and a

quoting the *Bhagavad Gita* (4.11): "Howsoever men may approach me, even so do I accept them; for, on all sides, whatever path they may choose is mine." In other words, the one Divine Reality has many different names.

According to the theological pluralists, people may be savingly related to God through any number of vastly different religions because God is actively revealed more or less equally through all of them. Behind all the wildly divergent human religions, there is some basic, shared core, a universal essence or common denominator that allows us to say that they are all really the same or aiming at the same goal.

Despite the current prestige of theological pluralism, and even its apparent appeal—who would not want to affirm that all religions are equal?—this paradigm contains significant flaws.

First, we have all heard the cliché that "all religions teach the same thing." Is that true? At a superficial level we might answer yes. It would be easy, for example, to document versions of the Golden Rule in a number of otherwise very different religions. But at a deeper level, a universal essence or common denominator is precisely what the world religions do not have. Once we move beyond superficial similarities, we discover that the many religions of the world present to us very different and sometimes contradictory pictures of God and the world.

In his excellent book *Dissonant Voices*, evangelical philosopher Harold Netland compares the way Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, and Shinto answer three basic questions: the nature of the religious ultimate, the human predicament, and salvation. What we discover, of course, is that these religions offer radically different perspectives on these basic questions. For example, Islam, like Christianity and Judaism, confesses one creator God as ultimate, whereas a number of different concepts within Buddhism make it hard to locate a single idea for the ultimate. Or again, Shinto is polytheistic whereas Christianity, Islam, and Judaism are monotheistic. To take one more example, in Hinduism and Buddhism the fundamental human problem is not sin against a righteous God, but "rather a profound ignorance, blindness, or confusion

We need to hold two biblical principles together: one, God desires that every person

book edited by Knitter and philosopher of religion John Hick entitled *The Myth of Christian Uniqueness* (1988). Their goal was a radical reconception of traditional Christian beliefs, and in this they more than succeeded.

Despite important differences among its various advocates, theological pluralism entails both a positive and a negative judgment. Negatively, pluralists categorically repudiate the traditional Christian position that Christ is the only way to the Father; they view this as outrageously absurd, chauvinistic, and as morally, politically, and theologically disastrous. According to Hick, "only diehards who are blinded by dogmatic spectacles can persist in such a sublime bigotry." Thus, pluralists sharply reject the idea that any one religion is absolute or normative.

Positively, whereas atheism declares that all religion is false, the pluralist affirms them all as true. The many world religions are all limited but valid human apprehensions of the one, true, infinite Divine Reality. Hick often summarizes his position by

regarding the true nature of reality." With differing conceptions of the human predicament, then, the world religions propose differing concepts of "salvation."

Furthermore, to insist that the world religions all make essentially similar claims distorts what they actually do teach and is blatantly patronizing. Imagine how a Muslim or Hindu feels when she is told that the central affirmations of her religion are no different from those of a Christian or Buddhist. As Netland writes, "So long as the meanings of the doctrines within the respective religious communities are preserved, they cannot be jointly accepted without absurdity."

Second, according to the religious pluralists, god or the "Ultimate Real" is in itself unknown and unknowable. All that we do know are the very human and relative religious expressions of this Real, which are accepted as equally valid. Says Hick, the Real remains "forever hidden, beyond the scope of human conception, language, or worship." The world religions then speak symboli-

cally and mythically about the Real, but not literally. But if this is so, why are the pluralists so confident about their own pronouncements about religion? By their own standard, these too are merely relative descriptions of the Unknowable, but in fact, they propose to inform us about the way things “really” are. If the Real is unknown and unknowable, why argue that all the religions are more or less true? Why not argue that they are all false? Or again, why does the pluralist argue that there is only one Ultimate Real? Why not many? In short, in theological pluralism the Real has become an empty referent that has no clearly

Teresa’s Sisters of Mercy are any better than the Heaven’s Gate cult; or that David Koresh’s compound at Waco, Texas, was any worse than an Amish community. Simply put, consistent pluralism tolerates the intolerable.

THEOLOGICAL EXCLUSIVISM AND INCLUSIVISM

Evangelicals rightly reject the theological pluralism of Knitter, Hick, and others, while continuing to explore the adequacy of two other theological models of relating to the world religions: exclusivism and inclusivism. Both have their strengths and weaknesses, and both have their advocates within evangelicalism.

Exclusivism has been the historic position of much of the church, and for that reason alone it merits our deepest respect. In its simplest form, exclusivism is a logical claim: When two religions make logically incompatible truth claims, they cannot both be true. For example, some Eastern religions hold that life and death are an endless, recurring cycle, whereas Christians believe that after death comes judgment. To be sure, when we die, one of these views will be proved false. Thus we see how silly it is to claim that “all religions are equally true.”

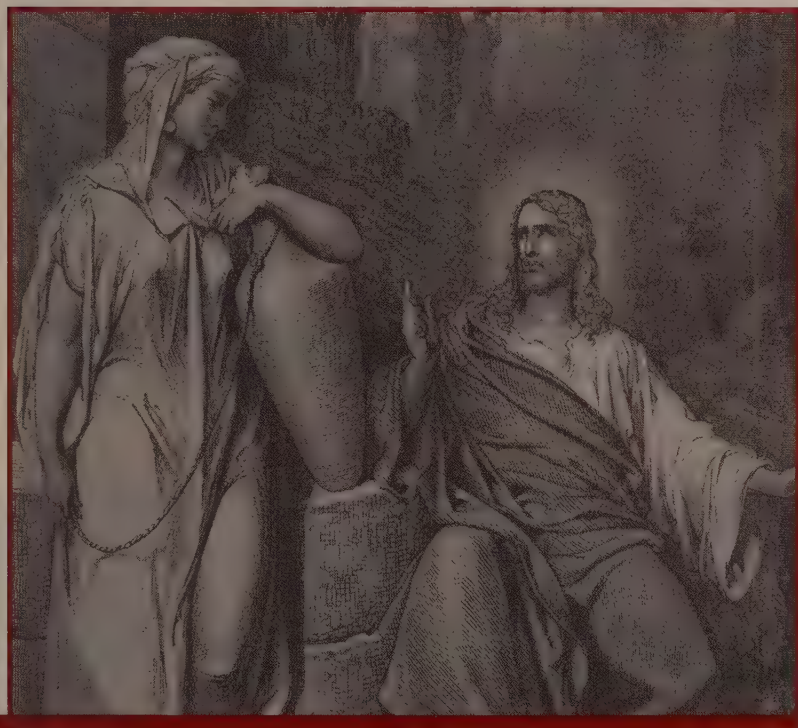
More important, exclusivism is a theological claim that, in order to be saved, people must intentionally place their faith in Christ alone as the only way to God. Indeed, if Jesus is truly God incarnate, then some form of exclusivism is necessary. Christian exclusivism need not claim that all the beliefs of other religions are false or have no value. We can affirm that non-Christian religions contain some truth. Non-Christian beliefs are rejected only when they contradict clear Christian teaching. Exclusivism finds expression in the classic statements of Origen (c. 185–254) and Cyprian (c. 200–58) that “outside the church there is no salvation.”

In its purest form, an exclusivist would

argue that there are no exceptions to the rule that salvation requires an explicit acceptance of Christ’s redemptive work through faith. Evangelicals who tend toward a “hard” exclusivist position include Harold Netland (*Dissonant Voices*) and D. A. Carson (*The Gagging of God*).

Many Christians, including some exclusivists, want to make at least some exceptions. It seems likely that some people have been saved exclusively by Christ even though they have not explicitly called upon Christ—for instance, Old Testament saints, infants who die young, and the severely mentally challenged. By analogy, some would add a fourth category of possible exceptions, some people of other religions. This is the inclusivist position.

C. S. Lewis illustrates inclusivism in *Mere Christianity* when he writes, “We do know that no person can be saved except through Christ; we do not know that only those who know Him can be saved by Him.” In his final Narnia classic, *The Last Battle*, despite having followed the false god Tash, the pagan Emeth (whose name



GUSTAVE DORÉ

saved; and two, Christ alone is the only way to be saved.

assignable content, and it is self-contradictory to claim that its own religious world-view is not a contradiction.

Finally, while with atheism it is impossible for a religionist to be right, with theological pluralism it is apparently impossible to be wrong. If the pluralist is correct that all the religions are more or less equally true, then it is impossible to make a mistake, either morally or cognitively. But do we really want to say this? What about the Christian Crusades, Hindu widow burning, female genital mutilation, temple prostitution, or Aztec human sacrifice? Are these religious expressions really as valid as Islamic almsgiving or Buddhist self-denial? Do we not want to distinguish between a religion whose symbol is a stone phallus and a religion whose symbol is a cross?

It seems clear that some religious practices and beliefs are false and evil. But this is precisely what the pluralist cannot say and remain consistent. Without some absolute standard by which to judge, it becomes impossible to say that Mother

is the Hebrew word for "truth") is welcomed into the kingdom of Aslan. So in inclusivism, salvation is exclusively by Christ alone and not good works, even though a person has not explicitly called upon Christ. Evangelical inclusivists today include Clark Pinnock (*A Wideness in God's Mercy*) and John Sanders (*No Other Name*).

Certainly caution is in order here. We must not assume that God has put us in a position to answer questions beyond the scope of our own personal sphere of obedient responsibility: that is, the fate of those who through no fault of their own do not hear the gospel or because we Christians through no fault of our own were unable to take it to them. J. I. Packer says that "we have no warrant to expect that God will act thus in any single case where the gospel is not known or understood. Therefore our missionary obligation is not one whit diminished by our entertaining this possibility." We do better to redouble our efforts to obey what we do know is clear—the Great Commission—rather than to speculate or worry about what is unclear.

THE CHARGE OF INTOLERANCE—NOT GUILTY

Oddly enough, the theological affirmation that Christ alone is the only way to salvation brings us to the question of cultural pluralism, which was illustrated by my sex-education experience. There is a clear link between the two. Theological pluralists like Hick and Knitter accuse traditional Christians of bigotry and arrogance when we proclaim the exclusivist gospel in the public square. They maintain it is wrong to proselytize and to try to convert people of other religions to Christianity. How should Christians respond to charges of intolerance toward other religions?

One way to address these concerns, as Netland has shown, is to distinguish between several related but different types of *toleration*. First, there is *legal* toleration, a tradition championed in the West and painfully absent in many other parts of the world. Legal toleration refers to what we call our First Amendment rights—freedom of speech and press, freedom of and even from religion without compulsion or government interference, protection of minority opinion and dissent, and so on. *Social* toleration refers to the promotion of attitudes of respect, esteem, humility, modesty, and the like. Christians should always be in the forefront of promoting and protecting both legal and social toleration for all people, regardless of their religious beliefs. This is simply a human right that we all cherish.

Another level of toleration is *intellectual*, which is the relativist belief that we should accept whatever another person sincerely believes as "true for them." Legal toleration commits us always to protect people's political rights to follow any religion or no religion at all; and social toleration advocates charity toward people who think and believe differently from the way we do; but this does not necessarily commit us to intellectual toleration if that means we should never conclude that a person holds to false ideas and, consequently, try to convince them that they are wrong and should change their views. Vigorous debate can occur in a civil and charitable manner.

The current cultural climate often fails to distinguish legal and social toleration from intellectual toleration so that if you criticize a person's ideas you are charged with bigotry and intolerance toward that person. Proselytizing becomes the worst social sin imaginable. Because of this current climate, evangelicals need to give renewed vigor and attention to promoting cultural pluralism, which encourages the legal and social toleration of a multiplicity of religious voices while vigorously rejecting theological plural-

ism, which practices intellectual toleration in its claim that salvation is equally accessible through all religions. In other words, we can love those we disagree with (by practicing legal and social toleration) while trying to convince them that they are wrong.

So are we being hypocritical by wanting to protect and promote the rights of people of other faiths while, at the same time, declaring them to be wrong and in need of conversion? No. There are at least three reasons for such a stance.

First is the recognition that legal toleration is just that, the law of the land, and for this we should be thankful. The alternative is some form of totalitarianism. In this sense, all American citizens should enjoy an equal protection of First Amendment rights. Christians should not expect any privileged status. For example, legally mandating a specifically Christian prayer in public schools is not a good idea, whereas supporting the right of an atheist against religious repression is a good idea.

Second, as my sex-education experience indicated, even when we disagree with people theologically, there are often practical reasons to join with them in a moral alliance to resist evil trends in culture.

Third, a Christian anthropology affirms that God has given all people rational minds and free wills that even God honors. Practically speaking, as John Stuart Mill noted in his classic text *On Liberty* (1859), it is virtually impossible to use any sort of outward force to compel inward conviction. In fact, using compulsion often backfires. Rather, with Paul, we seek to woo people, with all of our passion and persuasion, but never by manipulation or force.

WHY WE WITNESS

Christians should champion political or cultural pluralism but categorically reject theological pluralism in favor of the exclusive work of Christ. Thus, to the other parents of children in my son's seventh grade, I extend grateful partnership for our shared moral concerns, a promise always to honor them with the civil grace that we all cherish, but also the promise of a vigorous discussion about the most important question anyone can ever ask—what must I do to be saved? (Acts 16:30).

To Lexi's question about whether her birth mother would be in heaven, I'd respond with an honest "It's possible" or better, "I don't know." But why then witness to her mother if she might be saved by Christ without calling upon Christ? As Packer suggests, it is impossible for us to know how God is dealing with any given individual who does not know or understand the gospel. The ordinary way of salvation entails an explicit act of faith in Christ, and any exceptions to this are best understood as extraordinary. To be saved, as it were, "by the skin of your teeth" is one thing; but to experience "abundant life" in Christ (John 10:10) in all its fullness requires an explicit knowledge and experience of the gospel in all its depth and breadth. The latter is the better and more sure way to heaven and the one we attach our labors to.

Finally, we witness because we must exercise practical obedience to what God has clearly commanded, even if we do not understand everything. Rather than some flimsy excuse that results in evangelistic timidity, here our theological humility results in a doxological response to God whose ways are sometimes unsearchable (Rom. 11:33–36) but in whom we can certainly trust. 

Daniel B. Clendenin is a graduate staff member for InterVarsity at Stanford University and author of *Many Gods, Many Lords: Christianity Encounters World Religions* (Baker, 1995).

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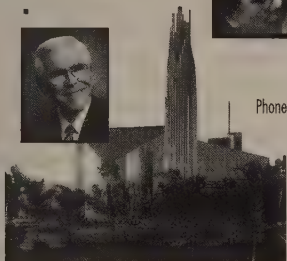
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A Different Kind of Guru

Christian intellectual Vishal Mangalwadi explains why India's experiment in democracy has failed.

He is not yet a household name among evangelical Christians worldwide, but he could well become one. At 48, Vishal Mangalwadi is India's foremost Christian intellectual. The author of seven books, including *Truth and Social Reform* and *Missionary Conspiracy: Letters to a Post-Modern Hindu*, Mangalwadi is also an inveterate evangelist and political activist in his home province of Uttar Pradesh in India's north. He has been held briefly in prison several times for his evangelism and social activism among India's rural poor. Educated at Allahabad University and Indore University, Mangalwadi served in the national headquarters of India's ruling Janata Dal party, overseeing agricultural reform.

It was through reading Francis Schaeffer's book *Escape from Reason* that he became a convinced Christian. He studied for a short time under Schaeffer in 1973, then continued investigating Hindu gurus and dissecting everything from UFOs to tantric sex for his masterly book *When the New Age Gets Old* (InterVarsity).

Mangalwadi's most recent work, *India: The Grand Experiment* (U.S. distributor, The MacLaurin Institute), coincides with India's ongoing celebrations of the fiftieth anniversary of its independence from Britain. In it, he provocatively maintains that India would never have been able to develop institutions and a self-understanding capable of sustaining independence without the social, political, educational, and judicial reforms forced upon the subcontinent by the British, particularly in the second half of the nineteenth century when the British evangelical revival had profoundly influenced attitudes in the British Parliament. (In a recent ironic salute to history, Mangalwadi lectured on E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India* in the author's alma mater of Eton College, where Princess Diana's son William is a student.)



Mangalwadi holds no hope for democracy without the gospel: "The idea of human rights is a peculiarly biblical concept."

Mangalwadi was interviewed for *CHRISTIANITY TODAY* by former Time magazine senior correspondent and the author of *Hope: The Heart's Great Quest* (Servant, 1995), David Aikman.

Despite all kinds of problems, India has somehow managed to keep its democracy functioning for half a century. Why are you so pessimistic about India's democratic future?

For all practical purposes, democracy (as an ideal) is finished. There is hardly anyone who would fight for democracy now. It continues because there is no consensus on what to replace it with. Essentially, the days in which we are living resemble the end of the Mogul era (1707–57) when the British Empire began in India. The human-rights violations in India are pretty terrible.

A Punjabi superintendent of police not long ago committed suicide because it was about to be revealed that he had actually killed up to 3,000 people.

But what about the popular image outside India of Gandhian nonviolence and India's democratic ways?

Gandhi in the movie is fictionalized. Even Mrs. [Indira] Gandhi, the prime minister who suspended democratic freedoms during 1975–77, said, "We wrote the constitution, and we can change everything in it." She and others considered knowable moral law as an absurd thing that liberal democracies believed in, not realizing that the system worked as well as it did in America because of the impact of the pulpit on the habits of ordinary people. Human rights may seem "natural," but Mrs. Gandhi said that human rights are what the state gives.

I see the idea of human rights and human dignity as being a peculiarly biblical concept. In Mussolini, Hitler, and Stalin, a Catholic Italy, a Lutheran Germany, an Orthodox Russia succumbed to totalitarianism because of liberal humanist ideas that man can create a utopia. Joseph Campbell [the late renowned scholar of comparative mythology] and Carl Jung were both shocked after they came to India. They realized that the natural law is not natural. The fact is there are consequences to teaching that human beings are nothing but animals. This "truth" destroys the entire basis of civilized political life.

How did you become a Christian?

My parents were both Christian, but it wasn't until my last year of college that I became convinced of Christianity. At

first, I didn't feel that I could believe the Bible as God's Word. The turning point was reading Schaeffer's *Escape from Reason*. By the time I had finished college, I knew that the philosophers knew that philosophy didn't know the truth and couldn't know the truth. Truth only comes through revelation. It seems a foolish idea, after all, that *we* can speak but that the Creator cannot say anything.

The two Books of Kings and Chronicles in the Bible really began to hit me—this was God's Word written from God's point of view. God was telling his people how their society was disintegrating. Here I was, an Indian reading Jewish history, but it made sense that God had promised that all the nations of the world would be blessed through the seed of Abraham. It was Jewish history written for *me* to bless *my* nation. I began to see that it was my only hope. Eventually I wrote to Doctor Schaeffer and asked to study under him, which I did for six months in Switzerland in 1973. He became a model to me of how someone can be a blessing to the whole world.

Why did you return to the countryside rather than, say, try to influence the next generation through teaching?

I wanted to understand how the gospel related to poverty and to understand how young people could serve the poor. I founded an association for cooperative rural assistance. This involved both church planting and socioeconomic development. When it became apparent that there was a real possibility that we might be developing a mass movement after we had baptized 100 converts, we had a number of conflicts with the local Hindu establishment. I was jailed for a few days four different times. Each time the press stood up for me, and the authorities had to let me go. I started writing *Truth and Social Reform* while in prison.

Your name is associated with the fight to stop the practice of widow burning. How did that happen?

In the 1980s, I talked to a German follower of the Hare Krishna movement who was glorifying *sati* [the traditional Hindu practice of burning widows alive after the deaths of their husbands; while officially outlawed under the British, it is still practiced]. I had never heard a man defend widow burning before. I then wrote a story for the Indian press about how half a million people in one Indian province were lionizing a widow for having submitted to *sati*. In this case, the out-

cry forced the prime minister to arrest the family members, but they were acquitted in 1997. I resigned from the Janata party on the issue of widow burning, which some party members approved of. I was then invited to join the party of the lower castes, Bahujan Samah Party (BSP) and organize its wing in our part of the country.

What was the beneficial impact on Indian economics after the British began their rule that you write about?

British evangelicals brought to India the intellectual, moral, legal, and technical resources needed for economic emancipation. Before the British came, we did not even have the concept of banking or usury in India. Indians buried their money under the floor. The moral and spiritual transformation that Christianity brought about created a situation where you could trust a bank with your money. But there has been a decline of trust in Indian society since.

What is the condition of Christianity in India today?

In some pockets we have a vital church which could become a real hope for India, though much of the institutionalized leadership doesn't have the credibility because of corruption. My one prayer is that we would see that same sort of phenomenon happening in India that we all see in South Korea. That is essentially what I am working for and praying for. Even my sitting down and talking to you threatens a number of Indian Christian leaders. When they come here they are raising money for their projects. But I don't have an empire, and I don't raise any money.

Do you have any hope for democracy in India?

Not without the gospel. The breakdown of liberal democracy and the new fascism of Hinduism is leading them toward a German-style "nationalism." We have religious sects importing plane-loads of arms for civil war [a reference to a plane-load of arms brought to India by a Hindu sect from Pakistan]. There is enough high-explosive material stored up in every Indian city to blow up all of India.

I am hoping that my book will reawaken people. India's future is as great as the promises of God. Ultimately, the hope comes from faith in a transcendent God. As you look around India and see the failure of the institutions, you can sink into despair, but as you look at God, then you have a basis for hope.



Christian Best Sellers!

CLOTHBOUND NONFICTION

- * (1) 1. *The Great House of God*, Max Lucado, Word
- (2) 2. *Streams in the Desert*, Updated Edition, L.B. Cowman & edited by James Reimann, Zondervan
- (7) 3. *Managing Your Emotions*, Joyce Meyer, Harrison House
- (4) 4. *Joy for the Journey*, J. Countryman/Word
- (5) 5. *Prayers That Avail Much*, commemorative gift edition, Word Ministries, Harrison House
- 6. *What's So Amazing About Grace*, Philip Yancey, Zondervan
- (3) 7. *Butterfly Kisses*, Bob Carlisle, J. Countryman/Word
- (6) 8. *The Weigh Down Diet*, Gwen Shamblyn, Doubleday
- (16) 9. *The New Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*, James Strong, Nelson
- (12) 10. *Moments Together for Couples*, Dennis & Barbara Rainey, Regal Books (Gospel Light)

PAPERBACK NONFICTION

- (2) 1. *Living Somewhere Between Estrogen and Death*, Barbara Johnson, Word
- (3) 2. *Apocalypse Code*, Hal Lindsey, Western Front Ltd.
- (4) 3. *The Final Quest*, Rick Joyner, Whitaker House
- (5) 4. *A Divine Revelation of Hell*, Mary Baxter, Whitaker House
- (16) 5. *Out of Control and Loving It*, Lisa Bevere, Creation House
- (7) 6. *Five Love Languages*, Gary Chapman, Moody
- (10) 7. *The Bondage Breaker*, Neil T. Anderson, Harvest House
- 8. *I Kissed Dating Goodbye*, Joshua Harris, Multnomah
- 9. *The Pursuit of God*, A.W. Tozer, Christian Publications
- 10. *Exposing Witchcraft in the Church*, Rick Godwin, Creation House

CLOTHBOUND FICTION

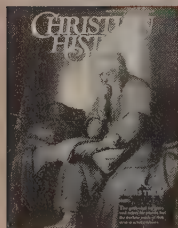
- (1) 1. *Nicolae*, Tim LaHaye & Jerry Jenkins, Tyndale
- (2) 2. *The Tender Years*, Janette Oke, Bethany House
- 3. *This Present Darkness/Piercing the Darkness*, Frank Peretti, Budget Book Service
- 4. *Only the River Runs Free*, Bodie & Brock Thoene, Nelson
- 5. *Solar Flare*, Larry Burkett, Northfield (Moody)

PAPERBACK FICTION

- (1) 1. *Left Behind*, Tim LaHaye & Jerry Jenkins, Tyndale
- (2) 2. *Tribulation Force*, Tim LaHaye & Jerry Jenkins, Tyndale
- (7) 3. *The Confession*, Beverly Lewis, Bethany House
- (4) 4. *The Shunning*, Beverly Lewis, Bethany House
- (3) 5. *Promise Me Tomorrow*, Lori Wick, Harvest House

* Indicates last month's positive.
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Billy Graham Had a Dream



American revivalist preachers have been evangelical Christianity's most visible spokesmen over the centuries. What does their record on race relations show? This article by Edward Gilbreath, excerpted from

CHRISTIANITY TODAY's sister publication CHRISTIAN HISTORY, paints a mixed but improving picture.

“Eleven o'clock Sunday morning is the most segregated hour in America,” declared civil-rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr., in a well-known line. What is not so well known is that the remark was first made by someone else in a 1950s *Reader's Digest* article on racism—Dr. King's friend, evangelist Billy Graham.

To better appreciate the uniqueness of Graham's concern for racial reconciliation, we need to set him in the historical context of a long line of nationally known American evangelists who faced the problem of racism. Their record is mixed.

Consider George Whitefield, the father of America's Great Awakening. In the 1740s, Whitefield won countless souls to Christ—both black and white. Early in his ministry, he questioned the morality of slaveholding. Yet later he approved buying slaves to help work in the fields of his Georgia orphanage. Whitefield justified the move in part because enslaving blacks, he reasoned, exposed them to Christianity.

Like Whitefield, many Christians were opposed to the oppression of blacks but believed the church's main function was to win souls, and secondarily, to perform acts of mercy—but certainly not to change social structures like slavery.

An exception was Charles Finney, who was both an influential evangelist and an outspoken abolitionist. In 1851 he was elected president of Ohio's Oberlin College, a leading stronghold of the antislavery movement. Eleven years later, through Finney's efforts, Oberlin student Mary Jane Patterson became the first African-American woman in the United States to

receive a bachelor's degree.

While the nineteenth century saw increased concern over social issues, not every Christian was convinced about the need to abolish slavery. The controversy divided America's largest denominations—Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian.

After the Civil War, southern Christians still balked at integration, as evangelist Dwight

L. Moody discovered. In 1876, during revival meetings in Georgia, the popular evangelist attracted both black and white audiences. The meetings were originally unsegregated. But soon whites began complaining, and those sponsoring the rally divided the seating according to race. From then on, whenever Moody preached in the South, he either addressed audiences that were segregated or held separate services for blacks and whites.

By the early 1900s, evangelist Billy Sunday had become America's pre-eminent preacher. Sunday, who began as a Bible teacher with the Chicago YMCA, had been sensitive to the plight of minorities since the start of his ministry. In the fall of 1917, during his Atlanta crusade, Sunday held special meetings for African Americans and visited several black churches. When it came to holding integrated meetings, however, Sunday drew the line. He knew that any national Christian leader who wanted to maintain his public image could not upset the social mores of the day.

Four decades later, evangelist Billy Graham found himself in a similar bind. Early on, Graham freely accepted the custom of segregated seating at his southern crusades. By 1952, however, the young preacher, now a national figure, began to speak out against racial prejudice in the church. “There is no scriptural basis for segregation,” Graham told a crusade audience in Jackson, Mississippi. “It may be there are places where such is desirable to both races, but certainly not in the church.” Graham's words were greeted with enthusiasm by blacks and a few

whites, but provoked criticism from many.

Though the statement was ahead of its time, Graham was still tentative. When pressed by his critics, he softened his views. “We follow the existing social customs in whatever part of the country in which we minister,” he said. “I came to Jackson to preach only the Bible and not to enter into local issues.” But he soon discovered that was no solution. He had to decide where he was going to stand publicly.

In 1953—three years before Martin Luther King hit the national scene and more than a decade before the 1964 Civil Rights Act—Graham stunned the sponsoring committee of his Chattanooga, Tennessee, crusade. At a meeting of the committee, Graham railed against the practice of segregated seating. And then before one of the crusade meetings, Graham personally took down the ropes separating the black and white sections.

In 1957, Graham integrated his ministry internally by adding his first black team member, Howard O. Jones, a young pastor from Cleveland. Soon Graham was working regularly with African-American churches where his crusades were held. That same year, at a black church in Brooklyn, Graham said publicly for the first time that antisegregation legislation might be necessary to bring an end to discrimination. Graham's actions stirred the wrath of many of his supporters who derogatorily labeled him an “integrationist” and a “nigger lover.”

The evangelist held a steady course, consistently speaking out against racial injustice and gradually adding more African Americans to his organization. “His preaching of reconciliation and his call to repentance,” said the late Samuel Hines, a nationally known black pastor, “have had a direct impact on the alienation and polarization which have afflicted our land.” For his part, Graham today simply says, “Of all people, Christians should be the most active in reaching out to those of other races.”

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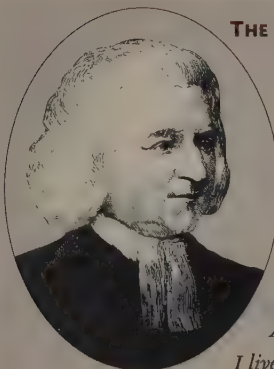
*O that I might the power receive
The simple life of faith to live,
A stranger by the world
unknown,*

*To live, shut up with
Christ alone!*

*Jesus, my real Life Thou art,
Inspire Thyself into my heart,
And fill'd with purity divine*

I live, thro' endless ages thine.

—Charles Wesley in *The Unpublished Poetry of Charles Wesley, Vol. II*



WHEN GOD GIVES EXAMS

The wonderful thing about God's schoolroom . . . is that we get to grade our own papers. You see, He doesn't test us so He can learn how well we're doing. He tests us so we can discover how well we're doing.

—Charles Swindoll in
God's Provision in
Time of Need

GIFT EXCHANGE

For one who has made thanksgiving the habit of his life, the morning prayer will be, "Lord, what will you give me today to offer back to you?"

—Elisabeth Elliot in
Love Has a Price Tag

A PRAYER

Lord, like the star, the Christian is the light that belongs to the Master, leading others to him, glad to be at his bidding. May this be true of me throughout the coming year.

—Alan Redpath in
The Life of Victory

cous in goodness. How harmful is the so-called Christian who harps on about his goodness. How little does he realise that the man who is furthest from God is the man who thanks God he is not like others.

—William Barclay in
Daily Celebration

PRIDE IS ITS OWN REWARD

A worldly spirit loves to talk a lot but do nothing, striving for the exterior signs of holiness that people can see, with no desire for true piety and interior holiness of spirit. It was about people like this that our Lord said, *Amen I say to you, they have received their reward* (Matthew 6:2).

—Saint Francis of
Assisi in *The Wisdom of Saint Francis*

THE POWER OF WORDS

Poets are caretakers of language, the shepherds of words, keep-

ing them from harm, exploitation, misuse. Words not only mean something; they are something, each with a sound and rhythm all its own. . . .

I also am in the word business. I preach, I teach, I counsel using words. People often pay particular attention on the chance that God may be using my words to speak to them. I have a responsibility to use words accurately and well. But it isn't easy. I live in a world where words are used carelessly by some, cunningly by others.

—Eugene H. Peterson in
Living the Message

THE HARDER PATH

Criticism is easy; achievement is more difficult.

—Winston Churchill in
Churchill on Courage

THE SECRET OF GOD'S LOVE

Why did God create a world? God created the world for something like the same rea-

son that we find it hard to keep a secret! Good things are hard to keep. The rose is good, and tells its secret in perfume. The sun is good, and tells its secret in light and heat. . . . But God is infinitely good, and therefore infinitely loving. Why therefore could not He by a free impulsion of His love let love overflow and bring new worlds into being? God could not keep, as it were, the secret of His love, and the telling of it was creation.

—Fulton J. Sheen in
From the Best
of the Angel's Blackboard

GOD'S THOUGHTS

Holy Spirit, think through me till your ideas are my ideas.

—Amy Carmichael in
The Doubleday
Prayer Collection

WHICH CHOICE?

There are two kinds of people: those who say to God, "Thy will be done," and those to whom God says, "All right, then, have it your way."

—C. S. Lewis in
The Great Divorce

HOLY

HANDKERCHIEFS

In his holy flirtation with the world, God occasionally drops a handkerchief. These handkerchiefs are called saints.

—Frederick Buechner in
Wishful Thinking

THE POWER OF CHRIST

"I can't get Jesus Christ out of my mind," he said. "If I dismiss him as a person he haunts me as an idea."

—Earl Palmer in
The 24-Hour Christian



"Apart from that, our candlelight vigil for the homeless was an unqualified success."

Why Evangelicals Have the Biggest Seminaries

And why they are in crisis.

THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES ON CHRISTIAN EDUCATION: A READER ON THEOLOGY AND CHRISTIAN EDUCATION, edited by Jeff Astley, Leslie J. Francis, and Colin Crowder (Eerdmans, 464 pp.; \$34, paper); **CHANGING THE WAY SEMINARIES TEACH: GLOBALIZATION AND THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION**, by David A. Roozen, Alice Frazer Evans, and Robert A. Evans (Hartford Seminary Center for Social and Religious Research/Plowshares Institute, 206 pp.; \$13, paper); **THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN THE EVANGELICAL TRADITION**, edited by D. G. Hart and R. Albert Mohler, Jr. (Baker Book House, 320 pp.; \$24.99, paper). Reviewed by Robert W. Patterson, a frequent contributor to *CHRISTIANITY TODAY*.

In his autobiography, Kenneth Taylor, the man who gave life to the Living Bible, recalls his first semester as a student at Dallas Theological Seminary in the fall of 1940. To his astonishment, his Greek professor could not remember all the letters of the Greek alphabet the first day of class, another professor simply read from the class textbook, and a third teacher hounded his students with outlines to memorize. This half-hearted approach to theological education, Taylor says, led several of his classmates to transfer to Princeton Theological Seminary at the end of the semester.

That was then. Today, Ken Taylor's classmates would have no educational reason to transfer to a mainline seminary. Dallas Seminary is the sixth-largest institution accredited by the Association of Theological Schools (ATS). Its standard curriculum for students preparing for the ordained ministry is in many respects the most rigorous of any seminary in the country, demanding four years of graduate study (not three years as most other

seminaries require), including three years of Greek, two years of Hebrew, and a senior thesis. Its well-kept, engaging four-block campus not far from downtown Dallas represents a model of educational facilities and resources.

Perhaps more than any other school, Dallas represents the metamorphosis of evangelical theological education since the early 1940s. No longer does anyone need to lament, as did Carl Henry in his autobiography, the "modernist takeover" of Protestant seminaries on the eve of World War II. According to the ATS, evangelicals in the 1990s lay claim to 63 divinity schools and theological seminaries in North America, enrolling more than 30,000 students. In fact, the six largest accredited schools, which account for 20 percent of seminary enrollment

nationwide, are Southern Baptist institutions or seminaries with northern evangelical roots (Fuller, Trinity, and Dallas).

Ironically, at the very moment evangelical theological education appears to have come of age, some influential parachurch and megachurch leaders are questioning the whole idea of formal theological education. The observation is made that if men who never spent a day in seminary can build successful ministries like Prison Fellowship, Focus on the Family, and Willow Creek Community Church, why have seminaries at all? In fact, a seminary degree will actually disqualify a candidate from a staff position at some megachurches.

From one angle, this bold questioning of theological education resembles the same concerns William Tennent and George Whitefield expressed about overly



JOHN OVERMYER

educated ministers during the Great Awakening of the eighteenth century. But seen in the context of modern evangelicalism, the growing antagonism toward divinity schools, even conservative ones, represents a sharp departure. Indeed, in the evangelical resurgence that began in the 1940s, the Presbyterian model of a "learned ministry" was advanced with great effectiveness by Harold John Ockenga and Carl Henry, an emphasis that helped balance the more democratic, lay-oriented character of evangelicalism with its dislike of formal structures and penchant for heart knowledge over head knowledge.

Three new books represent widely differing approaches to the role of theological education in the life of the church. From across the Atlantic comes *Theological Perspectives on Christian Education*, a collection of 29 previously published journal articles, many from a decidedly liberal viewpoint, woven together into one volume by two British ecclesiastical foundations. Issues facing theological education in the wider church are addressed in seven essays, but the focus of the book is Christian education, broadly defined. The volume caters to the mainline crowd, complete with sections exploring trendy approaches to Christian education, including postliberal, liberationist, and feminist. While a few essays are commendable, and while some insights are tucked away in the book here and there, the volume as a whole is disappointing. It will most likely serve as a reference tool, perhaps gathering dust in some library, providing a perfect illustration as to why Alister McGrath found spiritual emptiness in the religious Left of the Church of England.

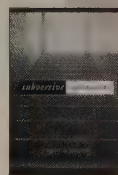
Nor is the discussion advanced by *Changing the Way Seminaries Teach*, a volume that deals more with the Christian education of ministers. Produced jointly by two New England think tanks, the Hartford Seminary Center for Social and Religious Research and Plowshares Institute in nearby Simsbury, this extended report assesses a five-year program funded by the Lilly Endowment and the J. Howard Pew Freedom Trust to improve the educational program at 12 North American seminaries, including two evangelical schools, Gordon-Conwell in South Hamilton, Massachusetts, and Conservative Baptist in Denver. The pro-

gram, however, was not aimed at reducing class size, raising faculty salaries and competence, or exploring the relationship between Christian character and ministerial skills. No, this project was none other than a "global" consciousness-raising effort at these schools, challenging what it claims is their provincialism and isolation from the resources of the Third World church.

While the book accurately gauges what happened—and what more needs to be done—in terms of the ethos, curriculum, and faculty at these seminaries as a result of the project, what *globalization* really means is anyone's guess. Its trendy, anti-Western, anti-white-male rhetoric and its utopian vision, in the words of the Plowshares Institute, for "a more just, sustainable, and peaceful world community" divert attention away from what might be called the indigenous challenges of theological education in the United States today. Those needs can be no more served with "immersions" of Third Worldisms than seminaries in Korea or Kenya can be improved with "immersions" of Americanisms. An exotic fascination with the Third World is every bit as problematic as alleged Western ethnocentrism; in fact, as William Willimon and Thomas Naylor of Duke University suggest in their new book, *Downsizing the U.S.A.* (Eerdmans), "localization" more than "globalization" may be the crying need of the times.

Whatever *Changing the Way Seminaries Teach* and *Theological Perspectives on Christian Education* lack, however, is more than compensated for by the strong showing of *Theological Education in the Evangelical Tradition*. This collection of papers presented at a Lilly Endowment-funded conference at the Institute for Study of American Evangelicals at Wheaton College provides penetrating insights into theological education from some of the nation's finest theological educators, including Timothy George, Richard Mouw, and David Wells. Also contributing essays are the volume's editors, two promising educators under the age of 40: D. G. Hart, the prolific writer-librarian at Westminster Seminary in Philadelphia—one of the first "evangelical" institutions north of the Mason-Dixon Line—and R. Albert Mohler, the president of Southern Baptist Seminary in

SHORT NOTICES



SUBVERSIVE SPIRITUALITY
By Eugene H. Peterson
Eerdmans
263 pp.; \$18, paper

Subversive Spirituality is a wide-ranging collection of Eugene Peterson's occasional writings spanning a period of some 25 years. The volume is divided into five sections: "Spirituality," "Biblical Studies," "Poetry" (consisting of one longish poem, "Holy Luck"), "Pastoral Readings" (ranging from Revelation to mystery writer Rex Stout), and "Conversations" (a collection of interviews), valuable for Peterson's reflections on the pastoral vocation.

"Spirituality," Peterson writes, "is not the latest fad but the oldest truth," and indeed there is nothing trendy about his account of the spiritual life.

From this assortment two themes or qualities or traits stand out. First is a certain manner—earthy, plainspoken—that most readers would associate with "working men" rather than with pastors. Granting the enormous range of legitimate preaching styles, we need to ask why this down-to-earth manner is so rare in the pulpit today. Second is a literary sensibility that informs everything Peterson writes—and this, too, is increasingly rare among pastors. What a strange and wonderful combination of gifts—and no wonder that this is the man who has given us *The Message*.

Complete this sentence: "The first book on pastoral care that meant anything to me personally or vocationally was ____." If you are Eugene Peterson, the answer is James Joyce's novel *Ulysses*. For many more such surprises and useful provocations, read *Subversive Spirituality*. **[C]**

Louisville, the first divinity school chartered by Baptists in Dixie.

The book's strength is articulating the conceptual unity that holds evangelical theological education together. Whether exploring the spiritual formation of ministers, the tensions between church and academy, or the place of women in formal educational settings, the book explains how the evangelical approach to training ministers differs from both old-line Protestant and Roman Catholic traditions. That difference, the book illustrates, relates not so much to institutional or formal arrangements but rather to a distinctive set of expectations. "Evangelicals," the introductory essay summarizes, "have been especially wary of religion that appears to be automatic or routine, and they have desired ministers and leaders who have experienced firsthand a vital and deep encounter with God's grace and who could instill and reproduce such characteristics within other believers." This holds true of every stripe of evangelical institution, from the fundamentalist Prairie

Bible College in Three Hills, Alberta, Canada, to the academically demanding Westminster Seminary in Philadelphia.

The volume highlights the historical dimension of that conceptual unity, contending "that the problems seminaries face today are not dramatically different from those that confronted evangelical theological educators in the past." So as evangelicals struggle to understand the tensions between clergy and laity, or seek a more parish-based approach to ministerial training—moot issues among Roman Catholics and old-line Protestants—the volume explores how those same issues have defined evangelicals since Jonathan Edwards. As evangelicals seek to understand how the life of the mind should inform vital piety and gospel zeal (and vice versa), the book reveals how Enlightenment empiricism has been a common element in evangelical education, including William Tennent's "Log College," the old Princeton Seminary, and Charles Spurgeon's "Pastor's College" at Metropolitan Tabernacle in London. The volume even suggests that many of the difficulties facing evangelicals today are rooted in the past; James Bradley of Fuller Seminary, for example, illustrates how the English-Puritan tradition of "practical divinity," with its goal of subduing scholarship to the professional training of pastors, did little to prepare evangelicals for the onslaught of critical and scientific thought in the nineteenth century.

While strong on historical analysis, *Theological Education in the Evangelical Tradition* is weak on prescription. The concluding four essays, "The Future of Evangelical Theological Education," are brief, reflecting more afterthoughts than serious discussion. Granted, no one knows how evangelical seminaries will change a generation from now, but the insights offered in this book would seem to lead quite naturally to some "definitive guidance," perhaps some kind of standardization of ministerial preparation to guide evangelicals in the twenty-first century.

The time for raising or rethinking standards could not be better. As David Wells outlines in *No Place for Truth*, the pastoral vocation today is in crisis. Ministers, who in Puritan New England and colonial America were critically important leaders in their communities, have become, in Wells's words, "dislodged from the network of what is meaningful and valuable in society." The structures of modern life, he says, "offer no plausibility for the work they do." The Gordon-Conwell professor could have

added that ministers have even lost standing in the Christian community, especially its evangelical expression. The bonds that tie pastors with congregations are weaker than ever, as the average tenure in a pulpit is rarely more than three years; traumatic "forced exits" of pastors, according to a study in *LEADERSHIP* journal, have reached epidemic proportions. Like Rodney Dangerfield, ministers get no respect. Most public-school teachers have far greater stability and workplace protection, higher salaries, and more generous benefits than ministers enjoy, including a decent pension at retirement.

The pastoral crisis will not be solved overnight, but perhaps the seminaries and the denominations they serve could begin with attention to quality rather than quantity. This shift will not be easy; it would cut the fuel line that has fostered the proliferation of evangelical seminaries in the past 25 years. But the hard questions need to be asked. Do evangelicals in North America really need 63 divinity schools educating 30,000 potential ministers? Has the mass of these institutions really enhanced pastoral quality and effectiveness? Because they compete with one another for market share, evangelical seminaries are not very selective in their admissions policies, admitting virtually anyone with a bachelor's degree. The result is a pool of graduates who do not measure up academically or personally with corresponding professions as well as an oversupply of candidates who struggle to receive a call from a particular congregation or ministry.

This situation will not change unless the churches and the seminaries become genuine stake-holders with students, working together to sponsor and accept only promising candidates, subsidizing their education and funding residency programs, and helping them secure calls. Because the churches today could not realistically commit themselves to 30,000 students, this approach would significantly lower seminary enrollments, but it might reap revolutionary results.

While the popular nature of evangelicalism will resist recommendations like these, the time has come for bold yet respected voices in church and academy to wean evangelicals from the thoroughgoing pragmatism that has contributed to the crisis in the pastoral vocation. For without single-minded devotion to preparing, strengthening, and upholding qualified pastors in their ministry of Word and sacrament in the context of local, healthy congregations, the evangelical faith can only face an uncertain future.

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Spiritual Mapping Gains Credibility Among Leaders

Shortly after Bob Beckett learned that the Hemet, California, property he planned to occupy had been a transcendental meditation hot zone, he pulled out an area map and marked the spot.

His finding eventually turned into a concerted, ongoing probe into the dark, spiritual underside of the desert community, southwest of Palm Springs. Beckett, who later planted a church in the city, believes that this spiritual reconnaissance—which he now recognizes as spiritual mapping—provided the fuel for focused prayer that not only unleashed church growth, but has begun to transform Hemet's social fabric.

Beckett's report was one of a half-dozen success stories presented to 400 participants from 31 countries at the first International Consultation on Spiritual Mapping in Tacoma, Washington, in November. Other descriptions of transformation came from Kenya, Nigeria, Colombia, Ecuador, and Guatemala, where Christians claim that a breaking of a territorial spirit's power over their country resulted in unprecedented church growth and the end of 36 years of civil war (CT, Feb. 3, 1997, p. 76).

A PRAYER TOOL: Spiritual mapping is a term coined in 1991 by the Tacoma meeting's organizer, George Otis, Jr., but enthusiastic proponents say it is really the reprise of an old practice that can help propel the church toward fulfillment of the Great Commission.

Spiritual mapping, says Otis, president of the research agency the Sentinel Group, is nothing more ethereal than creating a spiritual profile of a community based on careful research. It is a tool, he says, for intelligent prayer aimed at opening spiritually blind eyes to the gospel.

Otis poured seven years of global research into his new book, *The Twilight Labyrinth: Why Does Spiritual Darkness Linger Where It Does?* (Chosen Books). He has identified 15 "transformed communities," of which 14 incorporated spiritual mapping. Two factors present in all 15, Otis says, are "persevering leadership" and "united prayer." Commitment is the key, he says. "God didn't move in Hemet until Bob bought a burial plot in the city."

Otis has developed a 28-stage scale to measure the progress of a community from

the "spiritual beachhead" phase to "spiritual breakthrough" to "spiritual transformation." Spiritual mapping does not begin until stage nine, Otis points out. "When you reach that point you have a core of intercessors in a community really petitioning God for a visitation," he says.

"LESS FLAKY": Though it still raises many eyebrows among evangelicals, spiritual mapping is gaining broader acceptance, as evidenced by the AD 2000 United Prayer Track's Spiritual Mapping Division, which Otis heads. United Prayer Track coordinator C. Peter Wagner teaches a class on spiritual mapping at Fuller Theological Seminary, which is capped by a field trip to Hemet guided by Beckett.

"There's a lot less flaky stuff in 1997 than in 1990," Wagner says. "We're on a learning curve."

Many of spiritual mapping's detractors have less of a problem with spiritual mapping than with its most common applications, "strategic-level warfare"—defined by Wagner as discerning and praying against

ranking evil powers, and he is cautious about a leader repenting for sins in which he did not participate. But Arnold does see value in spiritual mapping "to guide intercessors" as they pray for the lost.

Greg Boyd, author of *God at War: The Bible and Spiritual Conflict* (InterVarsity, 1997), cautions that there is no clear New Testament precedent for strategic-level warfare. "That doesn't mean you need to

rule it out, but it does mean you've got to be careful about excesses," says Boyd, a professor at Bethel College in Minnesota. "I've seen this get real wacko, where people are rebuking a demon over Minnesota. It's better to spend more time

on things that have clear precedent."

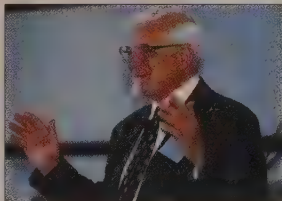
Otis places the emphasis of spiritual warfare on battling strongholds of the mind rather than of geographical locations, though he does believe that places can become strongholds when they become focal points for deceptive practices. "People who begin spiritual mapping with a focus on trying to identify and name prevailing territorial spirits are likely to get sidetracked," he says.

GAINING ACCEPTANCE: Otis predicts that by the end of the century spiritual mapping will become mainstream. Most of his teaching and training is with evangelicals, whom he finds generally more responsive than charismatics. Still, many evangelical leaders are concerned that this may be a passing fad. Otis says spiritual mapping is especially needed now because Satan will increase his resistance to the church as it moves toward fulfillment of the Great Commission.

"The 1990s are not the 1790s," Otis says. "God is very wise and very resourceful, and he brings to his church different emphases, different methodologies, different strategies to commend the gospel to the prevailing culture."

In 1998, Otis's Sentinel Group, Wagner's Global Harvest Ministries, and Ted Haggard's Christian Information Network plan to move into the high-tech World Prayer Center on the grounds of Haggard's New Life Church in Colorado Springs (CT, May 20, 1996, p. 78). Spiritual mapping will be central to the operation of this "electronic nerve center to connect the intercessors and let each other know what they're hearing from the Holy Spirit," Wagner says.

By Art Moore in Tacoma.



On a learning curve: C. Peter Wagner.



Targeting strongholds: Participants focus on intercessory prayer.

territorial spirits assigned to a community—and "identificational repentance."

John Dawson's bestseller *Taking Our Cities for God* (Creation House, 1989) promoted identificational repentance as a way of breaking Satan's hold on a city and bringing reconciliation through confessing and repenting of community sins.

CAUTION URGED: Biola University Talbot Theological Seminary professor Clinton Arnold, author of *Three Crucial Questions About Spiritual Warfare* (Baker Books, 1997), finds no biblical basis for taking an aggressive posture against high-

MUSIC

Sandi Patty Stages Comeback

Sandi Patty has returned to the top of the Christian music charts with a new recording two years after confessing an extramarital relationship that put her career into a tailspin.

Released in late October, Patty's *Artist of My Soul* was among the top ten contemporary Christian recordings for more than five weeks.

In August 1995, Patty married Don Pleslis, with whom she had an extramarital affair during her first marriage, which ended in a 1993 divorce (CT, Sept. 11, 1995, p. 72). Pleslis, who is also divorced, had been a backup singer for Patty.

As her personal life came under an intense media spotlight, Patty's recording company, Word Records, delayed release of her Christmas album for one year. Patty reduced her performance schedule, spending more time in An-



Patty: Recording and touring again.

derson, Indiana, with her new blended family, which now encompasses eight children.

But one year ago, for the Clinton presidential inaugural, Patty began to relaunch her career, starting with her televised singing of "The Star-Spangled Banner."

Last month on ABC's *Prime-Time Live* Patty said, "I don't want to pretend. I want to set things right. I don't know if there is even a way to make some horrendous wrongs right." Also, in an interview

with KSBJ, a Houston radio station, Patty observed, "The owning, naming, and confessing of the sin in my life was the beginning of experiencing the freedom that only comes through Christ."

"I know I let my marriage down with John [Helvering] in huge ways. I have tremendous regrets about that," Patty said she had used her ministry career as a substitute for a spiritual relationship with God. "You think that's a replacement for a relationship, and it is not; that is a lesson I have learned the hard way."

For 1998, Patty has a growing number of performance dates, and there are signs that she is regaining her audience. "Breathe on Me," a song from *Artist of My Soul*, has gained a spot on Christian radio play lists nationwide. With lyrics such as "Breathe on breath of God. Cover my sin with your mercy," Patty may have found her own distinctive way to integrate a troubled past and an authentic music ministry.

By Timothy C. Morgan.

DALLAS

Swift Growth Shapes Potter's House

T. D. Jakes has the type of church problems most preachers crave. The Potter's House has recently added 1,000 parking spaces, hired nine off-duty Dallas police officers to control traffic, and put a full-time minister on staff just to handle new members.

The nationally televised 40-year-old preacher and author bought a 5,000-seat church building in Dallas 18 months ago. Now the Potter's House has grown to more than 14,000 worshipers, including Dallas Cowboys stars Deion Sanders and Emmitt Smith, both baptized in October.

Gary Johnston, director of Church Growth Network in Temecula, California, says the Potter's House is one of the nation's fastest-growing mega-

churches. "It's phenomenal growth," says Johnston, noting that other megachurches such as Saddleback Valley Community Church in Mission Viejo, California, and Willow Creek in South Barrington, Illinois, took several years to become so large.

The Potter's House bought 34 hilltop acres of southwest Dallas for \$3.2 million from evangelist W. V. Grant, recently released from prison.

While the complex is large enough for worship services, there has been some trouble juggling space for ministries, including Bible studies, drug- and alcohol-abuse programs, prison ministries, feeding the homeless, tutoring for students, faith-based weight-loss programs, emergency coun-



CARL DUVERGER/REUTERS

Jakes: Moving to higher ground.

seling, and job training.

Jakes is a leader and elected bishop of the Higher Ground Always Abounding Assembly, a nine-year-old fellowship of about 200 Pentecostal churches. He is the author of 15 books, including the best-selling *Woman, Thou Art Loosed* and his new cookbook, *Lay Aside the Weight*. In addition, his program *Get Ready* is seen three times each week on the Trinity Broad-

TOP RELIGION STORIES OF 1997

(as selected by CT editors and writers)

1. Promise Keepers' Stand in the Gap draws 1 million men to Washington, D.C.

2. Gender-inclusive New International Version canceled.

3. Supreme Court rules RFRA unconstitutional.

4. Churches worldwide unify against religious persecution.

5. New Russian law restricts freedom of religion.

6. Oregon favors first law for physician-assisted suicide.

7. U.S. State Department notes global religious persecution.

8. New Era's John Bennett imprisoned for fraud.

9. Disney boycott gathers momentum.

10. Partial-birth abortion battle moves to states.



casting Network and Black Entertainment Television.

Jakes started a church in West Virginia in 1980 with 10 people and supplemented his income by digging ditches. When he left Charleston in 1996, his two side-by-side homes included an indoor pool and bowling alley.

"When I moved to Dallas, I bought the biggest house I could afford," says Jakes, who, with his wife, Serita, has five children. "I don't live in a mobile home. There's nothing wrong with being blessed and successful."

By Jim Jones in Dallas.

The Apostle Shows Grit, Grace

Hollywood does not focus on clergy as often as it does criminals, but when the lens is trained on the pulpit, the plot usually goes one of two ways. There is the *Elmer Gantry* approach, featuring evangelists as hypocritical flimflam artists; or there is the *Nothing Sacred* approach, featuring three-dimensional but theologically clueless clergy such as ABC's controversial Father Ray (CT, Sept. 1, 1997, p. 95).

Now comes *The Apostle*, a groundbreaking film that treats both Pentecostal evangelist Euliss "Sonny" Dewey and his biblical message with deep respect. Robert Duvall is the director, writer, executive producer, and title character.

The movie, out January 30, is drawing acclaim from both secular and religious film critics. "A rare display of spiritual light on screen," writes the *New York Times*. *MovieGuide* writes, "There is much to be said in favor of this movie, but most significant is its positive affirmation of God,



VAN REDIN/OCTOBER FILMS

Pentecostal power: Many scenes are with nonactors in Louisiana churches.

church, and evangelism."

Evangelist Dewey is no saint. He is a frail, flawed figure who battles pride, lust, and a violent temper that leads to murder and a dramatic fall from grace. Just as dramatic is Dewey's slow, painful redemption.

Duvall has been down this aisle before. He won an Oscar for his touching portrayal of born-again country singer Mac Sledge in the 1983 version of *Tender Mercies*, by Horton Foote.

"We make great gangster movies, so why not make this kind of movie right, too?" says Duvall, who wrote the screenplay for *The Apostle* in 1984 after visiting a Pentecostal church in Arkansas. After studios continually turned him down, he invested \$5 million of his own savings to make the movie.

By Steve Rabey.

Suit Challenges Religion Classes Credit

An Idaho State University student is suing the school for offering course credit for off-campus religion classes taught by the Latter Day Saints (LDS) Institute.

If Carole Wells, a 36-year-old sociology major and board member of the local American Civil Liberties Union chapter, wins her case, the school will likely be forced to shut down its religious-studies department. Wells alleges in her suit, due for a jury trial in U.S. District Court March 17, that the university is violating the U.S. Constitution by involving the state with religious institutions.

The department offers classes from three off-campus organizations: the LDS Institute, the Evangelical Studies Center, and the Logos Center for Religious Studies, which is composed of mainline Protestants and Catholics. All faculty are approved by the college. Most have doctorates, and all have at least master's degrees.

"The regional accrediting agency liked the fact that the program guarantees diversity and that students can choose

the perspective," says Mike Powell, director of the Evangelical Studies Center and pastor of University Bible Church.

No college funds are used for the classes. "The only connection is that the university gets money for tuition," says Powell. "We even pay for our photocopying." If the university loses the lawsuit, it will likely close the department because it cannot afford to maintain it without depending on the church-based classes.

Wells is aiming at the LDS Institute because it is the biggest target at the overwhelmingly Mormon university. Of the 360 students taking religious-studies courses for credit, five-sixths of them are enrolled in LDS Institute classes.

About 65 percent of the student body is Mormon, and only 100 are involved in evangelical student groups such as Campus Crusade for Christ or the Baptist Student Union. Powell says the Evangelical Studies Center will continue to offer classes whatever the outcome of the suit.

By Ted Olsen.

News Briefs

◆ The Sixth U.S. District Court of Appeals ruled 2 to 1 on November 18 that Ohio's first-in-the-nation ban of **partial-birth abortion** is unconstitutional because it imposes burdens on a woman's life, health, and right to choose abortion. Abortionist Martin Haskell, who originated the dilation and extraction method (CT, Sept. 16, 1996, p. 114), challenged the ban in a lawsuit.

◆ **Bob Jones, Jr.**, chancellor and chair of the Greenville, South Carolina, fundamentalist university named after his father, died November 12 at age 86 of abdominal cancer. He became president of the school in 1947, its twentieth year. Under his leadership, the IRS ended the school's tax-exempt status because of its ban on interracial dating. His son, Bob Jones III, is now president of the school.

◆ Fred W. Smith, 88, general superintendent of the Des Moines-based **Open Bible Standard Churches** from 1936 to 1951, died November 3. Smith was a founding member of the National Association of Evangelicals and the Pentecostal Fellowship of North America.

◆ By a 178-to-40 vote, the Franconia Conference, which represents 50 Mennonite congregations in Pennsylvania, has expelled



Jones



Smith

the **Germantown Mennonite Church**—the oldest Mennonite congregation in the country—for its policy of accepting as members homosexuals living in same-sex relationships. The Mennonite policy since 1987 has been to accept only celibate homosexuals as members.

◆ **Heritage USA**, the Christian theme park in Fort Mill, South Carolina, founded by Jim Bakker, closed November 30. In the 1980s, Heritage USA attracted 6 million visitors annually and employed more than 2,000 people. Signature Hospitality, a Malaysian corporation that purchased the 600-acre complex in 1992, says it could not find an investor to continue operating the 501-room hotel and resort.

◆ The Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA) has suspended **Gospel Rescue Mission** of Washington, D.C., from membership. The ECFA says fundraising letters issued by the organization are not in compliance with ECFA's standard of stewardship dealing with truthfulness in communication. Gospel Rescue Mission is working with the ECFA to rectify the problem, and director Edward Eyring says he expects membership to be reinstated.

◆ Anton LaVey, who founded the **Church of Satan** in 1966, died of pulmonary edema on October 29 at age 67 in San Francisco. LaVey wrote five books, including the *Satanic Bible*. □

Vineyard Founder Wimber Dies

Todd Hunter seen as possible successor.

John Wimber, whose ministry helped spawn new theological lingo and mass Christian movements—including the Vineyard—died on November 17, the result of a fall that caused a fatal brain hemorrhage. He was 63.

Wimber had already recovered from cancer in 1993 and a stroke in 1995 (CT, Oct. 7, 1996, p. 49). Last year he underwent triple-bypass heart surgery.

At a November 21 memorial service, an overflow crowd spilled out of the Anaheim (Calif.) Vineyard Christian Fellowship (VCF)'s 3,200 seats and into the aisles and outer rooms where big-screen monitors were stationed. In a fashion Wimber surely would have appreciated, the church he founded worshiped to the accompaniment of electric guitars, keyboards, and the soft beat of drums. Wimber had recently retired as pastor of the church (CT, July 14, 1997, p. 46).

Wimber graduated from Azusa Pacific University in 1970 and pastored the Yorba Linda Friends Church for five years. In 1974, Wimber began breaking traditional evangelical molds when he became director of church growth at the Fuller Evangelistic Association. He later taught a controversial and well-attended "Signs and Wonders and Church Growth" class at Fuller Theological Seminary. In 1978 he became full-time pastor of what became VCF in Yorba Linda, California.

ENORMOUS IMPACT: From that congregation, the Vineyard movement now has grown to nearly 500 churches nationwide and another 250 internationally.

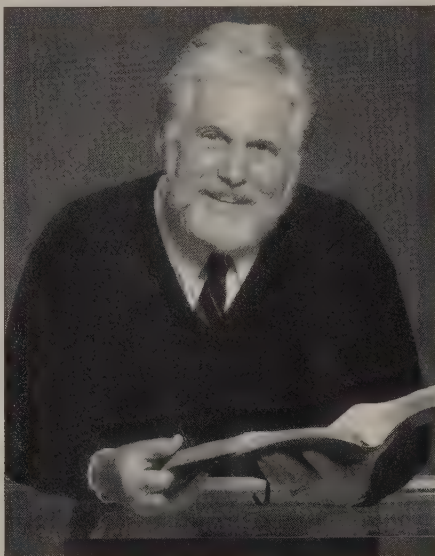
Today, thousands of traditional evangelical churches each Sunday sing Vineyard-produced songs, and Wimber's effective marketing has offered many Protestant denominations and individuals a non-threatening way of charismatic expression.

"The Vineyard has exercised influence all out of proportion to its numbers," Regent University divinity school dean Vinson Synan told CT; "I trace that to Wimber himself. The greatest asset Vineyard had was Wimber, just like Wesley was the greatest asset to the Methodists."

Wimber's Vineyard did not escape controversy. "The Vineyard sometimes let outside influences exercise undue influences within it," Synan says.

Eventually, after embracing the controversial Kansas City prophets, Wimber provided correction to their movement, which broke from the Vineyard in 1996 (CT, Oct.

7, 1996, p. 86). In similar fashion, John Arnott's Toronto Vineyard, home of the Toronto Blessing phenomenon, broke away from the Vineyard in 1995. Wimber



Lasting legacy: Wimber had a big impact on the American church.

had cautioned them not to encourage so-called exotic manifestations, including animal noises (CT, Jan. 8, 1996, p. 66).

"John was always on the cutting edge, so naturally he was at a point where there would be differences of opinion as to what he was doing," says Fuller Seminary professor C. Peter Wagner. "But now that he is gone he leaves a legacy not of criticism, but a legacy of positive contribution to the kingdom of God."

Todd Hunter, acting national director of the Association of Vineyard Churches, USA, recalled during the memorial service that Wimber was "always willing to selflessly take whatever heat came his way."

Bob Fulton, international coordinator of the Vineyard International Consortium and Wimber's brother-in-law, remembered his 33 years with Wimber. "When John was wrong, he would repent," Fulton said.

SEARCH FOR IDENTITY: The Vineyard now faces a future without its founding leader. Hunter said Vineyard

leaders are more certain how the transition will unfold within the United States than internationally.

"What's next is for the Vineyard in the States to affirm or ratify the national director, to set a course for post-Wimber Vineyard—how we will govern ourselves without his autocratic—and I mean that in the neutral sense of the term—without his autocratic leadership," Hunter told CT. "How can we become more participatory without getting stuck in the mud?"

Before his death, Wimber installed a board of six regional overseers, which included national leaders Hunter and Fulton. There is also a council of district overseers and a leadership team, including area coordinators and task force leaders.

Many observers say the 40-year-old Hunter, who holds a master's degree in biblical studies from Regent University, is Wimber's likely successor as the Vineyard's top leader. Regent University professor of theology J. Rodman Williams says Hunter is highly capable. "He's a well-balanced young man."

Internationally, more questions exist. "We've raised up other countries, and when they got to be a certain size we let them become their own independent Association of Vineyard Churches, which was working as long as John was alive because he was the umbrella man," Hunter says. "How are America and those other countries going to relate? We've said philosophically that we don't want America dominating and leading the whole world."

Synan believes the movement is "struggling to define its future, theologically and every way—whether they would be more of a straightline evangelical church or more of a charismatic and Pentecostal influence."

Wimber's books, including *Power Evangelism*, *Power Healing*, *Power Points*, *Power Encounters*, and *The Way to Maturity*, along with the Vineyard's growing contemporary music legacy, will continue to be consulted long after his death.

"John Wimber is one of those rare persons who has been the molder of a generation," Wagner says. "The contribution he has made has actually turned

the rudder of Christianity and moved it in the direction the Holy Spirit wants it to go in the twenty-first century."

By Joe Maxwell, with Heather Johnson and John Geary in Anaheim.



Acting director: Hunter.

IRS Spurs Nonprofit Disclosure on Internet

If Christians want to know how much money their favorite ministry took in last year, or how much its top officers make, current federal law does not make it easy for them.

The law only requires that charities show copies of their informational tax return, called Form 990, to those who ask in person. Charities do not even have to provide photocopies.

New IRS regulations, however, will change all that. Anyone else with an interest in a nonprofit organization's finances will soon be able to obtain Form 990 information with little effort. Under the new rules, organizations will have to send out copies of the forms within 30 days of receiving a written request, even if the request comes via e-mail.

INTERNET ACCESS: In addition, the Internal Revenue Service hopes that organizations will make it even easier to procure Form 990 information by offering it on the Internet.

"Regulators are pushing to get 990s up on the Internet because they want as much public accountability as possible," says Paul D. Nelson, president of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA).

But, says Nelson, it may be a while before Internet users can find all the information they want. "Most organizations will go the mail way to begin with," he says, "and even down the road some may still say they don't want to volunteer that kind of information without being asked first."

He guesses that controversial organizations, especially those with public-policy agendas, will be more likely to wait until being asked before providing the tax information.

Bill Bowers, chief operations officer of Didax Corporation, a company that provides online technical support for several Christian organizations, including Promise Keepers, World Vision, and Christianity Today, Inc., says he does not know of any Christian organization offering the financial information on their own Web sites. "But it seems to be a great, cheap way to get information to donors," he says.

Form 990 information for many nonprofit organizations is already on the

Internet's World Wide Web. Most often, such information can be found at larger Web sites devoted to monitoring the nonprofit sector, such as GuideStar: The Donor's Guide to the Nonprofit Universe

GuideStar
REPORT

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FIN: 36-2423707
Executive: Dr. Wesley Stafford, President
Contact Person: Mr. Brodd Heifer, Public Information Assoc
Phone: (719) 594-9900
Fax: (719) 536-9618
Internet: <http://www.ci.org>
Geography Served: CO, IL, DC, IN, MI, NM, and AZ, Honduras, El Salvador, Mexico, Guatemala, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Zaire, Peru, Kenya, India, Indonesia, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Uganda, Thailand, Philippines
Funding: Contributions and grants for unrestricted operating expenses, specific projects, endowment

Fiscal Year: 1996
Email: ECFA@ci.org
Number Employees: 201
Number Directors: 9
Audited Statements: Yes

PURPOSE AND DESCRIPTION

Star site: GuideStar provides some tax information for nonprofit organizations, but it can be outdated or incomplete.

(<http://www.guidestar.org>) or the Minnesota Attorney General's Charities site (<http://www.ag.state.mn.us/consumer/charities>). These sites typically get the Form 990 information from the IRS directly.

SAVING TIME, MONEY: Under new IRS rules, if an organization posts its Form 990 information on the Internet, the organization does not have to send it to those who make a mail request. This new method can potentially save time and money, though organizations are allowed to charge reasonable photocopying fees for mailed requests (\$1 for the first page, 15 cents for each additional page, the same rates used by the IRS).

The IRS estimates that only about 1,000 of more than one million tax-exempt groups will make their Form 990s available on the Internet. Nelson says he does not know of any ECFA member organizations offering Form 990 information on their own Web sites.

"We don't have our 990 on the Internet and we aren't planning to," says Chuck McGinty, field communications director for Compassion International. "We do, though, have our financial statement on the Web."

For the few people who ask, a Form 990 is mailed, but most simply want to

see a pie chart of how ministry expenses are subdivided, McGinty says.

Nonprofit watchdog groups, major donors, journalists, academic researchers, and ministry employees have strong interest in easy access to Form 990 information for analysis and comparison. Since the IRS each year audits relatively few nonprofits, public disclosure enhances the ability of an independent outsider to question how a ministry expends funds.

The Form 990 does not even have to be on the organization's own Web site. As long as it is accessible from the organiza-

tion's site, it can be stored at another address used as a database of documents for similar organizations.

ECFA has no plans to offer such a database, but it has considered "crossposting" member information. For example, a member organization could show the ECFA logo with a hyperlink to the ECFA Web site to show they are in good standing with the council. Conversely, ECFA could have a list of links to member organizations.

"But right now, our front burner is compliance with the new guidelines," Nelson says. "ECFA is simply trying to make organizations aware of the law."

FOILING FOES: The new guidelines also allow exemptions from the photocopying requirement if an organization can prove requests for the copies are part of a harassment campaign aimed at making the organization do extra work.

"In the public-policy area, especially organizations involved in the abortion and gay-rights debates, there have been concerted efforts to disrupt business," Nelson says.

Even in such cases, the organizations must always provide copies to journalists, hostile or not, with no apparent ties to the harassment campaign.

An organization cannot deny requests for photocopies due to an increase in requests from the public after a national news

story about the organization, such as the Federal Election Commission's complaint against the Christian Coalition in 1996.

The new regulations will go into effect 60 days after the IRS issues final rules on enforcing the law, which are expected shortly after a February hearing. Nonprofits that do not comply may be fined up to \$10,000. Nelson greatly approves of the regulations, saying, "This is a significant act for donors simply because it's one more way to get them the information they need."

By Ted Olsen.



ECFA president: Nelson.

Born-again Christians Lead Norway

During the recent election campaign, thousands of Norwegian believers fasted and prayed to ask God to intervene on behalf of their country.

The result is unique to modern Europe: more than half of the new government's 19 ministers, including Prime Minister Kjell Magne Bondevik, are born-again Christians.

"There has been no such thing as a government with a born-again majority in Norway ever, at least not in modern times," says evangelical leader Trygve Brekke, senior pastor of the charismatic Christian Service Church in Stavanger.

The previous Socialist government favored abortion rights and homosexual marriage. The Bondevik cabinet, in office since October 21, is a coalition among the Christian Popular Party of Bondevik, the Center Party, and the Left Party. Bondevik says the politics of his cabinet will be grounded in the "Christian inheritance" of Norway. In his inaugural speech, Bondevik—a Lutheran pastor who has declared that "God is my strength"—said the "erosion of morals and foundational values" must be halted. A new commission will be assigned

the task of reversing "destructive trends."

"There is presently a strong interest, and not only among Christians, in re-establishing foundational values," Brekke says. Erling Rimehaug, political editor of Norway's Christian daily *Vaart Land*, says the commission will deal with matters such as "greed, tax dodging, sexual abuse, violence, the erosion of family life, and extreme youth cultures."

Brekke is heartened by the new Christian majority. "I expect it to change the direction Norway is going," Brekke says. "But it won't happen overnight, and it is important that the churches keep on praying. If the churches pressure Bondevik to push controversial issues with no chance of getting a majority vote, they will achieve nothing but his fall."

Rimehaug also says the new prime minister will not campaign for an untenable cause. "The Christian Popular Party is committed to changing the abortion laws, but no government proposals have been announced since the Parliament majority is clearly against it," Rimehaug says.

By Tomas Dixon.

ARCHAEOLOGY

Pottery Shard Points to Temple

A potshard with an inscription of a receipt may contain the earliest extrabiblical reference to Solomon's Temple in ancient Jerusalem.

Top biblical scholars seem convinced of its authenticity, despite its unknown source. After surfacing on the antiquities market, the shard became part of the collection of London businessman Shlomo Moussaieff. The inscription is translated: "Pursuant to the order to you of Ashyahu the king to give by the hand of Zecharyahu silver of Tarshish to the House (or Temple) of Yahweh. Three shekels."

Scholars date the inscription from the ninth century to the seventh century B.C., based on the early-Hebrew script that was common before the Babylonian exile.

Ashyahu is not known as one of the kings of Judah. University of Chicago scholar Dennis Pardee suggests the name could be Josiah, who ruled Judah from 640 to 609 B.C.

Frank Moore Cross of Harvard and P. Kyle McCarter of Johns Hopkins believe the inscription is older, dating perhaps to the reign of King Joash, 835 to 796 B.C.

By Gordon Govier.

CONSCIENCE INTERNATIONAL



Suffering child: A mother tries to console her ill baby at a Baghdad hospital.

Christians Protest Trade Embargo

Three Christian organizations that provide aid to Iraq are calling for an immediate lifting of the United Nations embargo against the nation ruled by Saddam Hussein.

The Atlanta-based Conscience International (CI) is spearheading the embargo protest. Venture Middle East and the Middle East Council of Churches have also signed a declaration demanding an end to the trade embargo.

According to the World Health Organization and other UN agencies, 1.2 million people have died from the effects of malnutrition and medical shortages in the wake of trade sanctions imposed in 1990.

The infant mortality rate has doubled, and 6,000 children under the age of five die every month in Iraq. "Basra has no potable water supply and little electricity," says the city's Eastern Orthodox archbishop, Gabriel Kasab. "Epidemics rage, taking away children by the thousands. Our situation is unbearable."

A U.S. State Department official contends the Iraqi government is responsible for depriving citizens of food and medicine.

Christian relief agencies have supplied millions of dollars in medicine to Iraq. They also held workshops in Iraq in December on mother and child health. [C]

News Briefs

◆ David Bacon, a 33-year-old Missionary Aviation Fellowship (MAF) pilot in Lesotho, died October 1 when his plane crashed into a ridge after takeoff. Bacon, originally from Milton, Florida, had been with MAF since 1993. He is survived by his wife, Lisa, and daughters Tiffany, 8; Jennifer, 6; and Alyssa, 3.

◆ Five assailants using high-powered rifles shot and killed two indigenous leaders of the **Organization of Evangelical Peoples of the Chiapas Highlands** (OPEACH) November 12. OPEACH co-founder Salvador Collazo and treasurer Marcelino "Ricardo" Perez were shot and killed near San Juan Chamula, Mexico, by suspected traditional Catholic *caciques*, or chiefs, who oppose the presence of evangelical Protestants in the region.

◆ Four members of a car-theft ring have been charged with the September murder of missionary **Neal Eldrenkamp** in Ecuador (CT, Nov. 17, 1997, p. 76). The four, Meza Barbaro, 31; Velez Salomon, 23; Delgado Edgarindo, 18; and Munoz Lorenzo, 18, were arrested in Chone, Ecuador, and are in the custody of the national police. [C]



Bacon

Evangelicals, Catholics Issue Salvation Accord

The Gift of Salvation," a document expressing significant theological agreement between evangelicals and Roman Catholics, is drawing mixed reactions from leading evangelicals.

The document (CT, Dec. 8, 1997, p. 35) represents signers' ability "to express a common faith in Christ and so to acknowledge one another as brothers and sisters in Christ." It has been signed by 16 Roman Catholic leaders and 19 leading evangelicals, including theologians Thomas Oden, J. I. Packer, and Timothy George; seminary presidents Richard Mouw (Fuller) and Kent Hill (Eastern Nazarene); scholars Mark Noll and Os Guinness; Bill Bright, Campus Crusade for Christ; author Max Lucado; and Robert Seiple, World Vision.

Signers of the document, released November 12, gave assurances that "for the first time in 450 years, evangelical Protestants and Roman Catholics have pub-

licly agreed to a common understanding of salvation."

Some scholars outside the drafting process have applauded the effort. Roger Nicole, of Reformed Theological Seminary in Orlando, told CT, "Although I might have used a slightly different expression in a few places, I am so pleased with the context and mood of this document."

However, several leading Southern Baptists disagree. "The document appears to be inherently inconsistent," says Phil Roberts, director of interfaith witness for the SBC North American Mission Board. "The basic agreements regarding salvation appear to be nullified by the questions which the document says require further exploration. How is it that sacramental grace is still an outstanding question [when] salvation by

faith alone is affirmed by the document?"

Mark Coppenger, president of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City, Missouri, agrees. "I loved most of what I read in this document, both the content and the spirit," Coppenger says. But he did not sign it, he says, because it appeared that what Catholics agree to in one section they hedge on in another. "How can those matters [of a sacramental

system and purgatory] be open when the matter of 'faith alone' is settled?" Coppenger asks.

R. Albert Mohler, Jr., president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, says, "Justification by faith alone, if genuinely affirmed by Catholics and evangelicals, would require repudiation of baptismal regeneration, purgatory, indulgences, and many other issues presently affirmed by Roman Catholic doctrine."

FIRST DECLARATION: "The Gift of Salvation" is the second major public document to emerge from a nearly six-year process initiated by Prison Fellowship founder Charles Colson and Catholic leader Richard John Neuhaus of the



Phil Roberts

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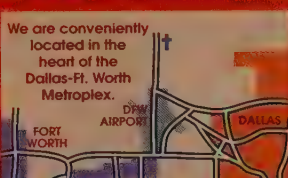
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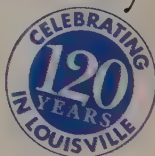
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organization Religion and Public Life.

The first document, "Evangelicals and Catholics Together," received much criticism in conservative evangelical circles following its release, prompting two SBC leaders to withdraw their names (CT, May 15, 1995, p. 53). Critics contended it did not sufficiently grapple with potentially unbridgeable differences between evangelical and Catholic theology.

Colson says that in facilitating the process that produced "The Gift of Salvation," he was determined to come up with a document that would pass evangelical muster. "After my experience with ECT I," Colson says, "I made a decision: I would not allow us to arrive at any document that was not satisfactory to John Woodbridge, Timothy George, and J. I. Packer." All three theologians approved the document.

REPEAT PERFORMANCE? Colson recalls circulating the first document prior to its public release and receiving no negative responses initially. He hopes history does not repeat itself with "The Gift of Salvation."

Among the concerns critics have expressed is that public statements do not accurately represent the Catholic church.



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According to this argument, the evangelical public might be wrongly led to believe the Catholic church has conformed to a Reformational position on justification when, in fact, the only ones who have changed are the handful of people who sign these documents.

However, Hill maintains that this line of reasoning does not take into account the stature of those who have signed the document or the involvement of the Roman Catholic ecclesiastical representatives.

Roberts points out, "No presiding bishop or member of the Ecumenical Secretariat nor representative of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops signed the document. It should therefore be taken with a grain of salt." Nevertheless, Hill says, "Based on my reading of the Catholic catechism and on my knowledge of Catholic leaders who have endorsed this process, I'm convinced that this document reflects official Catholic doctrine on soteriology. Otherwise, those Catholics who were part of this dialogue could not have signed the statement."

A DIFFERENT ERA: Catholics and



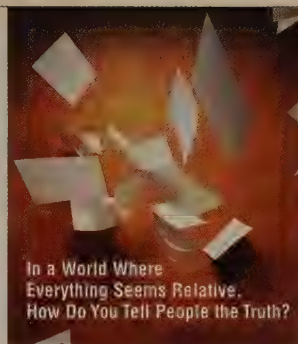
Charles Colson

evangelicals alike maintain that Vatican II ushered in a new era in Protestant-Catholic relations. Hill says, "I want to be careful not to overstate my belief that God has been involved in this process, but in some of the meetings we had a clear sense that someone else was seated at the table."

Instead of ignoring or downplaying important differences between Catholic and evangelical doctrine, "The Gift of Salvation" candidly acknowledges them, saying they "require further and urgent exploration."

Despite the criticism Colson encountered as a result of the 1994 statement, he is appreciative. Their voices, he says, resulted in a stronger statement, one that, because of its essentially theological nature, has far wider implications for evangelical-Catholic unity. In fact, he says, more than one person has suggested to him that had this kind of agreement been achieved five centuries earlier, the Protestant-Catholic split might not have taken place.

By Randy Frame, with reports from Martin King, Baptist Press.



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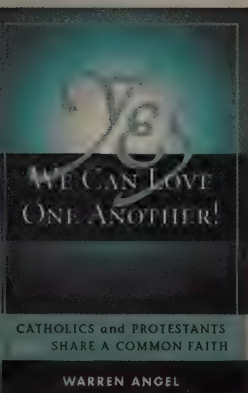
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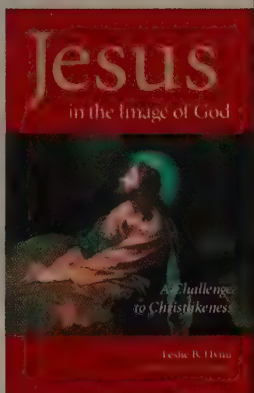
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China's Leaders Critical of 'Clandestine' Missions

The China Christian Council (CCC), a national association of registered churches, has severed its ties with the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) because of its alleged "clandestine" missionary activity.

But the council's action is not expected to trigger the ouster of eight SBC missionaries working through the CCC. Avery Willis, senior vice president for overseas operations with the SBC's International Mission Board (IMB), traces the disagreement to Southern Baptists sharing their Christian faith while working in professional capacities throughout China. There are 14 such individuals, most of them on two-year assignments. "I think this is strictly an isolated situation," Willis says. "It's not new. Ten years ago we talked about the same thing."

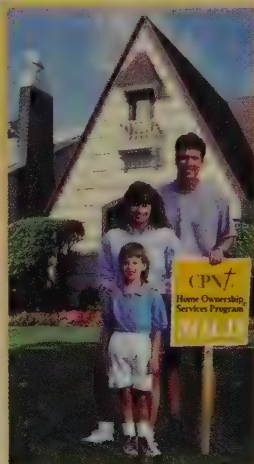
The dispute boiled over in November

when the CCC posted a letter on the Internet announcing an end to the relationship with the IMB. The agreement between the Foreign Mission Board—renamed the IMB during SBC's massive restructuring (CT, Oct. 17, 1997, p. 96)—had only been formalized in July 1996.

CRITICISM FROM CHINA: In the letter, council president Wenzao Han said the CCC and its government-sponsored Three-Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM) have always followed the principle that all church work should be open and above board.

In his letter, Han expressed disappointment that the IMB has, "without consulting us, adopted a 'two-track approach' vis-à-vis China.

"In this view, while not giving up its 'partnership' with the CCC as the 'open' track, [IMB] will try to give major atten-



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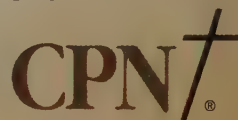
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Christian worship: Congregants sing hymns at Banstian Church in a rural area near Hangshow in Fujian Province.

tion to a clandestine track, through which church workers from abroad are secretly sent to China to carry out 'missionary' work as dictated by the IMB."

Such people do not make their mission-board relationships known to the CCC or the government, he said. Han expressed respect for SBC missionaries who had resigned "rather than be a party to IMB deception."

SOME STEP DOWN: While three SBC career missionaries stepped down after the council's announcement, Willis maintains the agency is caught in the middle of the dispute between Christians who believe in working through official channels and those who consider that an unacceptable compromise.

The CCC insists that it is the exclusive channel for any Protestant worker coming into China for religious purposes. Yet, Willis notes, thousands of Christians are bearing a Christian witness in such professions as school teacher or humanitarian aid worker. "Anybody related to the SBC is legally in the country at the awareness of the Chinese government, not for religious work, but for humanitarian projects," Willis says. "We don't feel we're being secretive in that sense."

While the status of the eight career missionaries is unclear, the Southern Baptist official says the CCC has hinted that it would like them to remain in the country to work with other organizations or churches.

The former liaison for SBC short-term missions work in China is disturbed by what he sees as the IMB's casual treatment of the matter, saying the agency has turned its back on earlier pledges to cooperate with Chinese leadership.

Britt Towery says he took early retirement in 1992 after 30 years as a missionary rather than accede to SBC policy. He insists that China's government is not trying to "smash" the church as the Soviet Union did.

"This is dishonest. It's the wrong way to share the gospel," Towery told CT. "You don't have to sneak around like you do in a Muslim country. It's why we've got to be above-board."

HOUSE-CHURCH POLICY: Internal Chinese government documents have surfaced recently disclosing that high-level Communist party leaders are determined to shut down unregistered meetings of Christians, which typically take place in homes. Under Chinese law, the government-controlled Catholic Patriotic Association (CPA) and the TSPM for Protestants are the only legal religious organizations for Christians.

Documents written by the government-controlled New China News Agency and distributed to top officials demonstrate that the government has taken steps to close unofficial churches. According to the reports, the Communist Party Committee in Hebei Province has largely brought the underground Catholic church under direct control of the atheistic government's CPA. "It has successfully prohibited a series of large-scale illegal religious meetings, scattered the leadership structure of the underground forces, and, in accordance with the law, sealed up and destroyed the churches and meeting points of the underground forces," the dispatch states.

In Liaoning Province, grassroots Communist party units have been able to "resolutely exterminate illegal Protestant and Catholic organizations, and split and destroy their underground forces," according to the document.

However, in Henan Province, "illegal" activities, especially evangelical house churches, continue to increase because local Communist party control is unstable. Underground Christians are meeting in 112 of the 130 cities and counties in Henan, the government reports.

By Ken Walker, with reports from Compass Direct news service.

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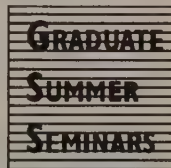
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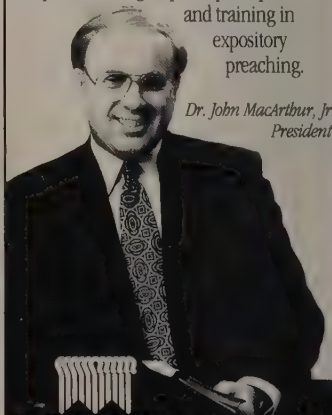


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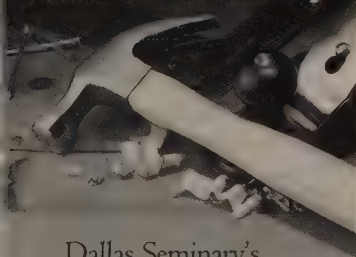
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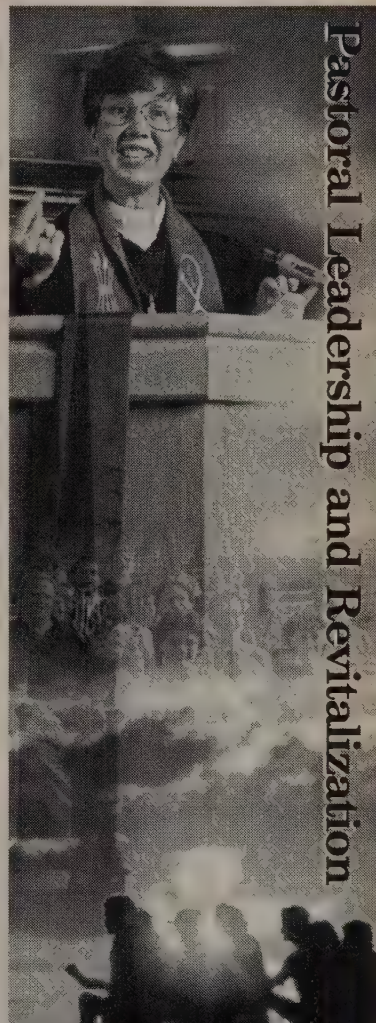
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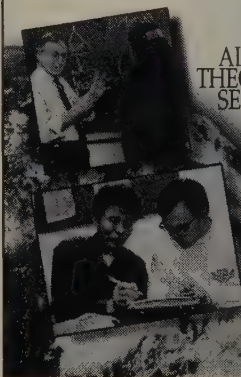
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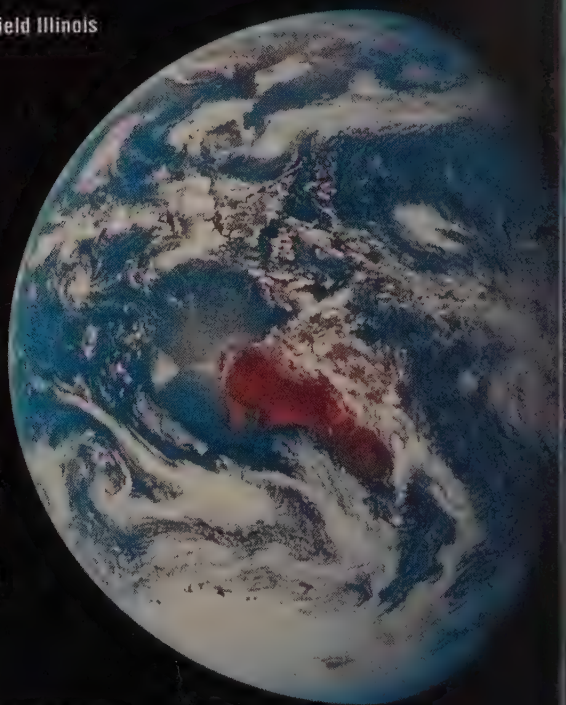
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DUE TO GROWTH AND EXPANSION, Belhaven College seeks those faculty who are excited to serve in the following areas at a college which prepares students to serve Christ Jesus in their occupation, relationships, and in the world of ideas.

- Theater Department Chair (MFA required)
- English Department Chair (Ph.D. required)
- Business Administration Faculty in Memphis (DBA or Ph.D. required)

Send vita to Daniel C. Fredericks, Provost, 1500 Peachtree St., Jackson, MS 39202. Minorities are encouraged to apply.

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

Been looking for a special challenge? We have it! **EAGLE RANCH**, Atlanta area's nationally accepted Christian home for needy children, has an immediate need for highly motivated, multi-talented #2 person. Must be mature Christian with demonstrable past success in directing and shepherding others. Job includes management of ranch's child-care program, human resources, and administrative infrastructure. Attractive compensation/benefits, including three-bedroom home, subsistence. Fax résumé to: Eddie Staub, Executive Director: (770) 967-3757.

TEACH IN JAPAN: Reach Asians for Christ. Teach in English. Several K-12 & ESL teacher openings. Mission school of 450; 2-year contracts. Must raise partial support. Write Dr. Bob Greninger, Okinawa Christian School, P.O. Box 14250, Gainesville, FL 32604; (1-800) 446-6423.

NOW'S THE TIME! Teach English or business in China, Russia, Muslim Asia, or E. Europe. Call us at (1-800) 895-7955. All college majors/degrees welcome.

CHILDREN'S PASTOR. Dynamic, growing CBA church of 1,000+ seeking visionary leader with relational, administrative, and communications skills. B.A. in Christian ed; M.A. & 5+ yrs. exp. pref. Send résumé to: Washington Heights Baptist, 1770 E. 6200 S, Ogden, UT 84405.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

YOUTH PASTOR for a large evangelical congregation in an Indianapolis suburb. Will work with children and youth through 12th grade and will oversee many lay leaders. Must feel that youth ministry is your calling. Experience is a must; min. of B.A. is preferred. Send résumé, references, and a personal statement of faith to Search Committee, First Christian Church, 16377 Herriman Blvd., Noblesville, IN 46060.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES: Advent Group Ministries, a Christian social service agency located in San Jose, CA, seeks resident counselors, night counselors, summer interns for adolescent residential treatment programs. Competitive salary, benefits. Residential positions provide room & board. Contact Deborah Norris: (408) 281-0708; (1-800) 96ADVENT; fax: (408) 281-2658.

WORLD VISION INTERNATIONAL seeks director of publications for MARC Publications program, journal *Together*, and other publications. Strong cross-cultural mission background and publishing management experience essential. Inquiry or résumé to Human Resource Specialist, World Vision International, 800 W. Chestnut Ave., Monrovia, CA 91016-3198; fax: (626) 301-7710.

NORTH PARK UNIVERSITY Chicago, Illinois

Faculty Positions (full-time, tenure-track, beginning Fall 1998)

- Nursing: Mental and/or community health
- Spanish: Peninsular language and literature; near-native fluency
- Psychology: Social/personality/psychological assessment
- Communication Arts: Intercultural communication
- Music: Keyboard
- Education (Graduate): Graduate program director; program initiatives, including off-campus; administration; teaching
- Business (Graduate): Not-for-profit management
- Social Work (Graduate): M.S.W. program developer/director
- Physical Therapy (Graduate): Program developer/director
- Occupational Therapy (Graduate): Program developer/director
- Community Development (Graduate): Director: administration, teaching
- Community Development (Graduate): Full-time teaching

Qualifications: Doctorate or A.B.D., commitment to integrating learning with Christian faith and to residential liberal arts education in an urban context. Rank and salary negotiable per qualifications. North Park University is affiliated with the Evangelical Covenant Church. Women and minorities encouraged to apply. Send letter and vitae to: Dean Ebner, Vice President for Academic Affairs, North Park University, 3225 W. Foster Ave., Chicago, IL 60625. EOE/M-F.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES
Brandywine Valley Baptist Church, Wilmington, DE. Evangelical church of 800 looking for right person to lead dynamic children's ministry, birth through 5th grade. Must have growing relationship with Christ, love for and understanding of children, at least 5 years teaching/administration in children's Christian education. Send résumé and letter of introduction, including your philosophy of ministry, to: Search Committee, 7 Mt. Lebanon Rd., Wilmington, DE 19803.

TEACHING ENGLISH IN KOREA. Indiv. with fervent heart of mission in Asia. Convers. English instructor. B.A./B.S. in any major. No exp. necessary. Housing & airfare provided; (213) 933-8415; www.graceconsult.com.

SENIOR HIGH YOUTH PASTOR. Overall responsibility. To provide leadership, pastoral oversight, and coordination of a senior-high ministry with over 200 young people. Applicants should be skilled in sustaining a culturally relevant, racially mixed, urban ministry, and maximally effective in winning students to Christ, building them up in Christ, and sending them forth in ministry for Christ with the goal of making Great Commission disciples. The applicant must have an understanding of, or willingness to be trained in, SonLife strategies. The applicant should have at least 3-5 years experience in youth work. Send résumé to: Bruce G. Jackson, Executive Pastor, Allegheny Center Alliance Church, 250 E. Ohio St., Pittsburgh, PA 15212-5554.

ACADEMIC DEAN: Geneva College in Beaver Falls, PA, is seeking qualified candidates for the position of dean of the undergraduate division. This position will provide leadership to the entire traditional undergraduate division of the college, which offers programs to over 1,300 students through 15 departments and 58 full-time faculty, with accredited programs in chemistry, engineering, and business. The position will provide leadership to program and faculty development and assessment, student academic issues, relationships with enrollment services and student development, and the registrar's office. Candidates must have an earned doctorate, demonstrated leadership ability in higher education, demonstrated excellence in teaching, ability to articulate a Christian profession of faith, commitment to Christian higher education, an understanding of and commitment to a Reformed theological perspective, and membership in an evangelical Protestant church. Interested candidates should send a letter of intent, a current résumé, and the names of three references to: Dr. James Boelkins, Provost/VCAA, Geneva College, Beaver Falls, PA 15010. Application review will begin on 1/15/98 and continue until the position is filled. Geneva seeks applications from qualified women and minority candidates. The college is committed to nondiscrimination on the basis of age, color, disability, gender, national or ethnic origin, or race, consistent with federal and state requirements.

YOUNG, ENERGETIC CONGREGATION is seeking a director of children and youth ministries. Passion for Jesus, for kids, and for growing leaders a must. Our church is small (150+), vibrant, musical, and growing. We envision everything from effective Sunday School to local youth outreach to short-term mission trips. SonLife youth strategy training plus. Send résumé to Christ Community Church of the C&MA, 217 Swartswood Rd., Newton, NJ 07860; E-mail: ccchurch@ptd.net; (973) 579-1873.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

ARCHITECTURE & ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY FACULTY POSITIONS

Full-time, tenure-track for Fall 1998

- Architectural Design/Graphics and Construction/Environmental Controls
- Architectural Design/Graphics and History of Architecture, or
- Architectural History and American/World History

Judson College is a Christian college of the liberal arts and professions committed to an evangelical expression of the Christian faith, seeking candidates desiring to teach in such a setting. Applications due Feb. 15, 1998. Adjunct/part-time positions may additionally be available. For application and details, write: John K. Hopkins, Director, Architecture Program, Judson College, Dept. of Art, Design & Architecture, 1151 N. State St., Elgin, IL 60123; phone: (847) 695-2500, ext. 3340; fax: (847) 695-8014; E-mail: jhopkins@mail.judson-il.edu.

VICE PRESIDENT FOR ADVANCEMENT

Jerusalem University College seeks candidates for this newly created position at its North American office in Rockford, Illinois, starting August 1, 1998, or possibly earlier.

The vice president for advancement is responsible for shaping and conducting a fundraising program that emphasizes fund development goal setting, planned giving, and short-term fundraising activities. This person shall report to the president, serve on the president's cabinet, and represent the college at the direction of the president. This person shall become and remain familiar with the college and community life in Jerusalem by spending at least one month annually living in Jerusalem.

Qualifications: The candidate shall be a mature Christian whose life is consistent with the goals of Jerusalem University College. This person shall be trained and experienced with a proven track record in development work and shall demonstrate outstanding interpersonal and communication skills. This person shall be asked to represent the university college, the only school of its kind in Protestant Christianity, to diverse groups and individuals within the evangelical community. This person shall possess appropriate academic credentials, be a team player, and yet be comfortable with a leadership style that includes personal initiative. Salary is competitive, based on qualifications.

To obtain information about the school and a position description, call Mr. Michael W. McDonald at (1-800) 891-9408. Send application letter, résumé, and a list of four references (including telephone and fax numbers) to Dr. Sidney DeWaal, President, Jerusalem University College, P.O. Box 1276, 91012 Jerusalem, Israel. Fax: (011)972-2-673-2717 (hard copy by mail). Review of applications begins immediately and will continue until the position is filled.

PRACTICAL THEOLOGY PROFESSOR:

Westminster Seminary in California seeks to fill a tenure-track position in practical theology, combining homiletics/pastoral ministry and missiology/evangelism or Christian education/leadership development. Appointment to begin July 1, 1998. Required qualifications: earned doctorate in appropriate discipline, pastoral or other ministry experience, subscription to Westminster Standards and Three Forms of Unity. Send inquiries and curriculum vita by January 15, 1998, to R. Scott Clark, Academic Dean, Westminster in California, 1725 Bear Valley Pkwy., Escondido, CA 92027; fax: (760) 480-0252; E-mail: rsclark@mailhost2.csusm.edu.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

ASSOCIATE PASTOR FOR URBAN MINISTRIES, Bethlehem Baptist Church, Minneapolis, MN. The mission of our 1,200 folks at the center of the city is to spread a passion for the supremacy of God in all things for the joy of all peoples. We are Calvinistic in theology, Baptist in polity, and Charismatic in our affections, and driven by the truth that "God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in him." We are committed to unremitting God-centeredness, intensity, and authenticity. We aim to be Bible-saturated, Spirit-filled, soul-winning, and culture-confronting, while putting fresh energy into a spirit of urban/suburban partnership and good news to the poor. Visible racial harmony matters. With a focus on the vicinity of the church, the Associate for Urban Ministries equips, mobilizes, and models in the areas of evangelism, social action, public relations, justice issues, and pastoral care for city dwellers. With the aim of raising up strong disciples of Christ, he is a risk taker, flexible, able to champion a compelling vision and inspire a movement. Elder qualifications in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 are expected. Write to Randy Westlund, Chair of Search Committee, 720 13th Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 55415.

PASTOR: Christ-centered, four-yr.-old Congregational church (NACC) in So. NH, seeking biblically based, energetic, well-educated pastor to lead growing flock of 100+ in our spiritual journey. Must possess a deep personal faith and the ability to communicate that faith through solid preaching and leadership skills. Interest in youth ministry and missions important. Experience preferred. Submit résumé and tape (video if available) of recent sermon and a statement of faith to: Phil Michaels, Souhegan Congregational Church, 5 Rt. 101A, Unit 2, Amherst, NH 03031.

ADULT ASSOCIATE BOOK EDITOR

Group Publishing, a leading Christian publisher, is in search of an adult associate book editor in our books and curriculum department. This position will involve proposing, acquiring, and editing all of our pastor's and family ministry books. The candidate must have a bachelor's degree in English or a related discipline combined with 2+ years of editorial or vocational ministry experience. A seminary degree is preferred. Apply in person or send résumé to: Group Publishing, Inc., 1515 Cascade Ave., Loveland, CO 80538, Attn.: Katie Sherick. For additional information, call Katie at (1-800) 635-0404. EOE.

GRADUATING COLLEGE SENIORS are invited to apply for the 25th annual Pulliam Journalism Fellowships. We will be granting 10-week summer internships to 20 journalism or liberal arts graduates in the August 1997-June 1998 graduating classes. Previous internship or part-time experience at a newspaper is desired, or other demonstration of writing and reporting ability.

Winners will receive a \$5,000 stipend & will work at either *The Indianapolis Star* and *The Indianapolis News* or *The Arizona Republic*. Application postmark deadline is March 1, 1998. To request an application and related materials, write: Russell B. Pulliam, Pulliam Fellowship Director, The Indianapolis News, P.O. Box 145, Indianapolis, IN 46206-0145.

PASTOR. A growing Chinese church is looking for a N. America evangelical seminary graduate with 3+ years experience pastoring an English-speaking congregation in a Chinese church. Chinese Bible Church of San Diego, 12335 World Trade Dr., San Diego, CA 92128.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

ATHLETIC DIRECTOR

Seattle Pacific University seeks an athletic director to lead the university's (a) NCAA Division II athletic program which includes men's/women's basketball, crew, cross country, and track and field; men's soccer; and women's gymnastics and volleyball; (b) intramural sports and recreational/fitness programs; and (c) SPU-sponsored sports camps. Qualifications include a maturing Christian faith; ability to work with campus and community constituencies; working knowledge of NCAA governing principles; demonstrated fundraising and athletic promotion skills; budget management experience, and writing and public-speaking ability. Bachelor's degree required; advance degree preferred. Seattle Pacific University serves 3,400 undergraduate and graduate students in liberal arts and professional studies. The Christian commitments of the university are both evangelical and Wesleyan, with faculty, staff, and students representing a broad range of faith traditions. SPU seeks applicants who are committed to its Christian mission. Women and people of color are encouraged to apply. Call (206) 281-2065 for athletic director application materials. Application deadline: January 30, 1998.

MINISTER OF MUSIC

Full-time position with Kil-Cona Park Alliance Church, Winnipeg, Canada. Sun. a.m. attendance 500. Must have genuine appreciation for traditional and contemporary worship. Responsibilities include leading worship, directing choir, developing orchestra, etc. Please fax résumé to: Ken Johnston at (204) 222-6899.

TENTH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, PCA

Dr. James M. Boice, Senior Minister Announces the following vacancy: Organist/Music Director (Beginning August 1998)

Highly qualified applicants are encouraged to apply by sending a one-page résumé postmarked no later than February 14, 1998, to: The Rev. D. Marion Clark, Executive Minister, Tenth Presbyterian Church, 1701 Delancey Place, Philadelphia, PA 19103.

Tenth Presbyterian Church is looking to continue its high standard of classic, traditional, vocal, and instrumental music in worship. Compensation for this full-time position is commensurate with education and experience.

TEACH IN JAPAN. Evangelical church reaching out to the Japanese through teaching English as a second language. Mission-minded single persons needed; 2-year contracts. Support and accommodations. Write Shukugawa Bible Church, 7-12 Aioi-cho Nishinomiya-city Hyogo, 662 Japan; phone: 011-81-798-724128; fax: 011-81-798-724128.

COVENANT COLLEGE

History: Tenure-track position beginning August 1998. Major field or strong minor in non-Western history, especially Africa, Asia, the Middle East, or Latin America. Covenant College seeks an applicant who is committed to the integration of the principles of biblical Christianity with the discipline of history. Teaching excellence a priority. Minority and women candidates are encouraged to apply. Ph.D. preferred. Please send curriculum vita, and request application from Dr. Louis Voskuil, Covenant College, Lookout Mountain, GA 30750.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

ASHLAND THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Ashland Theological Seminary, a conservative evangelical seminary with 700 students, invites résumés from individuals for the following faculty positions. Requirements include: Ph.D. or equivalent, commitment to evangelical faith and life, pastoral experience, commitment to servant leadership and team ministry. All positions are tenure-track. Applications will be received until the positions are filled. The positions require teaching on both the master's and D.Min. levels.

- **Church Planting** (Fall of '98): Candidate should possess experience as a church planter with both teaching and practical skills. The position requires experience and training in administration, assessment, supervision, mentoring, and evaluation. The position requires classroom and field work.

- **Missions** (Fall of '98): Candidate should have a global Christian perspective with cross-cultural and/or urban ministry experience for a program that is global in scope and practical in application. Curriculum includes introductory and advance courses in cross-cultural studies and evangelism.

- **Pacific Rim** (Fall of '99): Candidate should be bilingual (English and Chinese required), with work experience in Asia. Doctorate may be in either biblical studies or theology. The position will require teaching in an academic discipline, student advising, and the ability to bridge curriculum and culture with Pacific Rim students.

Applications should be sent to: Dr. Frederick J. Finks, President, Ashland Theological Seminary, 910 Center St., Ashland, OH 44805.

CHRISTIANITY TODAY, INC.

Publisher of 10 evangelical magazines seeks to fill the following positions:

- **ASSOCIATE EDITOR: LEADERSHIP** Journal seeks editor with 3-5 years of experience and a thorough, broad-based understanding of the Protestant milieu/theology. Pastoral experience strongly preferred. Must be editor first writer second. Send detailed information elaborating on interest in ministering through a magazine for church leaders and qualifications to do so, plus writing samples.

- **MARKET RESEARCH ANALYST:** Degreed analyst with 2-3 years exp. in market research analysis. Should be skilled in PC & Mac software, survey development for both qualitative and quantitative research, data analysis.

- **DIRECTOR OF MARKETING:** Degreed individual with 8 years experience (preferably in magazine/book publishing) to provide strategic direction for ancillary product direct-mail marketing, supervise marketing managerial staff, and give input to new product R&D. Must have proven experience managing direct-mail marketing efforts.

To combine career with ministry, mail/fax résumé with cover letter detailing salary history to: Christianity Today, Inc., HR Dept.-CT, 465 Gundersen Dr., Carol Stream, IL 60188; fax: (630) 260-0114; E-mail: CTIHRDept@aol.com.

SEARCHING FOR MINISTRY?

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EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC with organ/piano skills wanted for 400-member PCA church. Trinity Presbyterian Church, 975 Willington Dr., Orangeburg, SC 29118; E-mail: nhisgrip@aol.com.

IMMEDIATE OPENING for CPA in Eugene, OR, CPA office. No audits, otherwise diversified. City in beautiful area and close to ocean, skiing, lakes, & forests. CT Classified Box 212, 465 Gundersen Dr., Carol Stream, IL 60188.

FACULTY POSITION. Missions professor for 1998-99 or long-term. Theology professor for 1999-2000. Write: Academic Dean, Alliance Biblical Seminary, P.O. Box 1095, Manila 1099, Philippines.

SIMPSON COLLEGE (Redding, CA) anticipates several faculty positions open for August 1998 due to growing enrollment.

- **Youth Ministries:** Doctorate preferred. Successful church ministry experience required. Able to teach a variety of youth ministry courses, as well as contribute in some areas of biblical studies.

- **Biblical Studies:** Emphasis in Hebrew and Old Testament. Doctorate required; college teaching experience preferred.

- **Theology:** Doctorate required. Able to assist with theology, historical theology, church history, and biblical studies courses.

- **Music:** Emphasis in worship and ministry. Also able to assist in one or more of the following areas: choral direction, introductory classes, string or brass teaching, piano teaching, or voice instruction. Doctor's degree and church music ministry experience required.

- **Education:** Doctorate or extensive education exp. required as well as understanding of teacher credentialing and graduate education.

- **Computer Applications:** Able to teach general computer-use courses, computer applications to education and business, and programming.

- **English:** Emphasis in composition & rhetoric. Able to oversee general education composition program and to develop writing concentration in English major. Doctorate required.

- **Psychology:** Ph.D. or ABD required. Emphasis in experimental psychology with interest in one or more of the following sub areas: developmental, perception, cognition, or physiological psychology.

- **Mathematics.** Ph.D. to teach primarily upper-division courses in new math major.

Candidate should (1) be committed to the integration of faith and academic excellence (2) be supportive of the mission and in agreement with the doctrinal statement of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, and (3) evidence a strong interest in teaching and working with students. Application forms may be requested from the Provost, Simpson College, 2211 College View Dr., Redding, CA 96003 tel.: (916) 224-5600; fax: (916) 224-2051; E-mail: gbrown@simpsonca.edu.

PASTOR: Six-year-old nondenom., seeker-sensitive ministry, contemporary worship style seeks seminary-trained pastor with gifts of evangelism, leadership, shepherding, discipline. Min. 3 yrs. experience. Attendance less than 100. Located in south Nashville, TN. Send résumé and message tape to: Springbrook Community Church, c/o David Baker 6021 Deer Trace, Nashville, TN 37211 ph., (615) 661-5600; fax: (615) 831-2212.

CHURCH PLACEMENT SERVICE

Networking of churches & ministers seeking placement. CMPN, P.O. Box 1132, Barre, VT 05641; (802) 476-8902.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

PROGRAM DIRECTOR CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY PROGRAM

The School of Counseling and Human Services at Regent University has an immediate opening for a Psy.D. program director. Applicants must have a doctorate in psychology. The position requires strengths in program administration/development, clinical work, and teaching. Responsibilities will include setting program goals, curriculum coordination, faculty supervision, budget administration, and ensuring compliance with accreditation standards. The director will report directly to the dean of the School of Counseling. Salary and rank will be commensurate with experience. Applications will be taken until the position is filled. Send letter of interest and vita to Dr. William Hathaway, Chair, Program Director Search Committee, School of Counseling and Human Services, 1000 Regent University Dr., Virginia Beach, VA 23464; fax: (757) 579-4263. Regent University is an evangelical graduate university. Qualified prospective faculty will receive consideration without discrimination on the basis of disability, race, color, gender, age, national or ethnic origin.

POSITIONS WANTED

BAPTIST MINISTER with Psy.D., M.A., MCC, M.Th. degrees seeks pastorate: (910) 378-1339.

YOUTH EVANGELIST for Generation Xers or speaking engagements. Also perform drama skits & comedy. Ed Peart: (1-800) 994-043.

ACADEMIC

HYMNODY IN AMERICAN

PROTESTANTISM: A Call for Papers
The Institute for the Study of American Evangelicals announces a project using hymn texts as a source for illuminating American protestant history. The ISAE seeks proposals or competitive grants of \$1,500 for article-length papers that study some aspect of the 90 most-often republished hymns. Successful papers will use the rich hymnological literature that is available on individual hymns and their authors, but they will use that literature to shed more light on important questions in broader Protestant history. Proposals and supporting materials must be received by April 30, 1998. For details, application information, and a copy of the list of most frequently published hymns, contact the ISAE, Wheaton College, Wheaton, IL 60187; (630) 52-5437; isae@wheaton.edu.

EDUCATION

A SABBATICAL IN PREACHING

GORDON-CONWELL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY offers to experienced preachers an opportunity to study with Dr. Haddon Robinson and assist him in the teaching of homiletics for one semester, Fall 1998. Financial assistance and housing are available for pastors able to invest in this sabbatical opportunity. Those selected may also choose to use this experience as a seminar in the doctor of ministry program. For application forms, write to: Sabbatical in Preaching Program, Dr. Kenneth L. Swetland, Academic Dean, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, 130 Essex St., S. Hamilton, MA 01982. Application deadline is April 1, 1998.

EDUCATION

SEMINARY DEGREES: Home Study. Theological Education Center, P.O. Box 41554, Baton Rouge, LA 70835. Online catalog: <http://www.harborcity.org/tec/> or send \$2. Phone: (504) 296-7531.

FREE, FORTY-LESSON Bible correspondence course. No private interpretations. Freedom Facts, P.O. Box 447, Long Key, FL 33001-0447.

JOURNAL OF INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES
Award-winning Christian journal, integrating knowledge, ethics, and faith, Vol. IX 1997 on *The Quest for the Holy Grail* (ca. 224 p.). Sample: \$15 prepaid to Institute for Interdisciplinary Research, 1065 Pine Bluff Dr., Pasadena, CA 91107.

INT'L. ACADEMY OF APOLOGETICS, EVANGELISM, & HUMAN RIGHTS, Strasbourg, France; 2nd annual study session: July 7-18, 1998. Lecturers: Mike Horton, Rod Rosenblatt, John Warwick Montgomery, etc. Limited to 20 registrants; \$2,495. For descriptive brochure phone: (805) 682-3020.

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I CAN THINK OF NO MESSAGE MORE IMPORTANT for theological education today—"relationship is everything." The mission of Beeson is to prepare persons whom God has called to be ministers of the Gospel for service in the Church of Jesus Christ. This requires a serious engagement with the primary documents of the Christian faith, a deep understanding of our historical and theological foundations, as well as the ability to read the culture and boldly proclaim God's Word. But books, classrooms, and computers do not by themselves a theological community make! This

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When this happens, the chapel will become as important as the library, the prayer closet as prized as the computer lab.



Timothy George

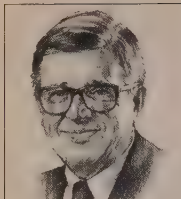
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Madison Avenue's Spiritual Chic

The typical television commercial is "a morality play for our time."

"A car that can help save your soul." Would that commercial entice *you* to buy a Volvo? Or how about this: A young woman sits in church, "confessing" her miserly ways. "It's not a sin to be frugal," the preacher reassures her. And the young woman is released from guilt to enjoy her sporty new Chevy Cavalier.

Madison Avenue has discovered spiritual chic.

Commercials are cultural bellwethers. Advertisers spend fortunes on studies to probe our psyches so they can pitch their products to our deepest longings. Today "spirituality is in," says Sam Keen, author of *Hymns to an Unknown God*. It has become profitable to exploit Americans' growing spiritual hunger.

In a commercial for IBM's Solutions for a Small Planet, Catholic nuns walking to vespers talk about surfing the Net. Gatorade features Michael Jordan running in Tibet and meeting an Eastern holy man who intones, "Life is a sport; drink it up." Snickers shows a politically correct football team inviting a Catholic priest to bless the team, followed by a rabbi, a Native American, a Buddhist, and a long line of other spiritual leaders. The tag line: "Not going anywhere for awhile? Grab a Snickers."

There is no missing the religious overtones in this familiar television commercial: With a flood threatening to wash away the family home, a father cries out for help. Behold, the heavens open and a giant cartoon hand descends to rescue the family from disaster. The company, of course, is Allstate insurance. One almost expects to see the family offer up a prayer: "We thank thee, Allstate, for thy help in times of trouble."

The need for salvation has been imprinted on the human soul since the Fall. Ironically, in contemporary America, advertisers seem more attuned to that need than our spiritual leaders are, and more adept at exploiting it. This is no accident: According to sociologist James Twitchell in *Adcult USA*, the people who developed the art of modern advertising in the early part of this century were largely Christians, often sons of clergymen, who imported the methodology of religious revivalism into the commercial arena. The spiritual sequence of sin-guilt-redemption was transposed into the psychological sequence of problem-anxiety-resolution.

Thus the typical television commercial is, in Twitchell's words, "a morality play for our time." We see a man or woman in distress: he has a cold; she has stains on the laundry. A second figure appears on the screen promising relief. This person gives witness to the power of the featured product. The product is tried and, Hallelujah! the problem is solved. Finally, the disembodied voice of a male announcer—like a voice from on high—presses home the product's advantages.

"The powerful allure of religion and advertising is the same," Twitchell concludes. Both reassure us: "We will be rescued."

Since advertisers are paid to hook people at the deepest level, it's no wonder they are hooking into the spiritual. We were created to be in communion with the Creator, and the faith dimension is at the core of our nature. Novelist John Updike compares the effort put into commercials with the fanatical care medieval monks put into decorating sacred books. The goal of all this labor, Updike writes, is "to persuade us that a certain beer or candy bar, or insurance company or oil-based conglomerate, is, like the crucified Christ . . . the gateway to the good life."

Of course, commercials have always sold more than products. When an ad features a well-dressed businessman, it's selling an image of success. When an ad features a sultry model, well, we all know what it's selling. But it is profoundly disturbing to see religion reduced to one more handle for manipulating viewers' acquisitive desires. When our kids hum the catchy jingle of the latest commercial, is their spiritual impulse being diverted into consumerism? Are they absorbing Madison Avenue's false values?

We must remember that no part of culture is religiously neutral, no part free from the need for an informed Christian critique. Ads do a service when they convey information about a product in a creative manner. But today's ads often do much more. They exploit our deepest longings, sell false philosophies, pander to self-indulgence. And ads with spiritual themes trivialize religion by reducing it to a marketing ploy.

We should not shrink from calling admakers to account. Saab's "Find your own road" campaign featured characters who fantasize about never shaving again, about leaving work, about "flying in the face of convention," and driving off into the sunset. In other words, Saab wasn't just selling cars, it was selling a philosophy: the theme of autonomy, of breaking the rules, of rebellion against the constraints of civilized society.

After I criticized the ad on my radio program *BreakPoint*, the president of the company notified us that the ad program was under review and that we would not be seeing those ads anymore. The company's new ads stress product and performance. Two thumbs up for Saab.

Make a point of discussing ads like these when they appear on the screen and inoculating yourself and your children against their appeal. And why not write to the company expressing your objections? After all, a good ad should sell a product, not a philosophy.

Forum: The Future of Evangelical Theology • A Psychiatrist's Plea

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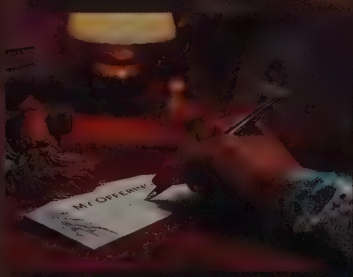
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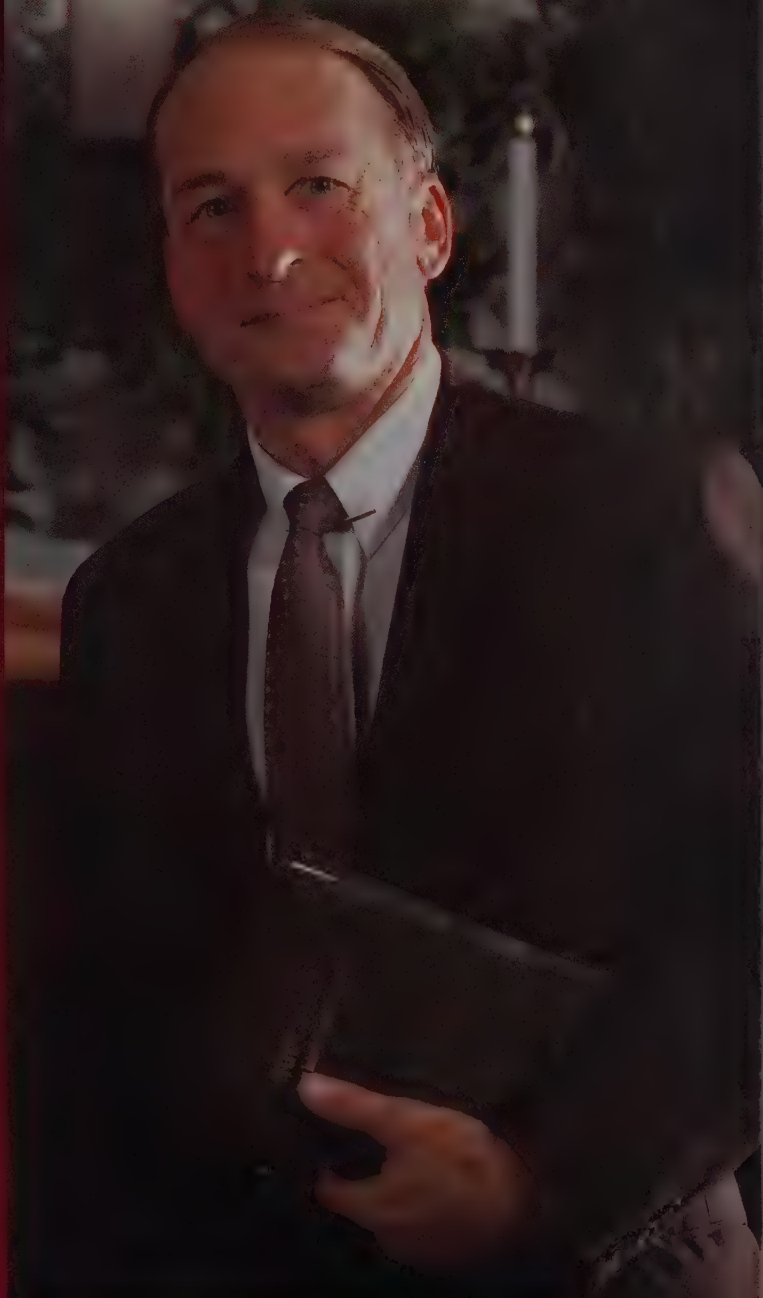
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CHRISTIANITY TODAY[®]

Volume 42, No. 2
February 9, 1998

A Magazine of Evangelical Conviction

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Michael G. Maudlin,
Managing Editor

A Tough Choice

INSIDE CT

How we chose this issue's cover story provides a window into this magazine's editorial dynamics. We had three contenders, each representing a different piece of journalistic turf CHRISTIANITY TODAY is committed to cover.

First was an issue debated in the church. Psychiatrist Dwight Carlson takes up the task of "Exposing the Myth That Christians Should Not Have Emotional Problems" (see p. 28). His article is paired with a frank conversation about pretense in the pews with Steve Arterburn of New Life Clinics, the group that has done the most to make evangelicals comfortable with seeking therapy. We felt that many readers struggle with the proper role of psychology.

Second, an issue debated in the Christian academy. Our next contender for cover story was a spirited exchange over whether the evangelical theological consensus, which made our movement possible, has broken down or will soon do so. Bethel Seminary professor Roger Olson, coauthor of *20th-Century Theology*, sketches the theological map, and three theologians respond: the staunch-conservative-turned-theological-pioneer Clark Pinnock; the hip-liberal-turned-paleo-orthodox Thomas Oden; and Southern Baptist historical theologian Timothy George, who hasn't changed much but is always worth listening to (see p. 52). While fewer of our

readers live with these issues day to day, we felt many would be interested. We are all affected by the outcome of the debate, which will determine the degree of evangelical common ground.

And the winner is—a Christian idea debated in the culture. Apartheid was doubly tragic because South African culture was so permeated by Christian themes. During apartheid, Christians proved just how much evil could be done in Christ's name. Beginning on page 18, the new dean of Duke University's divinity school, L. Gregory Jones, shows that while the church was crippled it was not broken, and out of the ashes has emerged the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, "one of the most dramatic and hopeful signs of an authentically Christian contribution to political life to emerge in many years." Combined with Seattle Pacific University professor Susan VanZanten Gallagher's eyewitness account and Bishop Desmond Tutu's reprise of what has been achieved, this cover-story package constitutes an exciting and hopeful statement of Christian social impact today. We felt we could all be inspired by this report.

If you disagree with our choice, feel free to read your contender first. CT editors try to cover each of these areas, and more, as we attempt to report on what the Holy Spirit is doing in his church. As always, let us know what you think of our efforts and choices (see Letters, p. 6).

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"RIGHT DIAGNOSIS, WRONG RESPONSE"

"The Making of a Revolution" [Dec. 8] conveys the "giddy" excitement Phillip Johnson and others feel in believing he leads a revolution that will cause Darwinism to go "belly up." However, the situation warrants more caution.

The article ignored the question of why many Christians most qualified to assess Johnson's scientific claims remain unconvinced. His philosophy troubles many Christian scientists more than his scientific claims. He agrees with atheists such as Dawkins, Sagan, and Provine that evolution and a materialistic metaphysics are inseparable, implicitly affirming the logic of their anti-Christian argument—that evolution by natural selection (if true) implies Christianity is false. But this is precisely the issue that needs refutation. Equating natural selection with materialistic metaphysics makes no more sense than equating gravity with materialism because it explains planetary motion without mentioning God. Johnson has ceded the most critical part of the debate to those with an anti-Christian agenda, insisting on a position that is more restrictive than that held by seminal fundamentalist theologian B. B. Warfield.

Remarkably, Johnson labels Christian scientists who disagree with him "accommodationists," saying they lack objectivity—that "they are thirsty for approval of non-Christian peers" or have been "brainwashed." What could compromise objectivity more than Johnson's own belief that acknowledging evolution is tantamount to betraying Jesus?

A concise assessment of Johnson's work would be: Right political diagnosis—wrong response. Evolution is inappropriately used to advance metaphysical ends, but Johnson's response is philosophically and scientifically flawed.

*Prof. Joel W. Cannon
Centenary College of Louisiana
Shreveport, La.*

Tim Stafford's report on Phillip Johnson should convince all creationists that nothing new has been added to the "creation-

WE GET LETTERS

Using e-mail, fax, and old-fashioned snail mail, readers' letters to CT editors totaled nearly 1,500 during 1997. By far, the subject that commanded the greatest attention was the ongoing controversy over the proposed, then withdrawn, inclusive-language edition of the New International Version of the Bible (already published in Great Britain), and the ensuing discussion of Bible translation issues. Other articles that produced strong reactions from readers in 1997 were Daniel Clendenin's piece on Eastern Orthodoxy (Jan. 6, 1997) and Gary Burge's analysis of evangelical worship (Oct. 6). Scores of writers also responded to Michael Hamilton's examination of the legacy of the late Francis Schaeffer (Mar. 3) and to Philip Yancey's "A State of Ungrace" (Feb. 3), asking if the church has forgotten its central message in fighting contemporary culture wars.

For 1998, keep those cards, letters, faxes, and e-mails coming.



evolution" debate that will persuade the evolutionist to change his mind.

*Eugene F. Anthony
Ballwin, Mo.*

Although I agree wholeheartedly with Johnson's criticisms of Darwinian evolution, I'm not sure a complete revolution can occur until the efforts of deconstruction are supplemented with those of reconstruction. I have a feeling most people will hold to a bad theory, in this case Darwinian evolution, until they are offered something better.

*Tom Oord
Rialto, Calif.*

■ If Johnson is correct that evolutionary theory fails to account adequately for the existing data, I have full confidence that those scientists who have expertise in this area will recognize this state of affairs and move toward some better explanation. This is how science works. I am completely unconvinced of Johnson's position that the scientific community wants to cling to an inadequate theory because it helps them maintain an atheistic world-view.

*Prof. Glenn G. Sparks
Purdue University
West Lafayette, Ind.*

LEARNING TO DIALOGUE

■ The new ECT statement on salvation improves upon and clarifies the ambiguities of the earlier statement and shows that just as we learn to speak by speaking and to write by writing, so we learn to

dialogue by dialoguing ["Evangelicals and Catholics Together: A New Initiative," Dec. 8]. That Catholic theologians wish to embrace the doctrine of justification by faith alone as accurate biblical teaching, and that they desire to acknowledge that the core of the Reformation theological tradition is in agreement with, and not in contradiction to, the biblical gospel, is most welcome. On the other hand, that evangelical scholars are admitting the term "free" in connection with our willing adherence to the gospel (something Martin Luther would have died ten deaths before acknowledging), and that faith,

"though inherently personal, is not a purely private possession but involves our participation in the body of Christ" throughout the centuries of her existence, is a welcome corrective to certain traditions within evangelical Protestantism.

In reading this document I feel like a man who thought he was looking into the heart of an enemy, but who saw there love and understanding. Add my name to the list.

*Pastor Tom Scheck
Evangelical Free Church
Orleans, Neb.*

■ As a Catholic and long-time subscriber to CT I was heartened to see such a clear articulation of the saving faith that Catholics and evangelicals share in common. I hope the statement receives a wide hearing and that the group that produced it can continue their discussions with mutual love and respect as common brethren in the faith. Although Timothy George's assessment was well said, it would have been nice to have had a Catholic assessment as well. Also, it seems appropriate to me that in future discussions some respected theologians who are women might be added to the group from both traditions.

*Rick McKinney
Gaithersburg, Md.*

Although I might have used a slightly different expression in a few places if I had written this text, I am so pleased with the context and the mood of this document, and especially of Timothy George's as-

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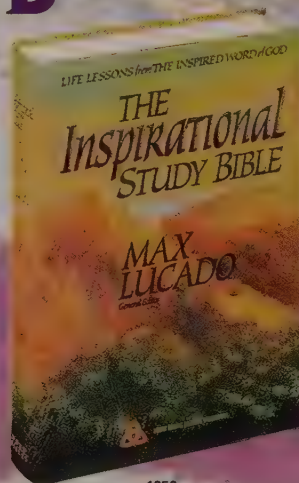
*"I thought I'd left
my Christian roots
far behind..."*



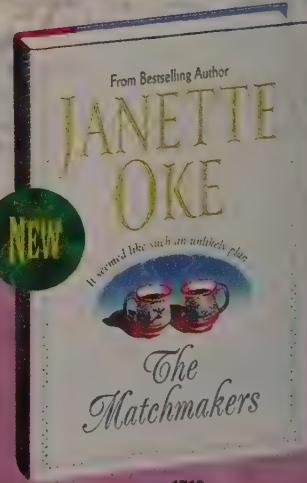
But then the books I found through *Crossings* book club reminded me that God is always near. Max Lucado helped me understand what the emptiness I'd been feeling was all about. And Charles Stanley showed me how to look for God in the most ordinary of places. Now I feel good about God again. After a long time away."

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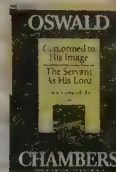
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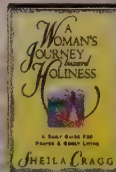
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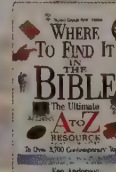
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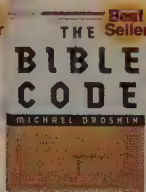
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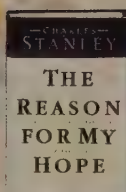
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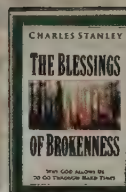
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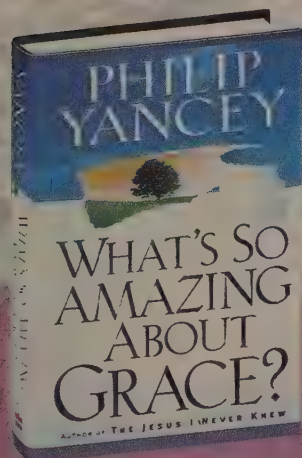


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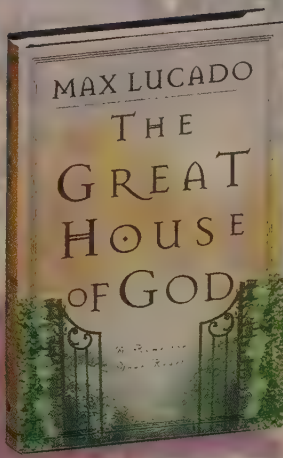


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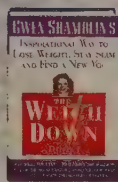
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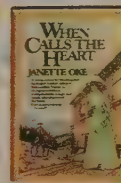
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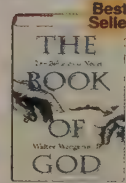
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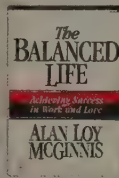
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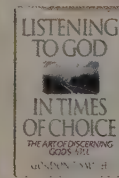
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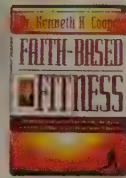
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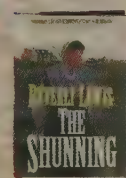
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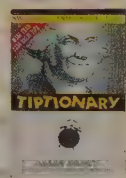
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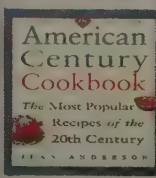
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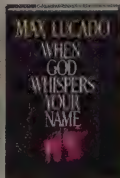
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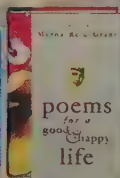
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essment, that I enthusiastically add my signature to your list. *Prof. Roger Nicole*
Reformed Theological Seminary
Maitland, Fla.

Unity is a fine thing—but not at the price of compromise: I'm sure you will agree. The idea seems fine—but we see no move by the Catholics to give up the real reasons for separation, which are not in the Bible!

Paul B. Cole
Big Bear City, Calif.

The continuing attempts of Protestants to call Roman Catholics "brothers and sisters in Christ" reflects the value our society places on compromise rather than the truth of the gospel. I believe there are several substantial issues that separate Protestant and Roman Catholic fellowships: (1) the interpreting of the Bible as part of church tradition rather than as being the sole authority for life and faith; (2) the centuries of accumulated church tradition that are upheld as authoritative truth that often contradicts the most basic biblical pronouncements; (3) the blatant idolatry supported by the highest levels of Roman Catholic tradition; (4) the distortion of the biblical teaching of salvation through Christ's atoning death; and (5) the reliance upon a complex system of sacraments and works. While the document admits these "differences" of belief, it fails to acknowledge that these are at the core of Roman Catholic tradition, and it is doubtful that these will change. I maintain that the Roman Catholic tradition's contradiction of Scripture in these issues should keep any from considering them in the family of the Christian faith.

To continue to speak to Roman Catholics as if they were true followers of Jesus Christ is to fail to speak the Word of God accurately to those who most need to hear it. *Christopher Schansberg*
Scottsburg, Ind.

The best answer to the ECT crowd is that more North American Catholics have been born again in the last 25 years than Europeans evangelized during the Reformation. God helping us, those of us in Roman Catholic evangelization will continue to lead Catholics to biblical salvation and then to urge them to leave the Scarlet Harlot! *Pastor Lyle P. Murphy*
Grace Bible Mission
Lee's Summit, Mo.

MARY'S UNIQUE ROLE

At a time when some leading Protestants are de-emphasizing theologi-

cal differences in order to seek agreement with Roman Catholics, it was refreshing to read David Neff's courageous and biblically based editorial ["Let Mary Be," Dec. 8] on the unique role that Mary played in God's great plan of salvation. Let us honor her memory as the blessed Mother of Jesus and learn from her example of joyful obedience. But let us not mix folklore with divinely revealed truth. Indeed, let Mary be!

Humberto M. Rasi
Silver Spring, Md.

I believe there is an unfortunate misunderstanding afoot with regard to the question of declaring the Mother of God (an ancient, orthodox declaration rather audacious in itself) Co-Redeemer, Mediatrix, and Advocate, a misunderstanding that Catholics and Protestants alike may be sharing in this matter. Like the title Mother of God, the proposed nomenclature is attempting to highlight a theological truth that on its face only appears to be primarily about the singular personhood of Mary herself. In fact, the office of Co-Redeemer/Mediator/Advocate has a simple name: *Christian*. Every obedient believer participates in and cooperates with the plan of salvation on behalf of others. In so doing they become, in a very real sense, co-redeemers, mediators, and advocates; furthermore, they are called to "share in the divine nature," and are ultimately destined to be glorified with Christ and to interact with the life of the Holy Trinity. Mary is simply the highest model of this reality; as the church's Exemplar, she calls us to imitate her own graced response to God Almighty—like mother, like children. Seen in this light, the proposed "elevation" of Mary is nothing more than an announcement of the immanence of the glorification of the entire church, part and parcel of the gospel itself.

Nicholas A. Marziani, Jr., Associate Rector
St. Nicholas' Episcopal Church
Midland, Tex.

Neff's editorial treated the concept of Mary as "Co-Redeemer" and "Co-Mediatrix" as something yet to be asserted by the Roman Catholic Church (RCC). While it may be true that the current pope has not offered an official statement on the issue, the RCC has not been silent. The fact is that the RCC has declared, with papal authority, that Mary holds both titles. Even Pope John Paul II has said so "on the side." I have been reading through the "new" Roman Catholic Catechism to see what the RCC believes. A short side trip

on the topic of Mary took me to the utterances of Pope Leo XIII who, in 1892 and 1893, proclaimed Mary to be both Co-Mediator with Christ and even Co-Redeemer through her abundant grace. The fact that the current pope has not made a statement does not erase the record. *It is already established* as doctrine and therefore does not need restatement to be confirmed.

Can we really even think of making a treaty with the RCC until the offices of mediator, savior, and redeemer are given solely to Christ? *Pastor Randy Campbell*
Midland, Mich.

While Leo XIII and Pius X have used these titles for the Virgin Mary, they did so in ways that were not fully binding on Roman Catholics. The petition that Newsweek reported on asked the current pope to proclaim Mary's roles as Co-Redeemer and Mediatrix of All Graces as dogma—much in the same way that Pius IX declared her Immaculate Conception in what was touted as the first infallible papal declaration.
 —Eds.

Neff skates on thin ice with his suggestion that Protestants need a greater appreciation for Mary as Theotokos. This title reflects the Alexandrian tendency to confuse the two natures of Christ, thereby undermining his humanity. In the Latin West, Theotokos was translated *Dei Genetrix*, or "Mother of God," a term that certainly fueled medieval Mariolatry on the popular level. It is possible to reject the Antiochian separation of the two natures of Christ and still suggest that Nestorius's proposal to call Mary Christotokos represented a clearer and more biblical alternative to Theotokos.

James A. Patterson
Memphis, Tenn.

AMY'S "REAL LOOK AT LIFE"

I was happy to see CT give Amy Grant's latest album a fair and balanced review in light of CCM's supposed identity crisis ["Where's the Gospel?" Dec. 8]. The only crisis I see is from those in the evangelical community who are pharisaical enough to narrowly define what makes music Christian. I've followed Amy since her first album. I've loved seeing and hearing her raw honesty about life, love, and the universe. She is not diminished as a Christian artist, wife, and mother for sharing a real look at life. I've listened to her critics since she had the chutzpah to "take the cross over" to the secular adult contemporary crowd. Folks seem to forget that she, more than any other Christian artist, has planted seeds of God's love in

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the hearts of many people who would probably never be reached by the more traditional "Praise and Worship" genre. Personally, I believe love songs to one's child, husband, and friends give plenty of praise and worship to the Lord who brought them all together in the first place.

Kathleen Olsen
Port Orchard, Wash.

■ I agree with William Romanowski's article/review of Amy Grant's new album *Behind the Eyes*. While I can appreciate the album musically and professionally, its lyric content basically left me wanting to call Amy and ask how her quiet time was going. If these songs come from her life and heart over the past couple of years, what does that say about her Christian walk? The article, however, opened up a new way to see it, and basically put me in my place.

I'm forced to check myself—if I were as vulnerable, what would my music be?

Rick Stilwell
Columbia, S.C.

■ Taking Amy Grant's latest CD out of context from the rest of her music collec-

tion is like pulling selections out of Ecclesiastes and accusing the author of secularism. Let's grant Christian artists some freedom of authenticity and receive it within the context of their broader Christian testimony, concerning which Grant's is unquestioned. Had the Israelite community of faith applied the same litmus tests for acceptable music as the contemporary evangelical community, we would not have Song of Solomon in our Bible.

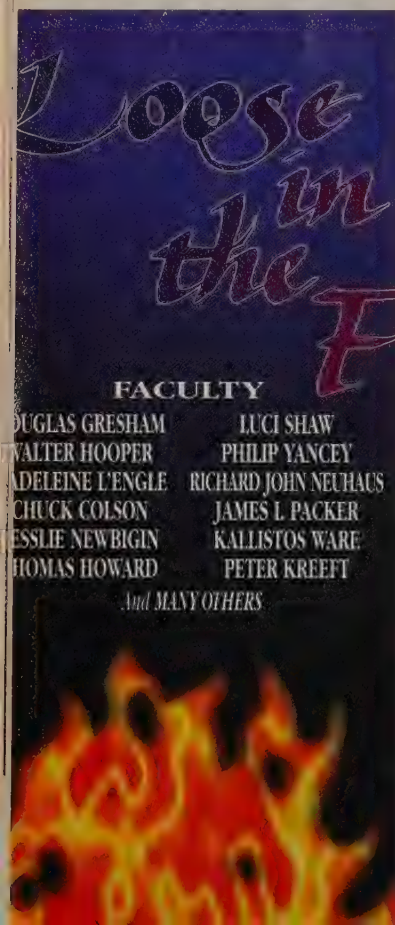
John Hilber
Gig Harbor, Wash.

Most Christian music is about entertainment. Any so-called ministry in and of the music itself is in God's hands, not the entertainer's. I'm not sure all music people would say that, but as one who listens to it all, I will say it because I have tried to get some "Christian" musicians in my church and discovered that they are under the control of the marketers who book them, and their "ministry" is secondary to the "market" that buys the stuff. If you don't believe that, try getting a popular entertainer, Christian or otherwise, in your local small community and you will find a brick wall, commonly known as a "booking

agent," who will tell you quickly what matters most—M.O.N.E.Y.—we can book them if you are in the right M.A.R.K.E.T. It's about money, friends—*ministry* continues to be in God's hands, thankfully.

Pastor Gene Young
First United Methodist Church
Mooresville, Ind.

■ The secularization of Amy Grant's music disappoints me, just as her explicitly Christian music satisfied me. I listen to CCM to hear appealing music that addresses devotional, theological, and practical aspects of my Christian faith. Explicit reference to God, Christ, faith, or related concepts is fundamental. I believe Grant's latest album is so secular that the GMA, CMTA, and RIAA should not classify it as Christian or gospel. Music by a Christian is not necessarily Christian music. If, as the article suggests, one of the main reasons for including Grant's album in these charts is to boost CCM's percentage of the overall market and secure "television coverage, sponsorship, and advertising," then I think the executives making those decisions must grapple with the concept that "you cannot serve God and Mammon."



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Let's keep both Cs in CCM and retain its uniquely Christian nature. *Garth Rieman
Arlington, Va.*

ONE FEMALE PROFESSOR'S EXPERIENCE

☐ I was discouraged to read "Do Christian Colleges Treat Their Women Faculty Fairly?" [Dec. 8]. I am a female faculty member at a CCCU college, and my experience working in a Christian college has been overwhelmingly positive. Like one of the women quoted, I worked at two secular colleges before coming to Point Loma Nazarene College. My job at PLNC is the most satisfying job I have ever had. The level of encouragement and support that I have received from my colleagues and students (both male and female) has been a great blessing to me.

Many of the concerns and experiences discussed in the article happen in secular institutions as well as Christian colleges. As members of Christian communities, those of us who work in CCCU schools have an obligation to make sure that all voices are heard and that all talents are recognized as gifts from God regardless of gender or race.

*Prof. Maria Zack
San Diego, Calif.*

☐ In the article on women faculty in Christian colleges, I was quoted regarding the tenure of women faculty as saying, "What matters most is the amount of scholarship produced." This should have said, "What matters more (vis à vis student mentoring) is the amount of scholarship produced." Hopefully, what matters most, our first criterion for tenure in Christian colleges, will continue to be biblically based teaching. My point was that its development can be more difficult for women faculty who often bear heavier responsibilities for mentoring female students. There just aren't enough of us to go around.

Prof. Shirley J. Roels

*Calvin College
Grand Rapids, Mich.*

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY'S DEBT

☐ There is an error in the heading and the News article "\$27 Million Payment Trims Debt" [Dec. 8]. Both indicated that the bondholders received \$27 million. If that were correct, then the bondholders would have received *all* of the principal and interest owed to them, and I would not have said what I am quoted as saying. The fact is that the bondhold-

ers were *owed* over \$20 million (about \$15 million of principal and several million in unpaid interest), but they were *not* paid nearly that much. None of the bondholders received any of the unpaid interest owed them. The total amount paid to bondholders in 1997 was about half as much as the article indicates they received in September.

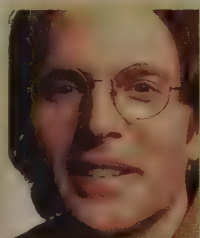
*Robert E. Newell, CPA
Former bondholder's committee member
Seffner, Fla.*

For the article, Liberty University spokesperson Mark DeMoss provided a payback figure of \$27 million. Now, however, Liberty general counsel Jerry Falwell, Jr., says the last group of bondholders to be repaid received only about \$15 million. Falwell agrees that no interest was paid in the settlement, only principal.

—Eds.

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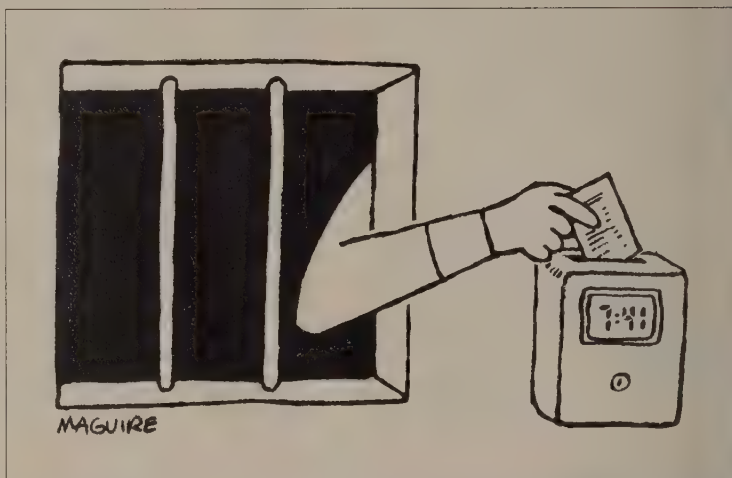
For one key period of his life, Ron Humphrey worked a typical eight-hour day as a computer-systems manager, followed by another four hours after dinner. He worked Saturdays as well.

Humphrey was not working for a cruel, Dickensian boss. As an inmate in a federal prison, Humphrey found his work to be a constructive escape from the ennui of his cell.

Unfortunately, few prison inmates have the opportunity for gainful employment. The federal prison population in the United States has nearly doubled since 1990, and the total U.S. prison population is now almost 1.2 million. Our rate of incarceration is second only to that of Russia. Remarkably, the percentage of prisoners working has dropped dramatically: from about 75 percent in 1885 to about 8 percent in 1995. When modern "penitentiaries" were founded in the 1790s, they were designed on Christian principles, with work as a key force in helping prisoners toward reform. But public concern grew over competition for jobs from the prison labor force, especially with the coming of the Great Depression, during which 33 states passed laws prohibiting the sale of convict-made goods on the open market. Federal laws passed since then prompted an assistant attorney general in Arizona to say, "The original conception of the penitentiary was . . . turned on its head. Prison labor, once viewed as indispensable for restoring a healthy relationship between the criminal and society, was made literally a federal offense."

The sheer volume of prison idleness demands a massive attitudinal shift on the part of society, so that private enterprise will link with public administration for the betterment of offenders and society. The benefits of prison employment (not to be confused with the economic exploitation of offenders) are evident: enhanced mental health for the prisoners, reduced violence, beefed-up family support, preserved marriages, diminished violence and recidivism, and increased restitution paid to victims of crimes.

Humphrey himself is a testimony to these benefits. He has been out of prison nearly a decade and is now circulation manager for the Prison Fellowship publication *Inside Journal*. Prison work is a mental-health issue, he says. "You keep yourself busy or you go nuts," he told CT.



"You have to look for ways to get through it without your mind being destroyed."

Marilyn Moses of the National Institute of Justice agrees. "From an offender perspective," says Moses, "doing nothing but 'three hots [hot meals] and a cot' is terrible." Indeed, says a Justice Fellowship report, work "can prevent some of the frustration that comes from idleness," frustration that often results in fights and violent assaults. When 85 percent of Minnesota's prison population was working, a Justice Fellowship report points out, it had one of the lowest rates of prison violence in the country.

BEATING THE ODDS

But prisoners who work are not just killing time: they are doing something constructive. In Humphrey's case, work was a way of participating in the life of his family. His six-day work week allowed him to pay the rent for his wife and four children, while she could use income from her nursing-home jobs on medical bills and food. But more significantly, "My monthly check indicated to us that I was still a participating member of the family."

This helped the Humphreys beat the odds: 85 percent of men who go into prison married are divorced by the time they are released. Of the remaining 15 percent, half see their marriages fail within their first year back in society. Humphrey believes his contribution to his family's maintenance created the context of confidence and caring in which his marriage could survive.

Clearly, the social cost of allowing prisoners' families to fall into a pattern of social dependency is enormous, while the payback for investing in prison industries is measured

not only in the economic value of goods produced and incarceration subsidies, but also in the incalculable value of families preserved.

PRISONERS WHO PAY

Prison labor also allows for offenders (where appropriate) to make some degree of restitution to their victims. Restitution teaches them that their victims are human like themselves by forging a personal and financial connection between victim and victimizer. Unfortunately, our courts too rarely consider the possibility of prisoners participating in restitution. In 1986, according to a Department of Justice study, 36 percent of felons placed on probation (including 52 percent of burglars) were ordered to pay restitution. But only 14 percent of felons sent to prison were ordered to pay restitution. The courts must realize more fully the potential for inmates to pay, literally, for their crimes.

The maturity that comes from participating in meaningful prison work—not the same as slave labor or chain gangs—shows in recidivism rates. In one study, after release to halfway houses, only 6.6 percent of participants who had worked in prison had their parole revoked or were charged with committing a new crime in their first year of supervised release, compared to 10.1 percent of those who had not worked in prison. Another study found that after three years the recidivism rate of those who had

worked for Wisconsin's state prison industries program was 15 percent lower than it was for those who had not.

Given such a positive record for prison industries, who could oppose them? In a strong economy, hardly anybody. Still, prison industries have a long way to go to achieve the effectiveness and public acceptance they should have even though Congress in 1979 relaxed the restrictions against prison industries. In October 1997, for example, certain manufacturing interests rallied around a bill introduced in Congress that would end the requirement that federal agencies should shop first with federal government-run inmate work programs. Perhaps that cozy marketing arrangement with federal agencies should be annulled. But October's protests were framed in terms of prisoners "taking job opportunities away from thousands of honest, hard-working Americans." That's political rhetoric, not reality. Case studies show that when private industry contracts for prison work, American jobs are saved, as low-skill, low-wage tasks are retained in our prisons instead of being shipped outside the country.

We all have choices. As one inmate told Charles Colson, "I can either lie on my prison bunk and cost the taxpayers about \$16,000 a year, or I can be out here doing something productive, paying back society." Or as former Chief Justice Burger framed the question: "Do we want prisoners to return to society as predators or as producers?" **CI**

WIMBER'S WONDERS

When John Wimber, only 63, fell and died of a brain hemorrhage this past November, we were forced to ponder so unceremonious an end for this prominent preacher of divine healing and other wonders. In recent years Wimber had battled cancer, a stroke, and heart disease, for which many interceded on his behalf. Instead of being healed, his weary body was laid in the ground, leaving admirers and critics alike to sort through the considerable legacy he had left to evangelical Christians.

That legacy leaves many uncomfortable—his linking of "signs and wonders" with church growth, his insistence on seeking the gifts of the Spirit, and his contribution to a participatory style of worship that slipped on wings of song through the back doors of even many avowedly noncharismatic churches. In later years, he saw certain groups in his Vineyard movement splinter off into unfortunate extremes. This, says Kevin Springer, a pastor and coauthor with Wimber of *Power Healing* and *Power Evangelism*, was largely due to his ministry philosophy of "Let the bush grow and then trim it." Under his leadership the Vineyard churches multiplied to more than 750 fellowships worldwide.

Perhaps Wimber's greatest impact, however, was in reminding the larger evangelical community that certain "Pentecostal emphases" could also be found in the Bible. "He raised the level of expectation of divine action in the life of the church," says J. I. Packer of Regent College, who at times took issue with points in Wimber's teaching. Wayne Grudem, author of *The Gift of Prophecy in the New*

Testament and Today, notes, "He continually talked about the ways we could recognize the Holy Spirit when he manifested himself in people's lives."

Such talk, of course, unsettled those of us whose understandings of the Holy Spirit kept him in a restrictive theological box. So when he died, that skepticism that wants to discount a worker of miracles felt affirmed. This prophet, too, was but a frail mortal.

Yet John Wimber realized his own frailty, never forgetting that he had been a beer-guzzling, drug-abusing pop musician who was converted at the age of 29 while chain-smoking his way through a Quaker-led Bible study. To the extent that he embraced his weaknesses, humbly hearing his critics and asking forgiveness when he had erred (and trimming back the bush when necessary)—to that extent God's power, about which he wrote so much, showed the stronger through him. "Our job is to pray for healing; God's job is to do the healing," Wimber often said, including when he lost his close friend, British charismatic leader David Watson, to cancer after praying fervently for his restoration.

It was this unadorned but theologically astute view of healing that Wimber would want us to remember now in the wake of his early death.

Evangelicals will miss Wimber. And we will recall with gratitude this man who opened himself so transparently to the work of the Holy Spirit that God chose him to teach us what couldn't be found in even the best seminary textbooks. For this reason, John Wimber was, in Packer's words, "a good gift of God to the church." **CI**

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King James Version:

Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.² Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing.³ For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.⁴ Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.

New International Version:

It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.

²Mark my words! I, Paul, tell you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no value to you at all.³Again I declare to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is obligated to obey the whole law.⁴You who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace.

New Living Translation:

So Christ has really set us free. Now make sure that you stay free, and don't get tied up again in slavery to the law.

²Listen! I, Paul, tell you this: If you are counting on circumcision to make you right with God, then Christ cannot help you.³I'll say it again. If you are trying to find favor with God by being circumcised, you must obey all of the regulations in the whole law of Moses.⁴For if you are trying to make yourselves right with God by keeping the law, you have been cut off from Christ! You have fallen away from God's grace.

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"HOW MUCH TRUTH CAN WE TAKE?"

*South Africa's
Christian experiment
for finding healing
from its violent past.*

L. GREGORY JONES

Laurice Nchabeleng tells the panel and the audience how as a school-boy he was taken to the room where his activist father had just been tortured and killed by the South African security forces. In that room he was ordered to wash his hands in his father's blood.

Stories like Nchabeleng's are surfacing all around South Africa. The coun-

try is trying to come to terms with its past. It is a past marked by apartheid and—as we are now learning—atrocities long hidden from view that are now being brought to light. These stories are horrific, yet told in gritty detail.

The storytellers do not sanitize the events, nor are they permitted euphemisms to cover the horrors. The stories are of people being tortured and killed

in unspeakable ways, yet now those ways are being spoken. It is not only victims like Nchabeleng recounting the details of their suffering; it is also the torturers, including high-ranking state officials, confessing their crimes.

Even more astonishing, however, is that these stories are not being told in the context of a confessional. Rather, they are being told on the national stage, and in the midst of national and international debates, as South Africa struggles to come to terms with the burdens of its past. In so doing, South Africa is offering to the rest of the world a test of the power, and perhaps the limits, of the Christian vision of reconciliation. For at the heart of the entire process of confessing the truth about the past is the conviction, and the hope, that a renewed future will be possible that is marked more by reconciliation and peace than by recurring cycles of violence and vengeance. For some, that seems too much to ask. For others, it is the most hopeful sign for political life that we have seen in some time. Before we can evaluate its prospects, however, some background is in order.

RECONSTRUCTION OF A NATION

As apartheid ended and Nelson Mandela was released from prison in 1990, South Africa faced the task of reconstructing a society that had been based on divisions and oppression. This entailed dealing with past injustices. First they looked to the ways other countries had formed "truth commissions" to deal with crimes; some even proposed the formation of "Nuremberg trials" for those responsible for apartheid.

However, in the interim constitution of 1993, South Africa committed itself to a program of amnesty. A key passage of that constitution declares: "Amnesty shall be granted in respect of acts, omissions, and offences associated with political objectives and committed in the course of the conflicts of the past."

This principle became a key feature of a bill establishing a Commission on Truth and Reconciliation passed by the South African Parliament on October 21, 1994. This commission linked together amnesty, truth telling, and a goal of reconciliation as key features of one process. The establishment of the commission made clear that South



Archbishop Desmond Tutu greets witnesses at the Truth and Reconciliation's first hearing, April 15, 1996.

Africa was going to give priority to reconciliation rather than revenge.

The commission was charged with several tasks:

- to establish "as complete a picture as possible of the nature, causes and extent of gross violations of human rights" during the period from March 1, 1960 (the Sharpeville massacre), to the end of 1993;
- to grant amnesty to "persons who make full disclosure of all the relevant facts relating to acts associated with a political objective" in that period;
- to give victims "an opportunity to relate the violations they suffered";
- to take measures of reparation, rehabilitation, and the restoration of

"human and civil dignity" to the victims;

- to report to the nation on its findings;
- and, finally, to make recommendations aimed at the prevention of similar violations in the future.

Obviously, such a momentous and monumental undertaking could succeed only if great care was given to the processes under which the commission would do its work. Amidst many crucial decisions, three have proven pivotal: first, the selection of Archbishop Desmond Tutu to head the commission; second, the careful yet rigorous process by which the various commissioners were chosen; third, the insis-

tence that the entire truth be told, including the sins and crimes committed by the victims of apartheid.

THE GOOD BISHOP

Archbishop Tutu is widely respected throughout South Africa. His gentle spirit, firm convictions, and tireless passion have served the entire process extremely well. Even more, Tutu's adherence to the South African notion of *ubuntu*, which stresses the interdependence of humanity and our need for reconciliation, undergirds his Christian theology and has guided him throughout the commission's work (see Michael Battle, *Reconciliation: The Ubuntu Theology of Desmond Tutu* for more on this theme). Tutu has been able to command widespread respect among diverse and opposite groups within South Africa.

This is also the case with the various commissioners selected to serve on the panels charged with listening to the stories and making decisions about requests for amnesty. One of the chief criteria employed in selecting commissioners was that they needed to have credibility with their own people and credibility among other groups. This scrutiny took a great deal of time and required extensive examination of the long lists of people nominated by the public to serve.

The selection panel included a representative from each of the major political parties, two church leaders, a trade unionist, and two lawyers with expertise in the area of human rights. This panel considered more than 600 names and selected 45 people for public interviews. Anyone could offer objections to any of the candidates. The selection panel developed a final list of 25 names that was presented to President Mandela. He consulted with his cabinet and then selected the final group of 18 commissioners. As a result of this careful discernment process, there has been a high level of trust in the work of the commissioners.

Perhaps most significant in the work of the commission has been the insistence that the entire truth must be told. Tutu has consistently refused to allow the focus to be only on the crimes of white South Africans. Of course, this is not a blanket assertion that "we are all sinners" and so all in need of absolution. There is no doubt that the crimes of the Afrikaner regime, and of the adherents

of apartheid, far exceeded the crimes of the African National Congress and other resistance groups. This is true whether the crimes are measured quantitatively or by the seriousness of the offenses.

At the same time, however, Tutu has insisted that South Africans cannot ignore or cover over the horrors committed by those resisting or seeking to overthrow an unjust regime. If truth telling and amnesty are to be linked to reconciliation, then the whole truth must be confessed. This requires a willingness to examine our own hearts, minds, and lives—whether we are investigating the horrors of South Africa and elsewhere or the particularities of our own lives in less dramatically sinful parts of the world.

SHATTERING REVELATIONS

The process of truth telling has been painful. Tutu himself has often been reduced to tears by the stories he hears told. In an interview, Tutu asks: "What would you do, if you were a mother and you sat there and you heard that your son had been put into a minibus, plied with alcohol, and then, on the border between your country and a foreign country, had some stuff injected into him, and the minibus was then packed with explosives and your son was blown to smithereens?"

"One is shattered in many ways by the revelations," Tutu continues, "but on the other side you are almost exhilarated by how most people have responded to the truth. But I have quite seriously wondered how much truth we can tolerate."

Thus far, South Africa's national culture seems to have been able to tolerate an astonishing level of truthfulness. Yet it has also been accompanied by questions, reservations, and pointed objections. Some worry that amnesty offers cheap reconciliation, particularly since those who confess do not have to express either remorse or repentance. Many, in fact, do express remorse, but that is not the point. Those who do not seem to be getting away with murder—literally.

True, the commitment to amnesty was made as part of the political negotiations that enabled a peaceful transition from apartheid to democratic rule. That is, amnesty was made a precondition of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission, not a result of careful deliberations by the

commission about how best to come to terms with the past. This fuels suspicion that South African politicians secured the promise of amnesty not only as a means of legitimately avoiding unjust (though understandable) reprisals, but also illegitimately to avoid accountability.

Even so, two other features of the process work to allay such suspicion. First, there is neither a blanket amnesty for all crimes nor is there a guarantee of amnesty for any particular crime. Persons must come before the commission to confess their specific offenses, and



"One is shattered in many ways by the revelations," Tutu explains.

"I have quite seriously wondered how much truth we can tolerate."

they must petition the commission for amnesty. In order to grant amnesty, the commission must be convinced that:

- the act(s) involved a political objective;
- the act(s) took place during the time period designated by the commission (1960–93);
- the act(s) committed were proportional to the political objective being sought;
- and that the perpetrator has confessed the whole truth.

People had only until the end of 1997 to come forward with confessions for the purpose of amnesty. (The period has since been extended through April 1998 to accommodate the response.)

Second, and closely related, the very process of requiring personal, public confession requires an accountability that we ought not underestimate. Particularly in the United States, people are tempted to equate accountability with publicly sanctioned punishment. In that sense, South Africa's amnesty allows the perpetrators to go free. But it also has required them to confess the truth of what they have done. This involves

courage, and it also enables South Africans and the whole world to have a public reckoning of the past.

OBJECTIONS OVERRULED

This approach to dealing with atrocities from the past presses another objection to the work of the commission. Many people worry that this commission, both through its offer of amnesty and its focus on reconciliation, undermines the importance of justice. For some, the problem is that it seems too soon for forgiveness. As one woman describes the torture and

death of her son, she concludes: "I do not know if I can forgive. I must know who did this to my son. When I see the face of the one who killed him, and he tells me why, then perhaps I can forgive."

Others have more pointed objections to the very idea of forgiveness. They do not want forgiveness at all; they want justice and, perhaps, even vengeance. They hear the true stories told of what perpetrators did to them or their loved ones, and they are filled with anger and desires for vengeance. They do not want reconciliation with these offenders; if they cannot have publicly sanctioned vengeance, they at least desire lawfully recognized justice. It is difficult to disagree, particularly since doing so may seem to be heaping further burdens on people already victimized in horrifying ways.

Archbishop Tutu has responded to these objections by drawing a contrast between retributive and restorative justice. The commission emphasizes reconciliation over retributive justice, but it does so in the interest of restorative justice. In part, they are bound to do so by the commitment to amnesty. At the same time, however, it is not clear that an alter-

native would have been preferable. Public trials on the order of Nuremberg would have been extraordinarily costly, and there is no guarantee that such trials would have necessarily produced either the truth or convictions of the perpetrators.

At a deeper level, the commission's focus on restorative justice seems closely allied to the process Jesus embodies in the Gospels. His primary concern throughout his life, death, and resurrection was offering forgiveness that aims not at retributive but rather restorative justice. The commission does not punish the offenders, but it does offer victims an opportunity both to tell their stories and to seek reparations for their suffering. Cheap rec-

is too high a price for political culture, and we ought not permit what one South African victim characterized as "the imposition of a Christian morality of forgiveness" into a political process. As Timothy Garton Ash put it, when "taken to the extreme, the reconciliation of all with all is a deeply illiberal idea" (*The New York Review of Books*, July 17, 1997). Ash asks, "Would it not be more realistic to define a more modest goal: peaceful coexistence, cooperation, tolerance?"

Presumably, democracy in the Western world represents the embodiment of this more modest goal. Rather than imposing ideals of forgiveness and reconciliation on a political culture, we ought

States, the most hopeful signs for progress in dealing with racism are coming not from the broader liberal culture of tolerance, but from Christians who believe that racial reconciliation is a task incumbent on all those who worship the God of Jesus Christ.

This does not mean, of course, that we will achieve reconciliation of all with all. I do not know what Ash means by his worry about taking the goal of reconciliation "to the extreme." There will likely be people in virtually any social setting with whom we will not be reconciled. However, that does not diminish the goal.

Christians are enjoined to struggle to "love your enemies" and even to "pray for those who persecute you." This seems a modest and realistic, though no less challenging, goal for those situations in which reconciliation is not currently conceivable. But unlike Ash and others, this does not diminish the focus on truthful reconciliation as the larger horizon that guides and structures our dealings with one other. Without that horizon, "peaceful coexistence" glosses over and evades the realities of our conflicts and masks the desires for retribution and vengeance that so often infect our relationships.

**Many express remorse,
but that is not the point.
Those who do not seem to be
getting away with murder
—literally.**



onciliation might deny justice of any kind; however, a Christian understanding of reconciliation, and of the relationship between justice and forgiveness, is well served by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's careful process of linking reconciliation with each person's confessing the whole truth of what that person did or had done to him or her.

Moreover, we ought not to lose sight of the dramatic and significant stories of victims or victims' families offering forgiveness to the perpetrators when the perpetrators confess their crimes. Over and over again, people have responded to horrifying stories about their loved ones, not with desires for retribution, but with gestures of forgiveness and hope for a future not bound by the destructiveness of the past. While we cannot expect all victims to be ready to desire and offer forgiveness, neither should we minimize the power and drama of people whose gestures offer signs of God's inbreaking kingdom.

Yet this presses perhaps the most pointed objection to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission: Reconciliation

to be satisfied with processes that preserve tolerance without requiring the embrace of strangers, much less enemies. This may seem to be a more modest goal, but does it really provide peaceful coexistence? What is the record of the United States in dealing with the legacies of slavery? Are the wounds healing, albeit slowly, or do we simply find ways of avoiding the open sores? The answer is undoubtedly a portion of both, yet I am not convinced that the "liberal" modest goal of peaceful coexistence, cooperation, and tolerance is sufficient.

Indeed, the model of "peaceful coexistence" seems these days to be masking a despair in African-American communities that whites do not really care about their plight. Perhaps addressing the realities of our social conflicts—whether in the United States, in South Africa, or in Bosnia—requires the risks of challenging people to imagine a higher goal, of forgiveness and reconciliation. This goal enables people to be prodded out of comfortable illusions about tolerance into a more costly, but also more life-giving, struggle toward truthful reconciliation. In the United

THE COMMISSION'S TRUTHS

I confess that I find the Truth and Reconciliation process one of the most dramatic and hopeful signs of an authentically Christian contribution to political life to emerge in many years. To be sure, there are many challenges yet to be faced, and moral and political minefields yet to be traversed. Even so, there are important insights that we can glean not only as observers, but also as participants in our own churches and in political contexts in our neighborhoods, schools, states, and our country. Three insights, if taken seriously, could faithfully transform our lives and our interactions with others.

First, there can be no healing of the past without truthful confession. We must abandon our attempts to rationalize what we have done or to blame others (particularly victims) or to excuse ourselves, and confront truthfully what we have done or had done to us. Such confession must be public in the sense that we test our judgments in the presence of others. But in a culture in which our public discourse seems all too contingent upon evading the truth or deceiving others, and in which studies indicate that

Cry with a Beloved Country

Restoring human dignity to the victims of apartheid.

SUSAN VANZANTEN GALLAGHER

I spent most of the summer of 1996 in South Africa, living in a small cottage, doing research, participating in a National Endowment for the Humanities seminar, and talking to as many South Africans as I could. Aside from my five-year-old son telling me that he had eaten "poodle" for lunch at the Zulu preschool he was attending, my most memorable experience was attending hearings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

These hearings are highly structured in a liturgical fashion. Each hearing is opened with a prayer—sometimes Christian, sometimes Muslim, sometimes Jewish—and a large, white candle representing truth is solemnly lit. The audience is then asked to rise out of respect for the victims and their families when they file in. In typical court settings, spectators would rise when the judge comes in; here we rose for the victims. The seven commissioners in attendance then came down from their white linen-clad tables to welcome the victims—by shaking hands, embracing, kissing. Many of the victims were already sobbing, overcome by the mere fact that an official government representative was showing them respect.

As each victim, often accompanied by two or three family members, went up to testify, a psychotherapist sat by his or her side. Before the testimony began, one commissioner asked about the victim's family—parents, spouse, children, siblings—their names, ages, where they lived, how they were employed. This was more than a strategic ploy to put the victim at ease; rather, this ritual grounded or located the victim as a person in the fullest African sense—with a family, a community, a place.

Then the story was told. I sat for two long days, spellbound, horrified yet mesmerized by riveting accounts of intimidation, assault, abduction, rape, torture, and murder. Since this was not a trial, there was no cross-examination. But the commissioners did ask questions at the end of each story, and during these question periods they often attempted to elicit the names of perpetrators and corroborating witnesses. At the conclusion of the testimony, the commissioners always asked what kind of reparation the victim was requesting. This was for legal purposes, in order to get these claims on record, but the final reparations will probably be more symbolic than sizable, given South Africa's depressed economy.

I was astonished that the victims' requests for reparations were so minimal: one woman wanted a plaque put up where her husband died; a young man, confined to a wheelchair because of a bullet in his spine, asked for financial assistance to attend college; a weeping mother said, "I have no particular request, I just wish to know who killed my son." A woman about my age testified about the assassination of her

husband, an African National Congress (ANC) community leader, who was shot while driving on the beautiful road that stretches through the valleys between Pietermaritzburg and Ixhopo, the town that Alan Paton describes so lyrically in *Cry, the Beloved Country*. She was left with five young children. "I wanted to kill all my children and myself," she said. "Sometimes, I still do."

With one exception, every victim I heard testify during two days in Pietermaritzburg understood his or her life as part of the Christian story and described suffering and endurance with Christian rhetoric. Biblical citations, references to impassioned prayer, narrow escapes attributed to God's miraculous intervention were commonly heard. "When I think of the things that have happened," one matronly woman said with great dignity, "I just open the Bible and pray Psalm 71."

When each victim finished, one of the commissioners responded with a formal statement, summing up the story that had been told, affirming and thanking the witness, pronouncing on the evil that had been done. "We have a system that needs overhauling, a system that needs to re-earn your trust," one said in thanks to the witness. "Testimony such as yours will assist in the process of creating a just system." "May the Lord help you through these hardships," concluded another.

The Truth and Reconciliation Human Rights hearings are an unusual instance in which the "hard-to-see" have been made visible. Apartheid South Africa was deliberately structured in numerous legal, social, cultural, and economic ways to silence those who were demonized as "other." The TRC process, in response, was designed to restore "the human and civil dignity" of the victims of apartheid by giving them a collective opportunity to tell their stories, to fashion new public narratives and identities.

Given the significant role that the Christian church played in both the creation of and struggle against apartheid, it is fitting that this attempt to exorcise the past draw on the Christian tradition. South African theologian John De Gruchy says, "The Christian understanding of repentance, forgiveness, and reparation is of fundamental importance in shaping a national consciousness that can heal the land, achieve genuine reconciliation, and build a moral and democratic culture." In this public, communal act of confession, South Africa is beginning to create a new national identity. **CT**

Susan VanZanten Gallagher is professor of English at Seattle Pacific University.

most of us tell at least two lies a day, such a commitment requires that we renew our commitment to truthful confession.

Second, truthful confession will only be life-giving if we can trust that others are more interested in forgiveness, reconciliation, and restorative justice than in retribution. Christian confession requires that we focus our attention on healing the brokenness that has occurred rather than on punishing those who have done wrong. This does require accountability, but we ought not let it become an occasion for retribution, much less ven-

we all can summon inspiration.

Tutu's commitment has been recently tested by the intransigence of two of South Africa's most visible political leaders: the African National Congress's Winnie Madikizela-Mandela and former president P. W. Botha.

Tutu has known the Mandela family for many years, including through some of the worst of the apartheid era. When Ms. Madikizela-Mandela, now divorced from Nelson Mandela, came before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in October of 1997, Tutu greeted her warm-

matic moments of the hearings, Paul Verryn, now a Methodist bishop in South Africa, approached Madikizela-Mandela and told her that he had been searching for a time and place to forgive her for her false accusations. She responded coolly through her lawyer: not here in public, adding that Verryn would have known where to find her.

Madikizela-Mandela neither accepted responsibility nor expressed any willingness to ask forgiveness from those she had wronged. Yet she has hoped to maintain strength as a political leader for the future, even running for deputy president of the ruling African National Congress. How will the people respond to one whom they have loved and respected for so long, yet whose character now seems so questionable?

On the other hand, P. W. Botha, South Africa's former president and one of the architects of apartheid, has refused even to appear before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. He has refused because, in his eyes, he has nothing for which he has to apologize. In

accordance with the law establishing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Botha's case will now be turned over to the courts. Botha's stubborn resolve has made him a hero to those white South Africans who regard the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's work as a one-sided persecution conducted by the victors.

These cases in particular will test the resolve of Archbishop Tutu, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and the South African people. Can they find the will to retain their commitment to truthfulness, even if some of their most visible leaders refuse to participate? Or will they—and we—find it easier to give up hope, returning to a supposedly “realistic” but ultimately cynical posture that all we can expect is tolerance of one another's failings? Sustaining such hope will continue to be hard work. Yet it is well worth the effort, for nothing less than faithful witness to God's ministry of reconciliation is at stake.

CT

*L. Gregory Jones is dean of the Divinity School, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina, and the author of *Embodying Forgiveness* (Eerdmans).*

**One woman concludes:
“I do not know if I can forgive.
When I see the face of the
one who killed my son, and he
tells me why, then perhaps
I can forgive.”**



geance. This will require re-evaluation of our attitudes toward punishment in our legal system, but it should also occasion some searching reflections about practices within our own congregations and our own personal relationships.

Third, in the absence of reconciliation, we need nonetheless to struggle to find processes that enable us to retain our commitment to truthful confession and reconciliation even while acknowledging the persistence of division and conflict. Central to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's success has been the care with which it has undertaken its deliberations, a care marked by the larger horizons of truth and reconciliation. Moreover, the commission has sought faithfully to maintain credibility with all parties to the disputes.

We need to find similar ways of ensuring credible processes in our own practices within the church and in the broader culture, and to explore ways of keeping the horizons of truth and reconciliation ever before us, even—indeed, especially—when we are inclined to hate and destroy our enemies rather than to love them. Archbishop Tutu's steadfast commitment stands as a remarkable witness from which

ly. He recalled her signal contributions to the struggle against apartheid. He also pleaded with her to acknowledge and confess the full truth of her complicity in the violence, injustice, and terror conducted in her name in the late 1980s.

Almost three dozen people testified that Madikizela-Mandela was behind several brutal tortures, abductions, and murder committed by young men who worked for her in the township of Soweto. During that time, in 1989, Madikizela-Mandela sought to deflect suspicions by falsely accusing a Methodist pastor, Paul Verryn, of sodomizing young men. One of those closest to her, Jerry Richardson, testified to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that Madikizela-Mandela ordered the abduction of a suspected informant, 14-year-old Stompie Seipei, and then oversaw his torture and murder at Richardson's hands.

Yet Madikizela-Mandela has acknowledged only that “things went horribly wrong.” She has denied any responsibility or complicity, even after listening to weeks of testimony from those who had been close to her during the struggles against apartheid. In one of the more dra-

Between a Nightmare and a Dream

If reconciliation can happen in South Africa, it can happen elsewhere.

DESMOND TUTU

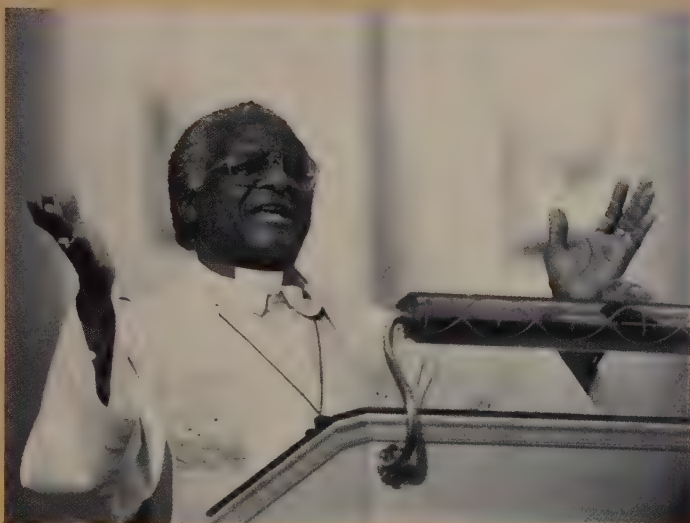
Desmond Tutu is archbishop in the Anglican Church in South Africa and head of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. In this article he gives his own account of the commission's efforts to work toward reconciliation in his native land. It is adapted from a speech he gave to the South African Press Club, October 1997.

Sadly, there are significant sectors in South Africa that have made it their business to denigrate, vilify, ridicule, and misrepresent the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and its work. They decided long ago, in advance of any evidence to support their position, that the commission was a witch hunt directed at one particular community, that a certain group had already been condemned collectively, that it was really an instrument to advance the political interests of one political party, and that in its composition the TRC was heavily weighted in favor of those who supported that political party. Evidence to refute these allegations and accusations has not made any difference at all.

Almost all those who oppose the TRC benefited from apartheid. Nearly every party has criticized the TRC whenever our spotlight has revealed something embarrassing to that party. Most of the victims, black and white, have largely been supportive of the TRC process.

There have been those who have been vociferous in asserting that the TRC, far from promoting reconciliation, has in fact done the opposite. They say it has engendered resentment and anger, opened old wounds, and fostered alienation. I have challenged those who have made these assertions to provide evidence that would support their claims, because our experience has been the direct opposite. It has been almost breathtaking, this willingness to forgive, this magnanimity, this nobility of spirit. No, this process has made a contribution to reconciliation, to healing, as our mandate says. The TRC is required not to achieve unity and reconcile our nation—it is required to promote, to contribute to it.

Let us look at some instances. In Bisho [the capital of the homeland Ciskei], some former Ciskei Defence Force officers testified about the Bisho massacre [where 29 people were killed and as many as 200 were injured in a 1992 march to protect political repression; the Ciskei Defence Force had opened fire when ANC demonstrators left the planned route and ran toward the city center]. One of the officers had



RNS/REUTERS

already alienated the people with his insensitive tirade. Then another confessed his part and asked for forgiveness. In the audience were people who had been wounded in that incident, people who had lost loved ones, but when that white army officer asked for forgiveness they did not rush to strangle or assault him. Unbelievably, they applauded. Yes, this is a crazy country. I said at that point, let us keep silent, because we were in the presence of something special, of something holy. Many times I have felt we should take our shoes off because we were standing on holy ground.

At the first amnesty hearing in Rustenburg [the site of a brutal political murder in 1990; the victim's house was surrounded by ten men who beat and strangled him when he came out of his house and later chopped his body into pieces to destroy the evidence], the community there, including the children of the man who had been murdered, said they supported the murderers' application for amnesty because it was crucial for advancing reconciliation. This is a crazy country; if miracles had to happen anywhere, then it's here that they would have to happen. No other country has been prayed for as much as this one.

Then there was the white woman victim who was attacked on a golf course. She was so badly injured her children had to teach her to do things we take for granted. She still can't go through security check points at airports because she has so much shrapnel in her body. She said, "I would like to meet the perpetrator in a spirit of forgiveness." That's wonderful! She goes on, "I would like to for-

give him," and then quite incredibly she adds, "and I hope he will forgive me." Crazy.

Then there was the Afrikaner father whose toddler son was killed in the African National Congress (ANC) Amanzimtoti Wimpy Bar bomb attack. He said he believed his son had contributed to the coming of the new dispensation; or the Afrikaner woman in Klerksdorp who testified about the abduction of her husband by libertarian army operatives and said her grief and loss were just a drop in the ocean compared to what other people have suffered in this beautiful traumatized land; or the daughter who, after hearing all the gruesome details of how her father had been killed, said in a hushed East London City Hall: "We would like to forgive; we just want to know whom to forgive." Incredible.

After the first hearing in East London, the brother of Matthew Goniwe [a political activist at the forefront of the antiapartheid struggle until his brutal murder in 1985; some of the highest officials in the apartheid government were implicated in this case, although no one was ever convicted] came to me and said, "We have told our story many, many

"We are singularly fortunate, indeed blessed, in this country."

times already. But this is the first time that, after telling it, it is as if a huge weight has been lifted from our shoulders." That was unsolicited. And there were the families whose loved ones were missing; it turned out they had been abducted, killed, and secretly buried. The TRC was able to exhume the remains, and the families were able to give a decent burial and so, too, experience closure. They thanked the TRC that this could happen.

The TRC process has helped to expose the real truth about atrocities during apartheid, and this surely is helping to heal. Ignorance and lies exacerbate the anguish of the survivors or the victims.

One week in October we had an extraordinary thing happen when four former cabinet ministers from the apartheid government testified in the State Security Council hearing. We could say they did not tell us who gave orders to kill, but that would really be to split hairs. Just note what they did say. They said apartheid had no moral basis. It was an immoral policy. They said they accepted political and moral responsibility. They said they could not say they did not know. That is a great deal more than anyone has said so far, and they did not evacuate their apology by letting it die the death of a thousand qualifications. They said they apologized unreservedly. They have contributed hugely to the process of healing and reconciliation because they have accepted moral and political responsibility. It has happened nowhere else in the world that former government ministers should appear before such a commission and give an account of themselves.

My friends, it is never easy to say, "I am sorry; forgive me, I was wrong." As humans we are forever trying to rationalize, to excuse the wrong we have done. Adam blamed Eve, and she blamed the snake. These ministers have said they are sorry, and for that they should be warmly commended.

No, I am not making it up. Five top judges on behalf of the judiciary past and present declare that apartheid, which these people supported enthusiastically, was in itself a gross violation of human rights. You couldn't have it more forthrightly than that, and the judges almost by definition can't be accused of political or any other bias. I am in very good company when I have said apartheid was intrinsically evil, immoral, and unchristian. That is not a bias—it is stating a fact now endorsed by the top legal people in our country.

Those who deride the TRC hardly ever refer to an amazing phenomenon—the victim's readiness, indeed eagerness, to forgive. Many are seemingly taking it for granted—as something almost to which they are entitled.

We are singularly fortunate, indeed blessed, in this country. We could so easily have gone the way of Angola, the Sudan, Bosnia, Northern Ireland, Sri Lanka, the Middle East, which have found peace so devastatingly elusive. We have been fortunate that Mr. de Klerk was so brave in 1990 and that he had to deal with the extraordinary Madiba [Nelson Mandela], so magnanimous, so forgiving.

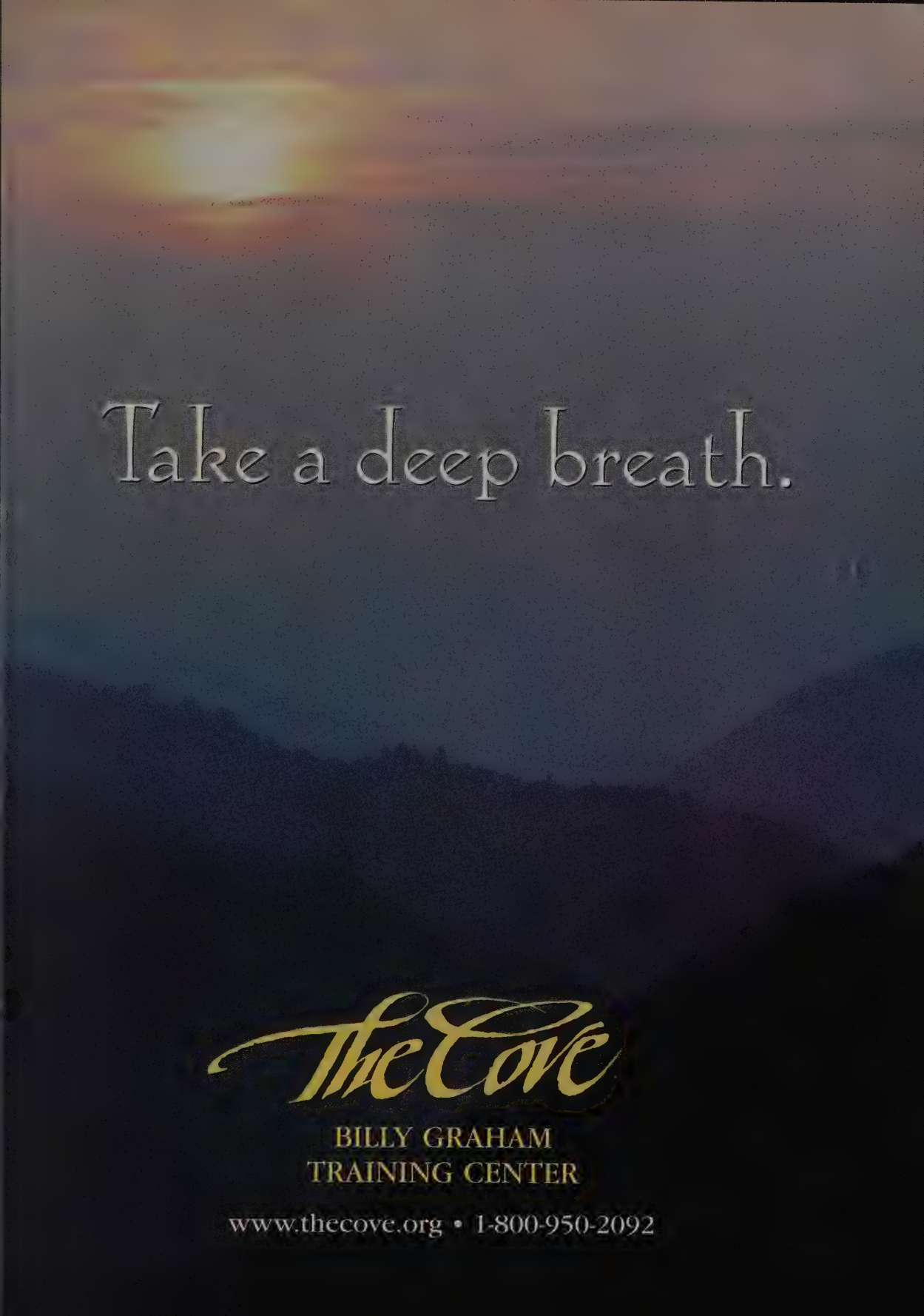
I used to say to whites: "I am as committed to white liberation as I am to black liberation. Whites won't be free until we are free." They thought I was spewing irresponsible slogans. We won a victory for everyone, black and white. Now we have all been liberated. Freedom is indivisible. Come share in the process of healing, in the process of reconciliation. If this commission fails, you may not be around to describe it. Reconciliation is a national project. We should all be involved. Those others are not doing their people a favor. Get out of your ghetto of self-pity, of not acknowledging how lucky we all are.

Blacks still get up from their shanty settlements and go to work for white people in affluent suburbs. At night they return to the squalor of their homes, on unlit streets, with no running water, no clinics, no schools, no decent homes. They actually go back to all that and don't go on a rampage in the largely white pockets of comfort and affluence. Yet, all some whites do is moan about their loss of power.

Please, God, give me a moving eloquence to persuade my white compatriots. Come eagerly, come enthusiastically, and join the healing, the reconciling side. Your ultimate survival depends on it. Come, please.

We are going to succeed—why? Because God wants us to succeed for the sake of God's world. We will succeed in spite of ourselves, because we are such an unlikely bunch. Who could ever have thought we would ever be an example, except of awfulness? Who could ever have thought we would be held up as a model to the rest of the world—not eminently virtuous—clearly not with an evil system. Not too bright. God wants to say to the world, to Bosnia, to Northern Ireland, et cetera: Look at them. They had a nightmare called *apartheid*. It has ended. Your nightmare too will end. They had what was called an intractable problem. They are solving it. No one anywhere can any longer say their problem is intractable. We are a beacon of hope for God's world, and we will succeed.

CT



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EXPOSING THE

Myth

THAT CHRISTIANS SHOULD NOT HAVE

EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS

DWIGHT L. CARLSON

The only army that shoots its wounded is the Christian army," said the speaker, a psychologist who had just returned from an overseas ministry trip among missionaries. He summed up the philosophy of the group he worked with as:

1. We don't have emotional problems. If any emotional difficulties appear to arise, simply deny having them.

2. If we fail to achieve this first ideal and can't ignore a problem, strive to keep it from family members and *never* breathe a word of it outside the family.

3. If both of the first two steps fail, still don't seek professional help.

I have been a Christian for 50 years, a physician for 29, and a psychiatrist for 15. Over this time I have observed these same attitudes throughout the church—among lay leaders, pastors, priests, charismatics, fundamentalists, and evangelicals alike. I have also found that many not only deny their problems but are intolerant of those with emotional difficulties. Many judge that others' emotional problems are the direct result of personal sin. This is a harmful view.

At any one time, up to 15 percent of our popula-

tion is experiencing significant emotional problems. For them our churches need to be sanctuaries of healing, not places where they must hide their wounds.

THE EMOTIONAL-HEALTH GOSPEL

Several years ago my daughter was battling leukemia. While lying in bed in the hospital, she received a letter, which read in part:

Dear Susan,

You do not know me personally, but I have seen you in church many times. . . . I have interceded on your behalf and I know the Lord is going to heal you if you just let Him. Do not let Satan steal your life—do not let religious tradition rob you of what Jesus did on the cross—by His stripes we were healed.

The theology behind this letter reminded me of a bumper sticker I once saw: "Health and Prosperity: Your Divine Right." The letter writer had bought into a "healing in the Atonement" theology that most mainstream evangelicals reject. According to

this traditional faith-healing perspective, Christ's atonement provides healing for the body and mind just as it offers forgiveness of sins for the soul. The writer meant well, but the letter created tremendous turmoil for my daughter.

While evangelicals have largely rejected "health and wealth" preaching—that faithful Christians will always prosper physically and financially—many hold to an insidious variation of that prosperity gospel. I call it the "emotional-health gospel." The emotional-health gospel assumes that if you have repented of your sins, prayed correctly, and spent adequate time in God's Word, you will have a sound mind and be free of emotional problems. Usually the theology behind the emotional-health gospel does not go so far as to locate emotional healing in the Atonement (though some do) but rather to redefine mental illnesses as "spiritual" or as character problems, which the church or the process of sanctification can handle on its own. The problem is, this is a false gospel, one that needlessly adds to the suffering of those already in turmoil.

This prejudice against those with emotional problems can be seen in churches across the nation on any Sunday morning. We pray publicly for the parishioner with cancer or a heart attack or pneumonia. But rarely will we pray publicly for Mary with severe depression, Charles with incapacitating panic attacks, or the minister's son with schizophrenia. Our silence subtly conveys that these are not acceptable illnesses for Christians to have.

The emotional-health gospel is also communicated by some of our most listened-to leaders. I heard one national speaker make the point that "At the cross you can be made whole. Isaiah said that 'through his stripes we are healed' . . . not of physical suffering, which one day we will experience; we are healed of emotional and spiritual suffering at the cross of Jesus Christ." In other words, a victorious Christian will be emotionally healthy. This so-called full gospel, which proclaims that healing of the body and mind is provided for all in the Atonement, casts a cruel judgment on the mentally ill.

Two authors widely read in evangelical circles, John MacArthur and Dave Hunt, also propagate views that, while sincerely held, I fear lead us to shoot our wounded. In his book *Beyond Seduction*, Hunt writes, "The average Christian is not even aware that to consult a psychotherapist is much the same as turning oneself over to the priest of any other rival religion," and, "There is no such thing as a *mental* illness; it is either a phys-

ical problem in the brain (such as a chemical imbalance or nutritional deficiency) or it is a moral or *spiritual* problem."

MacArthur, in *Our Sufficiency in Christ*, presents the thesis that "As Christians, we find complete sufficiency in Christ and his provisions for our needs." While I agree with his abstract principle, I disagree with how he narrows what are the proper "provisions." A large portion of the book strongly criticizes psychotherapy as one of the "deadly influences that undermine your spiritual life." He denounces "so-called Christian psychologists and psy-

chiatrists who testified that the Bible alone does not contain sufficient help to meet people's deepest personal and emotional needs," and he asserts, "There is no such thing as a 'psychological problem' unrelated to spiritual or physical causes. God supplies divine resources sufficient to meet all those needs completely." Physically caused emotional problems, he adds, are rare, and referring to those who seek psychological help, he concludes: "Scripture hasn't failed them—they've failed Scripture."

A PLACE FOR PROFESSIONALS

When adherents of the emotional-health gospel say that every human problem is spiritual at root, they are undeniably right. Just as Adam's fall in the garden was spiritual in nature, so in a very true sense the answer to every human problem—whether a broken leg or a burdened heart—is to be found in the redeeming work of Christ on the cross. The disease and corruption process set into motion by the

Fall affected not only our physical bodies but our emotions as well, and we are just beginning to comprehend the many ways our bodies and minds have been affected by original sin and our fallen nature. Yet the issue is not whether our emotional problems are spiritual or not—all are, at some level—but how best to treat people experiencing these problems.

Many followers of the emotional-health gospel make the point that the church is, or at least should be, the expert in spiritual counseling, and I agree. Appropriate spiritual counseling will resolve issues such as salvation, forgiveness, personal morality, God's will, the scriptural perspective on divorce, and more. It can also help some emotional difficulties. But many emotional or mental illnesses require more than a church support network can offer.

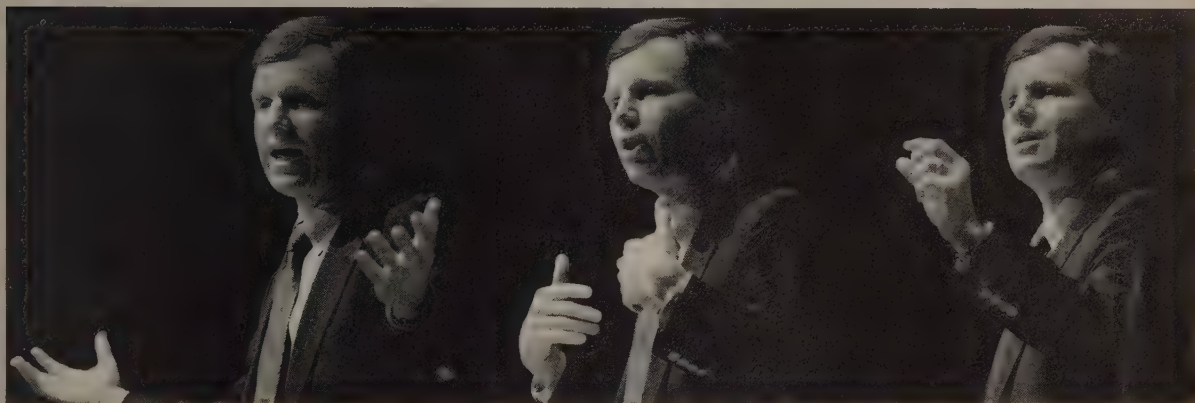
I know it sounds unscriptural to say that some individuals need more than the church can offer—but if my car needs the transmission replaced, do I expect the church to do it? Or if I

THE *Emotional-Health Gospel*

ASSUMES THAT
IF YOU HAVE REPENTED
OF YOUR SINS,
PRAYED CORRECTLY,
AND SPENT ADEQUATE TIME
IN GOD'S WORD, YOU WILL
HAVE A SOUND MIND.

I'm Not OK, You're Not OK

New Life Clinics' Steve Arterburn talks about why we are reluctant to be transparent about our problems.



MICHAEL HUDSON

For those who believe psychology is an enemy of the faith, Steve Arterburn is target number one. As cofounder of New Life Clinics, which absorbed the Minirth-Meier organization in 1984, Arterburn oversees 85 clinics in North America. New Life is the largest Christian provider of psychiatric and psychological services, offering both inpatient and outpatient care. Because of New Life and Minirth-Meier, evangelicals are much more comfortable calling a therapist for help than we were a generation ago.

Despite being the author of 25 books dealing mostly with psychological issues and being the host of a national daily radio program dealing with people's problems, Arterburn himself is not a psychologist but a licensed minister. Still, he has taken on the mantle as the most visible apologist for psychology among evangelical Christians.

How did your interest in psychology and counseling develop?

An early hero of mine was Gertrude Behanna. When I was 12, my father gave me one of her recordings. In it she talked about how she had been very wealthy,

lived in the Waldorf Astoria, and eventually became an alcoholic. Later, while recovering from her alcoholism, she opened up her mansions for other alcoholics to live in. She said something that never left me: "Once I began to recover I no longer looked down on people; but then I had the final battle that I had to fight, and that was looking down on people who looked down on people." I thought that that was such a wonderful statement of truth, that she was going deep. I had been raised around a lot of people who never went that deep into their own motives, their own character defects.

Another formative experience was meeting a recovering alcoholic during a seminar on recovery groups at Southwestern Seminary. That led me to work at an alcohol- and drug-treatment center in Fort Worth. So I got trained in addiction and really fell in love with working with addicts. I loved working with them because of their lack of pretense. When an old redneck Texas cowboy came in with puke all over him and just completely out of his mind, it was very difficult for him to put on a façade the next morning. I had lived all my life

Preaching against pretense: New Life Clinics' head Steve Arterburn wants churches to become sanctuaries for honesty and healing.

around people in the church who acted like their act was together, so I found that very refreshing.

Why are recovery groups effective in battling pretense?

Because in an AA group there is someone there, someone who's been around, to tell somebody else to sit down and shut up when they become inappropriate. In church, to tell somebody, "I'm not going to put up with this superficiality anymore" wouldn't be considered "Christian"; and so in being nice to people, we let them be superficial.

Let me give you a personal example. When my wife and I got married, the sexual intimacy of our marriage wasn't working. We were involved in a support group of four other couples who were older than us, but after one year we began to feel it was a waste of our time to attend. One week my wife said to me, "Next week we're either going to talk about our problem or we're not going to be involved with this group."

The next week she did, explaining that you could count the times we had attempted sexual intimacy on one hand. At the time, we didn't know that thousands of couples experience this in their twentieth year of marriage, much less their first. We just wanted help and felt these older couples could give us some insight. But their only response was to finish off the evening with a polite "Oh, we're so concerned, and we want to pray for you."

As it turned out, my wife's authenticity was such a threat that they never came back, and the group ended. Something that could have had a wonderful impact on our lives and could have been an invitation for the others to open up became a horrible experience. Because of the humiliation and rejection we felt, my wife and I didn't deal with our problem for another year.

Seen theologically, this kind of posturing is idolatry—worshiping polished, unblemished images we have created of ourselves for others to see and adore.

What prevents us from sharing our problems more openly at church?

Just look at what invitation to conversion we use: "Come to Jesus, and your life is going to be wonderful. It's going to be great, fantastic. All these problems are going to go away." There's some truth to that, but when you hear Dietrich Bonhoeffer say, "When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die," that's the reality that I've seen in the Christian faith.

I have problems now I would never have had if I hadn't accepted Christ. There's guilt that I've experienced that I would never even have thought twice about. We have to be realistic with people and tell them that when you come to Jesus, there is a new purpose and a fulfillment, but the struggle is going to continue. We have so many lukewarm Christians or people who turn away from the faith because they've been promised this ease.

I was in Hawaii doing a conference for pastors. I'm very self-disclosing in everything that I do, and I shared my testimony about how I had paid for an abortion when I was younger, had lived a promiscuous lifestyle, and had reaped the consequences of my actions—describing what happens in a life when you are in control versus God being in control. Afterwards, a minister of a very large congregation told me, "I can never con-

fess to any struggle unless I've already experienced victory over the struggle." Congregations and pastors need to overcome such false ideals. Those that do will strike a blow against the pretentiousness we're talking about here.

I think that's part of the appeal of pastors like Willow Creek's Bill Hybels or your pastor at Saddle Back, Rick Warren. They seem to share their struggles openly and appropriately.

Definitely. When someone says to Rick, "I really don't know if I love my wife," he responds, "Really! I used to hate my wife. You're in much better shape than we were!" Then he talks about the struggles they had. That's inviting to people.

Churches need to allow pastors to have problems. History shows that when a church doesn't allow a pastor to have little problems, many times those pastors go out and get really big ones.

Why do some churches oppose Christian psychology?

Let me say first that I would agree with much of the criticism leveled against Christian psychology 20 years ago. There were many calling themselves Christian psychologists, but there was nothing Christian about what they did. They just happened to go to church on Sunday—and some of them weren't even Christians.

But today it's a totally different picture. Over the past 15 years Christians have begun to take psychology back. You've got more marriage and family counselors coming out of Christian colleges than you do from secular colleges. They have a biblical spiritual foundation, which is only right because real psychology *is* biblical. *Psychology* means the study of the soul. And while there are ideas within the broader practice that are false, those don't negate the things that are true.

What makes the Christian therapeutic community stand out today from much of secular counseling is its goal: not to help people feel good or cope, but to come to the end of themselves. The goal is not to help people get *into* themselves, but *out of* themselves, and to move beyond their problems so they can go on to heal others.

What battles have you had in getting churches to work with New Life?

One of my great experiences was with

a pastor who asked to meet with me. He told me, "I used to preach against you and against psychology. And I sure preached against anybody taking medication. Then I ended up with a depression so debilitating I could not get out of bed. I languished there for about a month." Finally his wife convinced him that he had to get help. The church board was going to fire him, and he went to see a Christian psychiatrist who gave him medication. And he said, "Now the thing that I used to preach against is the thing that has set me free to preach."

Something else happened in the process. He discovered that not only did medication not separate him from God, it allowed him to know God in a more real way. He'd always had a thinking problem—adult attention deficit disorder. He just couldn't focus and concentrate. But once he got on medication for the depression, it helped clear up his thinking, and he was able to study the Bible in a deeper and a richer way.

So he came and said he was sorry for all the years that he had preached against this.

Now I'll tell you the most dramatic horror story in our area, in Orange County. There was a young man, Michael Pacewitz, who was a paranoid schizophrenic released from a mental institution at the age of 16. He was on heavy medication. A local church took him in, and he did errands around the church. He even did some babysitting. It was a wonderful story of a very severely mentally ill man finding healing and acceptance in the church community.

He became a Christian about a year after going to that church. And the pastor said to him, "Michael, now that you've accepted Christ, you're a new creature, and you no longer need medication because you're a new creature in Christ." Michael stopped taking the medication.

The Orange County Register interviewed him from a jail cell after he had plunged a knife through the heart of a little girl. They interviewed the pastor, and he said, of course, "I will never, ever recommend that a person stop taking medication."

The fact is, psychology has given us tremendous insights into many human problems. Christians, of all people and for Christ's sake, should be the first to recognize and use these insights for the healing of others.

By Michael G. Maudlin.

break my leg, do I consult my pastor about it? For some reason, when it comes to emotional needs, we think the church should be able to meet them all. It can't, and it isn't supposed to. This is why the emotional-health gospel can do so much harm. People who need help are prevented from seeking it and often made to feel shame for having the problem.

Thankfully, more and more people in the Christian community are beginning to realize that some people need this extra help. If professionals and church leaders can recognize the value of each other's roles, we will make progress in helping the wounded. Forty percent of all individuals who need emotional help seek it first from the church, and some of these will need to be referred to mental-health professionals. Church leaders should get to know Christian therapists in their communities so they can knowledgeably refer people with persistent emotional problems.

DEPRESSED SAINTS

Lurking beneath the stigma that many Christians with mental and emotional problems face is a simple question:

Can a Spirit-filled Christian have emotional problems? The emotional-health gospel overlooks the record of the Bible itself and church history, just as health-and-wealth gospels must ignore the history of not-so-rich saints (not to speak of Jesus himself).

The Reformer who penned "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God," Martin Luther, in 1527 wrote: "For more than a week I was close to the gates of death and hell. I trembled in all my members. Christ was wholly lost." According to Luther's famous biographer, Roland Bainton, Luther found himself "subject to recurrent periods of exaltation and depression of spirit." Luther himself had written that "the content of the depressions was always the same, the loss of faith that God is good and that he is good to me."

The famous preacher Charles Spurgeon, who lit the fires of the nineteenth-century revival movement, struggled so severely with depression that he was forced to be absent from his pulpit for two to three months a year. In 1866 he told his congregation of his struggle: "I am the subject of depressions of spirit so fearful that I hope none of you ever get to such extremes of wretchedness as I go [through]." He explained that during these depressions, "Every mental and spiritual labor . . . had to be carried on under protest of spirit."

In the Bible we find that Moses, Elijah, Job, and Jeremiah suffered from depression, often to the point of being suicidal. Elijah's miraculous victory over the prophets of Baal in 1 Kings 18 is followed in the next chapter with Elijah despondent and trembling with fear: "And he was afraid and arose and ran for his life . . . and sat down under a juniper tree; and he requested for himself that he might die" (1 Kings 19:3-4; all verses quoted from the NASB unless otherwise noted).

I've heard Elijah here described as being a coward or accused

of having a grand old pity party. Such interpretations fail to see God's compassionate response to his cry: "And the angel of the Lord came again a second time and touched him and said, 'Arise, eat, because the journey is too great for you'" (19:7). Far from criticizing him, the Lord allows him to rest and twice sends an angel to feed him.

Job cried out in the midst of his suffering, "I cannot eat for sighing; my groans pour out like water. . . . My life flies by—day after hopeless day. . . . I hate my life. . . . For God has ground me

down, and taken away my family. . . . But I search in vain. I seek him here, I seek him there, and cannot find him. . . . My heart is broken. Depression haunts my days. My weary nights are filled with pain. . . . I cry to you, O God, but you don't answer me" (3:23-24; 7:6, 16; 16:7; 23:8; 30:16-17, 20, LB). Notice that even with his depression, the Bible says, "In all this Job did not sin" (1:22). Moreover, God reproves Job's friends for accusing Job of sin and for their "failure to speak rightly concerning my servant Job" (42:7-8).

So the answer to our ques-

tion is a definite yes: Spirit-filled Christians can experience emotional problems.

Those who adhere to the emotional-health gospel often believe that negative emotions are in themselves sinful. We need to ask them how they account for the displays of Christ's emotions. In the Garden of Gethsemane, he "began to be very distressed and troubled. And He said to them, 'My soul is deeply grieved to the point of death'" (Mark 14:33-34). Jesus, in coming to earth, took upon himself the form of a human with all its frailties, yet he did not sin.

Paul writes with affirmation, "And I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling" (1 Cor. 2:3). Later he wrote, "We were afflicted on every side; conflicts without, fears within. But God, who comforts the depressed, comforted us by the coming of Titus" (2 Cor. 7:5-6).

Consider this thought experiment. Give me the most saintly person you know. If I were to administer certain medications of the right dosage, such as amphetamine, thyroid hormone, or insulin, I could virtually guarantee that I could make this saint anxious with at least one of these agents. Would such chemically induced anxiety be explained as a spiritual sin? What if the person's own body had an abnormal amount of thyroid hormone or insulin and produced nervousness? I have seen patients in this precise predicament.

While the church should never condone willful sin, it must learn to accept that people within it may suffer from emotional symptoms that are not the result of personal unconfessed sin, as many proponents of the emotional-health gospel suggest. We must take seriously Paul's injunction to "encourage the faint-hearted, help the weak, be patient with all men" (1 Thess. 5:14).

Up to 15 percent

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AT ANY ONE TIME

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EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS.

CALLING WOUNDS SCRATCHES

Which brings us to the heart of the problem with the emotional-health gospel. Followers of the emotional-health gospel often have a naïve understanding of the nature and cause of mental illness. Is mental illness always due to sin? Can people cure themselves by doing or thinking the right things? What role do chemicals and genetics play? What part can good, biblical counsel have in restoring people? How we answer these questions will dramatically skew how we deal with those suffering emotional problems.

It is tempting for people experiencing everyday stress and its accompanying anxiety or depression to think that those with severe emotional problems feel much the same as they do—only a little worse. After all, isn't depression merely feeling blue or down, and anxiety just plain worry or nervousness?

One minister writing on depression stated that he was "depressed" for several days after a property contract had failed. He wrote, "As a basic rule I never sympathize with depressed people. . . . These people have already pitied themselves excessively, thus generating their depression. What they need is help, which comes by gently getting them to see that they are indulging in self-pity." From the experiences of the many patients I have observed, I strongly doubt this author has experienced or understood clinical depression.

Recent studies of more than 11,000 individuals found depression to be more physically and socially disabling than arthritis, diabetes, lung disease, chronic back problems, hypertension, and gastrointestinal illnesses. The only more disabling medical problem was advanced coronary heart disease. And the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services reports that individuals who have suffered both emotional illness and cancer report that their emotional illness caused them the greater pain.

Deep depression is not just self-pity. The level of anxiety of those with generalized anxiety and panic attacks is significant even during sleep. If you can imagine the anxiety of being on a hijacked airplane and seeing several copassengers shot, you can begin to grasp the level of anxiety some people suffer for days at a time. Even people with moderate clinical depression (dysthymia) feel pain on their best days.

From a research perspective, the emerging answer to what causes emotional illness involves three components: nature (one's biological, chemical, and genetic makeup), nurture (environment, circumstances, teachings), and personal choice (which can but does not necessarily include sinful choices). Not uncommonly, the cause is a combination of all three of these.

While research into these matters is still in its infancy, some conclusions are already clear. Any paradigm that judges all mental illnesses to have the same cause (whether it be "sinful choices" or chemical imbalances) is too simplistic. We are a complicated and dynamic amalgam of body and spirit, nurture and nature. Any attempt to reduce our holism dishonors the Craftsman who made us.

Let me provide some examples of how these factors interact. More than a decade ago I experienced a severe depression caused by an external event: a patient for whom I cared very much committed suicide. For over three months a devastating sense of doom kept me feeling desperate and hopeless. I forced myself to socialize, exercise, and think on positive things. I spent additional time in the Word and in prayer. But I couldn't shake the depression until I asked for the help of a colleague. A circum-

stance in life (nurture) had thrown me into a tailspin I couldn't handle any more than I could a car out of control. At the height of my depression, I am sure my brain chemistry was affected. Still, God chose to preserve me through talking with a colleague, which had the effect of restoring me emotionally and, theoretically, chemically.

While my depression had been triggered by an outside circumstance, Marty's* was the result of a physical cause. A popular Big Ten athlete and a committed Christian, he encountered his first major depression the year after college. While at times he experienced tremendous highs, other times it took incredible effort for Marty to get up in the mornings, go to work, play with his young children, or go to church.

He was afraid of discussing his problem with friends because he believed it was a symptom of sin. He prayed, struggled, asked God to forgive him, and looked for what God might be teaching him. The only answers he heard from conference speakers and church leaders were prayer and confession. He wondered if demons caused his affliction.

When his problem was diagnosed as a physical one—bipolar disorder—I started him on lithium. The results produced an emotional stability that has lasted to this day—12 years so far. He is very active in his church and is involved in discipling a number of young men. But because of the stigma, only his wife and I know of his condition or that he is taking medication.

A number of studies point to a genetic origin of bipolar disorder. They show that while close relatives and the second fraternal twin have a 15 percent probability of acquiring the disease, the second identical twin has a 75 percent chance of acquiring it.

While Marty's illness had an internal cause, it resulted in external behaviors. The same is true for the cure. Does the physical cause of his illness mean that he was not responsible for his behaviors? No. We all have to stand before God for what we have done. Yet independent of what one does, we know that a person with a bipolar disorder is helped by chemical therapy.

Pat* provides an example of the inadequacy of a rigid physical/spiritual distinction and of the interplay between nature, nurture, and personal choice. A vivacious 23-year-old secretary, she had been extremely healthy until her car blew a tire on a busy but unfamiliar Los Angeles street. When she noticed the graffiti on the walls and people of another ethnic group who seemed to be watching her every move, she grew frightened. Subsequently, whenever she drove more than a few miles from home, dreadful panic attacks ensued. She feared, she said, she would "go Loony Tunes" or die. These attacks soon began to control her life, even when she was in "places that were perfectly safe." She also began to withdraw socially.

Her agoraphobia, as this kind of fear is called, had occurred in her family before. Her maternal grandmother and an aunt had experienced panic attacks, and her mother was afraid to ride elevators. As Pat sat in my office for her first appointment, she asked, "What is the cause of these attacks—physical or mental?"

"The answer is both," I told her, explaining that these factors cannot easily be separated. Studies show that 7 percent of the population develop panic attacks (with or without agoraphobia) during their lifetime, and 25 percent among those with close relatives with the problem. Which raises the question: Does

* The name and certain facts have been changed to protect the individual's identity.

agoraphobia run in families because of genes or environment?

In 1946, it was observed that patients with panic attacks often have an intolerance to heavy exercising. Researchers found that during exercise the body normally produces the chemical sodium lactate, but at higher levels in those who suffered from panic disorders. In 1967, Ferris Pitts injected sodium lactate intravenously into individuals prone to panic and found that the injection usually brought on attacks similar to the patient's worst attacks. The fact that individuals not subject to panic disorders in the first place did not develop attacks when given the sodium lactate pointed to a chemical difference in the individuals who experienced the panic attacks.

A later study showed that if patients with panic attacks were given certain medications, such as an antidepressant or a benzodiazepine tranquilizer, they greatly decreased or prevented panic attacks from developing when the sodium lactate was later injected. These are the medications we now use to help individuals such as Pat.

Interestingly, doctors also discovered that telling their patients to relax in order to relieve their anxiety usually did not work. In fact, for six out of ten patients, trying to relax actually brought on a panic attack.

With this medical evidence, it is obvious that we cannot attribute such panic attacks to wrong thinking or choice alone; there are clear underlying biological and chemical factors. The latest research shows that in anxiety disorders, the nerve endings overfire and excite the brain with chemicals called *catecholamines*. Medications we use to treat anxiety help reduce this overfiring to a normal level.

So what caused Pat's panic disorder? Her history suggests a very strong genetic-biological vulnerability to develop panic attacks. The fact that her grandmother and mother often communicated their fears to Pat while she was growing up points to a developmental influence, as does her learned fear of neighborhoods painted with graffiti and populated with people of a different ethnicity than her own. The threatening experience of being stuck on that unfamiliar street provided the environmental trigger that precipitated her first attack.

Besides nature and nurture, a third part of the equation—personal choice—must be factored in to understand her attacks fully. Her later avoidance behaviors (such as not driving far from home) decreased Pat's panic attacks for a time, but they also allowed her fear to fester and grow. Even after we talked about

how avoidance can make panic worse, and I had encouraged her to take steps to counteract it, she had a hard time following through on the assignments. She also continued to feed her fears with the notion that she was going crazy. Such "catastrophizing" often leads to a debilitating fear of having panic attacks. Since agoraphobia increasingly incapacitated her, I recommended some medications that often help. To date she has refused them—another choice.

So are Pat's problems caused by sin? If her pastor tells her simply to trust in the Lord, to pray more, and to meditate more on Scripture (all of which is generally very good advice), have we really understood or helped Pat with her problems?

FOLLOWERS OF THE

Emotional-Health

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WHAT THE
WOUNDED NEED

An issue of *Moody* magazine several years ago addressed the debate over Christian counseling. A number of writers took a strong stand against it. But Joseph M. Stowell, president of Moody Bible Institute, offered the balanced view I am arguing for. He said, in part:

There is often a need for well-trained counselors to lead the broken to healing.

Does that mean the Scripture and the Spirit are not sufficient? No. . . .

While much that is taught and practiced in secular counseling is unbiblical, it is also true that there are many helpful in-

sights to be gleaned from this field. . . .

We live in a season when life is increasingly complex and the fragility of precious souls is demonstrated by growing brokenness and complicated conflicts. We dare not waste their sorrow on the battlefield of careless counsel that violates biblical parameters or with simplistic, unqualified solutions that plunge them ultimately into deeper despair.

What the emotionally wounded need is for the body of Christ to be a place of love, acceptance, encouragement, forgiveness, and compassion. They need a place where Christ is lifted high and God's Word is never compromised but also where there is openness to use all available methods of healing that are not contrary to his Word. This kind of environment will not only foster emotional growth, but it will make this healing effort a spiritual service pleasing to God.

Dwight L. Carlson, M.D., is the author of several books, including *Why Do Christians Shoot Their Wounded? (IVP)*, from which this article has been adapted. He lives with his wife in Torrance, California.

The Alpha-Brits Are Coming



TIMOTHY C. MORGAN

A British course for non-Christians aims to transform North American evangelistic outreach.

When Nicky Gumbel began teaching the Alpha course in 1990, originally intended for new Christians, the Oxford educated barrister-turned-Anglican-priest soon discovered that many students were not Christians at all. They were, however, spiritually curious.

After mulling over how to meet their needs, Gumbel and leaders from his parish, Holy Trinity Brompton, where the Alpha course began in 1977, restructured and reworked the course curriculum so that non-Christians would be able to understand the basics of Christianity.

The revised course, as spelled out in Gumbel's book *Questions of Life*, does not begin with well-known theological categories and issues of doctrine. Its starting point is instead the experience of many nonbelievers that Christianity seems "boring, untrue, and irrelevant."

The impact on attendance was explosive. "Every talk is aimed at somebody who is outside the church," Gumbel says. "When we did that, we found that the numbers just rocketed." Holy Trinity's most recently concluded Alpha course drew 1,200 people, one of the largest groups ever, for the course's celebration dinner, an event that functions both as course climax and kickoff for the next round of instruction.

Alpha's full impact is no longer focused solely at Holy Trinity Brompton, a Church of England parish that is one of the most influential evangelical and charismatic congregations in Europe. Starting in 1993, Gumbel and Holy Trinity leaders released Alpha materials to churches throughout the United Kingdom first, and then to the rest of Europe, North America, and worldwide.

Global growth rates for the number of Alpha courses and attendees initially stunned Gumbel. "It was an amazement to us that it would work in any other church outside our own," he says. In 1991, four Alpha courses drew 600 people. In 1997, an estimated 500,000 attended courses around the world. Gumbel

and Alistair Hanna, a former corporate consultant and now head of Alpha North America, believe that by the year 2001 some 50,000 Alpha courses could be held yearly in the United States and Canada.

"I like to say that the biggest denomination in America is the unchurched," Hanna says. "There are 86 million of them. We don't need to poach from each other. We can actually go out and find people who don't go to church at all." Hanna envisions an Alpha course for every 5,000 residents of North America. But he says, "We won't be as good as McDonald's and say we've got an Alpha course within four minutes of you." An infectious enthusiasm, entrepreneurial spirit, and a bold plan for growth are all trademarks among Alpha's top leaders.

But not everyone is cheering Alpha onward. Some church leaders have found Alpha teachings too charismatic, too experience-driven, and too negative about traditional churches. Martyn Percy, director of the Lincoln Theological Institute for the Study of Religion and Society of the University of Sheffield, England, has commented about Alpha that it is "a package rather than a pilgrimage." In a recent essay, he said, "It is a confident but narrow expression of Christianity, which stresses the personal experience of the Spirit over the Spirit in the church."

The ten-week Alpha course bears some theological similarity to the bestsellers *Mere Christianity*, by C. S. Lewis, and *Basic Christianity*, by John Stott. But Alpha is significantly different, and it is its distinctives that have drawn criticism. For example, there is a strong emphasis on class attendees inviting the Holy Spirit to fill them. Gumbel says individuals are not required to speak in tongues, but it is very common for Alpha attendees to do so.

CHURCH-BASED EVANGELISM: Since Alpha is designed to be run in local churches, the program makes extensive use of promotional endorsements from prominent church leaders as well as emotional testimonials on how Alpha has transformed lives.

The Alpha program calls for congregations to rethink their approach to evangel-

ism. Instead of offering church-based community events or services that might expose nonbelievers to a congregation, Alpha instructs leaders on how to use an invite-your-friends model to stimulate interest in Christian doctrine.

"We don't try to get people who are not interested," Gumbel says. "The reason they have an interest is not because they have an interest suddenly in Christianity, but because of what happened to their friend on the previous course."

The Alpha system at first blush seems overly simplistic. The acronym stands for: A—Anyone interested in finding out more about the Christian faith; L—Learning and Laughter; P—Pasta (eating together gives people the chance to know each other); H—Helping one another (small groups are used for discussion of issues raised during the lectures); A—Ask anything. No question is seen as too simple or too hostile.

However, Alpha, in the hands of skilled church leaders, has succeeded in many cases in turning faithful churchgoers from an inward focus on church work to an outward focus on evangelistic outreach through relationships, networking, and invitations to Alpha events. In Gumbel's words, Alpha stimulates a "virtuous circle" that spreads outward, allowing churches regularly to break into new networks of unchurched, unevangelized people.

During the past six months, Alpha North America has held leadership-training conferences in Vancouver, British Columbia; and Overland Park, Kansas; among other places. In 1998, similar two-day events are scheduled at other venues around the United States. (Information is available from 1-888-949-2574).

Many people first experience the Alpha course as a series of videotapes featuring the telegenic Gumbel. But for a good half of the 450 people who attended an Alpha leaders conference in the suburbs of Kansas City in January, their first glimpse of the self-effacing, humorous speaker was in person.

The two-day Alpha conference trains people to run an Alpha course. In some

On their feet: Kansas City conferees take part in an Alpha worship time last month.

ways the conference resembled Alpha's signature Holy Spirit weekend, featuring contemporary worship music; back-to-back talks by "the two Nickys"—Gumbel and his lifelong friend, Nicky Lee, also an Anglican priest; dramatic testimonies by Alpha converts; and charismatic prayer sessions during which some people speak in tongues or fall prostrate on a carpeted floor.

Gumbel described Alpha's approach as a

Maj. Ron Gorton of the Salvation Army in Kansas City, Kansas, says he became acquainted with Alpha because Salvationists in England have operated courses.

Gorton says he and other Salvationists are discussing whether the Alpha course will meet their needs as they make changes in the Army's substance-abuse recovery program. "The things that God is teaching through this course are very similar to what he has been teaching us

foothold internationally among Roman Catholics, Baptists, and other faith groups.

One of the most expensive neighborhoods in Canada is the west side of Vancouver, British Columbia. Vancouver itself is one of the most secular cities in North America, and church growth, when it happens, is slow.

But Sally Start, a member of Vancouver's Dunbar Heights Baptist Church, began inviting a handful of her neighbors to join her in watching the Alpha videos a couple of years ago. Two of those neighbors have since joined the church and are now helping her run Alpha, which has since moved into the church with the leadership's blessing. About 20 new people have expressed interest in taking the next Alpha course. That is a hefty proportion for a church of only 50 people.

One of Dunbar Heights' newer members is 43-year-old Don Macdonald, an accountant who, barely a year ago, was a self-described atheist. His wife had been a long-time member of the church.

"Sally challenged me" to take the course, he says. By the time he finished, "I just couldn't believe there wasn't a God." From there, salvation through Christ resulted. "My heart finally convinced me."

"Our experience has been that none of [the participants], by the time they finish the course, are able to say anything other than Christianity is true," says Start. Not all of them make Christian commitments within the course, and of those who do, not all stay at Dunbar Heights. Some find that church too conservative and go elsewhere. "We're making a difference from a kingdom perspective, and that's what we keep focusing on," Start says.

Alpha's openness to questions allows people to experience learning about the Christian faith in a way that is not threatening.

Some have had "toxic" religious experiences in the past, says Start. They need to be able to say what they think and be accepted for who they are. Others have a "refreshing naiveté" about the Christian faith. They do not carry the same "inhibitions" as people who have been raised in the church.

One of the young women helping to lead the Alpha course was having trouble conceiving. A bout with cancer and surgery made it less likely that she would become pregnant. The Alpha group prayed for her, and just before Christmas she gave birth to a baby boy. Start says, "I'm not sure if outside Alpha we would have prayed."

Start and her pastor, Darcy Van Horn,



Alpha male: Nicky Gumbel from Holy Trinity Brompton addresses church leaders at the recent Kansas City training conference. The Alpha logo features a soccer player grasping an oversized question mark.

conscious effort to touch both minds and hearts with the gospel. Each plenary session included testimonies from people who became Christians or had their faith deepened through involvement with Alpha.

Keith Prestridge of Overland Park gave a brief talk on the first evening, striding toward the platform in a black leather jacket. Prestridge talked about leading a "punk rock, acid jazz" band known as the Screaming Beagles. Prestridge followed the ultraviolent philosophy of a character in Anthony Burgess's novel *A Clockwork Orange* until he dropped in one morning during worship at a Vineyard Fellowship service. Prestridge offered a pugilist's description of Alpha's Holy Spirit weekend: "They laid hands on me, and I knew release, you know? I know those of you who have felt the Spirit know what it's like. It's like being in a good fight and suddenly being knocked out."

The Kansas Alpha conference attracted a cross-denominational group, including seven members of the Salvation Army.

through our drug-and-alcohol program," Gorton says. "God has taught us that we need to break down this barrier of 'us and you.'"

Most testimonies at the Alpha conference focused on experiences at its Holy Spirit weekends. Hairdresser Mark Walker of Rogersville, Missouri, spoke about being delivered from two decades of drug addiction.

"After 21 years of drug abuse, three rehabilitation centers, two mental institutions, and two passes through jail, I decided I needed to change my life," he says. Walker missed a few of the first Alpha sessions, but then he went on the weekend retreat. "Late in the evening I laid in the back of my pickup truck and asked God to fill me with the Holy Spirit," he says.

BAPTISTS ADJUST ALPHA: Alpha courses have been held in about 50 countries. Although many have been held in Anglican, Vineyard, or independent charismatic churches, Alpha is gaining a

are cautious about Alpha's teaching on the Holy Spirit. "There seems to be more of a stress on the gift of tongues than I think is biblically warranted," says Van Horn.

"I'm a little leery of people who are not yet saved being pressed to be filled with the Spirit." Repentance is necessary before that should take place, he says. Van Horn is not bothered enough by the Holy Spirit teaching to dismiss Alpha altogether, however. "We have at times worked around that a little bit," he admits. Other pastors have done the same thing, despite Gumbel's emphasis on the importance of not modifying the curriculum.

In a society where faith is viewed as a private matter, Van Horn is pleased to provide a means for Christians to express what they believe. "One of my goals is to see people in the church equipped to share the gospel where they are," he says. "Not everyone is comfortable with that. Alpha gives them a practical way to fulfill their responsibility to evangelize."

EXPERIENCE OVER REASON? The Alpha approach has been faulted for pushing an experience-driven approach to evangelism that sidesteps intellectual difficulties. Yet Peter Horton, Rick Richardson, and a team from the interdenominational Church of the Resurrection in Glen Ellyn, Illinois, have found Alpha useful in reaching Generation X, young adults in their twenties and early thirties.

"Anything you do with Generation X needs to be relational," says Horton. "You have to show them that Christianity applies to things that they are struggling with and is relevant for them."

The Alpha structure is built to encourage relationships. "You bring your friends to Alpha and you start with a meal, which builds relationships," Horton says. Paula Karrasch, a recent college graduate, took part in Alpha a year ago. Karrasch says, "The meal forced me to talk to people. I couldn't hide. I had to relate to people."

The participants in the course are also divided into small groups from the beginning and attend a weekend get-together. "The purpose of the small group is to build community and relationship," says Horton. "It's meant to be a place where people can be open and ask questions."

Horton stresses the importance of authenticity and relevance in relating to Generation X. "Our personal stories of our relationships with Jesus are really important in showing them who Jesus is. I'm myself, being authentic and real. I think Generation X really wants to hear my story so they can see if it really works for me."

"Rick told a lot of stories from his

own life," says Karrasch. "I could see he wasn't this perfect, crystal clear Christian." They also watched a *Mr. Bean* video in which British comedian Rowan Atkinson falls asleep repeatedly throughout an Anglican church service. "It related to me as I didn't know what was happening in church. I could identify with Mr. Bean."

Alpha uses both apologetics and personal stories to communicate its evangelistic message. "Generally, Generation Xers are not interested in apologetics," says Horton, "but are very interested in personal stories or narrative." Horton believes that the stories bypass the "cynicism of Generation X."

Horton says, "It's not proof that they want, but experience. Typically, they're not asking me to prove that Christ died. They're more interested in what impact Christ will have on their lives."

"One of the principles of Alpha is that evangelism involves the whole person, the head, the heart, and the will," says Horton. Accordingly, the Alpha course allows participants to encounter God in many different ways. "It's an opportunity for them to explore Christianity and see whether it can address their needs."

QUESTIONS OF GUMBEL: More church leaders and scholars have questioned the Alpha program as it has gained a higher profile, and many of the criticisms have been focused on Alpha audio- and video-cassettes. Gumbel says the definitive Alpha curriculum is his book *Questions of Life*, and all ten Alpha teachings have been further revised and revideotaped.

Nevertheless, a lengthy critique of *Questions of Life* has been published in the January 1998 *Episcopal Evangelical Journal*. In his review, Roger Steer, a British author, faults Gumbel for downplaying the sacrificial nature of Christian living, for selectively quoting Scripture, and for portraying established churches as "dreary and uninspiring."

Steer in part focuses on Gumbel's selective scriptural quotation concerning speaking in tongues. In 1 Corinthians 14:5, Paul says, "I would like everyone of you to speak in tongues, but I would rather have you prophesy" (NIV). However, in *Questions of Life*, Gumbel says, "Not every Christian speaks in tongues. Yet Paul says, 'I would like everyone of you to speak in tongues,' suggesting that it is not only for a special class of Christians. It is open to all Christians. . . . If you would like to receive it, there is no reason why you should not." Steer asserts that Gumbel is wrongly suggesting that it

is normative for speaking in tongues to accompany infilling of the Holy Spirit.

During a lengthy interview, Gumbel discussed Alpha criticism, saying, "We haven't got everything perfect. Alpha is alive. It's not fixed. That's why we revideoed [the Alpha lectures], because we were trying to respond to criticisms." He says when there is another printing of *Questions of Life* he usually makes editorial changes, based on suggestions from church leaders.

Gumbel says Alpha materials avoid using the word *charismatic* because "we don't regard it as charismatic; it's just what we see as Trinitarian." Some leaders believe Alpha has too much about speaking in tongues, Gumbel says, while others say there is not enough. But Alpha's aim, he says, is to hold together the theological streams represented by its teaching on the sacraments, justification by faith, and infilling of the Holy Spirit.

Because Alpha's home base has been in the United Kingdom, church leaders there have the most experience with the course program. And to date, their enthusiasm is not flagging.

For 1998, they plan the unprecedented initiative of inviting every unchurched person in the United Kingdom to an Alpha course in October. Gumbel says, "There is an Alpha course within striking distance of everyone in the U.K. and within walking distance of most." The effort has the potential to transform many of the nation's churches into hot-houses for evangelistic outreach. "That's the vision," Gumbel says. "We hardly dare even mention it. We're trying to keep our heads down. The higher the profile the more people are out there trying to knock it."

Meanwhile, Alpha North America's Alistair Hanna is searching for 5,000 church leaders to attend one of the ten training conferences this year. He says Alpha is not a "magic bullet."

"It's a lot of work," Hanna says. "It takes sustained effort and faith. One of the things that quite often happens is after you've worked your way through your church, the next [Alpha] could be very small." Hanna says one pastor had only seven people show up for his third Alpha course. "He realized that this wasn't going to do anything for anybody if he didn't get people out, having friends bringing friends."

With reports from Doug LeBlanc, Overland Park, Kansas; Debra Fieguth, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada; and Mary Cagney, Glen Ellyn, Illinois.

THE FUTURE OF EVANGELICAL THEOLOGY

*Roger Olson argues that a division
between traditionalists and reformists threatens
to end our theological consensus.*

Responses by Clark H. Pinnock, Thomas C. Oden, and Timothy George

ROGER E. OLSON

Is there really such a thing as *evangelicalism*?" I had heard the question posed too many times. This time I heard myself responding, "There had better be! That's my family!" My passionate response surprised both me and my conversation partner.

Evangelical is not just a label for many of us. It is an emotive word that evokes powerful memories and deep-seated feelings of sawdust floors in open-sided tent meetings, moments with God and his people around altars and bonfires, sanctuaries and classrooms with preachers and teachers steeped in Scripture and soaked in the Spirit, and participation in Billy Graham crusades, Youth for Christ, Campus Crusade for Christ, and InterVarsity Christian Fellowship. This is our story. This is our song. This is our family.

But does it exist? Do I really have such a family, or is it merely a figment of my imagination—like the idealized TV families of 1950s sitcoms? And even if evangelicalism does exist, does it have a future?

I believe that evangelicalism does indeed exist, though what holds it together is sometimes hard to discern (much like the work of the Holy Spirit who animates the movement). I want to argue that evangelicalism is primarily a theological movement that has the following four minimum characteristics:

- It looks to the Bible as the supreme norm of truth for Christian belief and practice—the biblical message enshrined in its narratives and its interpretations of those narratives;
- It holds a supernatural world-view that is centered in a

transcendent, personal God who interacts with, and intervenes in, creation;

- It focuses on the forgiving and transforming grace of God through Jesus Christ in the experience called *conversion* as the center of authentic Christian experience;

- And it believes that the primary task of Christian theology is to serve the church's mission of bringing God's grace to the whole world through proclamation and service.

These four characteristics form the evangelical theological consensus, the core of authentic evangelical theology. Others would add features to this basic list, but no self-identified evangelical theologian—conservative or progressive—would take from it.

While I believe this familial consensus exists, I am anxious about its future. Since at least the mid-1970s, this glue has been gradually losing its binding power. Debates over the exact nature of Scripture's authority, the origins of humanity and creation itself, appropriate roles of men and women in church and society, and divine sovereignty in nature and history have manifested rather than caused a growing rift between evangelical theologians. The various positions in these evangelical debates do not themselves call into question our core commitments, but the rhetoric of the debates often imply that they do.

Powerful leaders within evangelical theological professional societies have threatened to leave and create rival societies unless other evangelical theologians and scholars are expelled. Books and articles decrying either too much revision and innovation or too little vitality and fresh rethinking of evangelical thought have

poured forth from evangelical publishing houses in recent years. The compilation *The Coming Evangelical Crisis* (Moody Press, 1996) and Millard Erickson's *The Evangelical Left* (Baker, 1997) warn of creeping liberalism in the camp while Stanley Grenz's *Revisoning Evangelical Theology* (InterVarsity, 1993) and William J. Abraham's *The Coming Great Revival: Recovering the Full Evangelical Tradition* (Harper & Row, 1984) call for reconsideration of traditional evangelical ways of thinking about matters dear to evangelical hearts and minds.

This crisis has been building for at least two decades, and whatever the next century holds for evangelical theology depends to a great extent on how it is handled and resolved. Failure to resolve it may mean the dissolution of the shaky unity that has marked evangelical theology since its emergence as a distinct movement during this century. My hope, however, is that the successful resolution of this debate may energize evangelical theology and be a catalyst for greater creativity and influence in the twenty-first century.

TWO-PARTY SYSTEM

At the risk of gross oversimplification, I will delineate two emerging parties, or loose coalitions, within North American evangelical theology. One party may be described as *traditionalist* and the other as *reformist*. Their differences lie in divergent *mindsets* toward a variety of fundamental issues, including *theological boundaries, the nature of doctrine, progress in theology, and relating to nonevangelical theologies and culture in general*. I would like to emphasize, however, that both groups passionately embrace the basic evangelical paradigm and work out of it.

Labels all too often are perceived as libels. Jaroslav Pelikan has defined *traditionalism* as "the dead faith of the living" and contrasted it with *tradition* as the "living faith of the dead." I do not use the label *traditionalist* in any negative sense. It simply means a mindset that values traditional interpretations and formulations as binding and normative and looks with suspicion upon doctrinal revisions and new proposals arising out of theological reflection.

Similarly, *reformist* is a label sometimes associated with idealism and progressive social and political agendas and activism. Here it simply describes a mindset that values the continuing process of constructive theology seeking new light breaking forth from God's Word. Neither label is used pejoratively.

My goal in describing these two mindsets is for evangelical traditionalists and evangelical reformists to begin to dialogue with each other for the greater good of the entire evangelical community. I believe they need to understand better one another's strengths, learn to challenge each other in love, and to work together for the strength and vitality of future evangelical fellowship and witness.

THEOLOGICAL BOUNDARIES

Church as bounded set. Traditionalists tend to specify who is "in" and who is "out" of the community. They see evangelicalism as a "bounded set" category. The only way to avoid the slide into debilitating relativism and pluralism—a disease that has virtually destroyed "mainline" Christian denominations—is to recognize firm boundaries. It must be possible to decide, by paying close attention, which theologians and movements are within the circle or—to use a common evangelical metaphor—under the tent.

One way of achieving the traditionalists' goal is to look to the past and acknowledge some outstanding signposts and landmarks in the history of Christian theology as irreversible and unquestionable achievements in interpreting Scripture.

My goal is for evangelical traditionalists and evangelical reformists to begin to dialogue with each other for the greater good of the entire evangelical community.



Traditionalists enshrine certain works of the past in a way analogous to landmark court precedents.

Evangelical traditionalism has a decidedly confessionalist cast, the acceptance of certain historical doctrinal confessions as absolute boundaries that put flesh on the skeleton of the basic evangelical paradigm. What good is it to affirm Scripture as supreme source and norm for faith and practice if one can draw all the wrong conclusions from it? Even cultists often affirm the supremacy of Scripture and claim to be "born again."

For at least the last 15 years, various evangelical thinkers have warned against "the goddess of novelty" and spurious innovation in theology, calling evangelicals back to the sources of the faith. Thomas C. Oden of Drew University, who represents a moderate and irenic traditionalism within the Arminian wing of evangelicalism, argues for a new appreciation of the early church fathers and the Great Tradition of Christian thought that preceded the denominationalism of Christianity. Oden likes to quote the criterion of Christian truth suggested by early theologian Vincent of Lérins: "What has always been believed by all Christians everywhere." Oden believes that the Great Tradition should be held up as a norm for Christian thought without denying the need for occasional, moderate reformulation of that tradition.

Other evangelical traditionalists emphasize the magisterial Reformation of the sixteenth century—Luther, Calvin, and the great Protestant confessions of faith stemming from their reforming theologies—as the touchstone of doctrinal truth for authentic evangelicalism. Certain evangelical thinkers have come together as the Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals (ACE) to call evangelicals back to our roots in the magisterial Reformation. Some within this group and its sympathizers look to Gordon-Conwell Seminary professor David Wells as the prophetic voice crying in the wilderness of current evangelical enthusiasm for therapeutic preaching and market-driven ecclesiology. Wells's books *No Place for Truth* (Eerdmans, 1993) and *God in the Wasteland* (Eerdmans, 1994) are regarded by them as clarion calls back to the solid ground of tradition and away from the precipice of evangelical decline into cultural accommodation.

Whether they sympathize with Oden's focus on the early church or Wells's emphasis on the magisterial Reformation and Puritan theology, all evangelical traditionalists see the need for firm confessional boundaries around the evangelical community. It is not enough to proclaim "The Bible only!" and leave open its interpretation to anything and everything that can possibly be justified by appeal to it. That would be like declaring allegiance

to the Constitution while rejecting landmark Supreme Court decisions or even the authority of the Court itself.

Church as centered set. Reformist evangelicals, on the other hand, prefer to see evangelical Christianity as a centered-set category rather than a bounded-set one. Risking ambiguity about boundaries—who is “in” and who is “out”—they insist on keeping the boundaries open and relatively undefined. Thinkers, books, groups can be “more or less” evangelical. When it becomes necessary—as sometimes is the case—to decide whether a particular theologian or movement is truly evangelical or not, reformists look to the center—the unchanging constellation of four evangelical commitments that makes up its paradigm.

To reformists, the traditionalists’ emphasis on clear boundaries verges on obsessiveness with order and manifests an “us/them” mentality. Their questions to evangelical traditionalists would be “whose creeds and confessions?” Those who hold to the Westminster Confession of Faith cannot affirm all of Wesley’s articles of religion or Pentecostal statements of faith. To reformists, the traditionalists’ respect for past affirmations is laudable, but their tendency to treat detailed doctrinal statements—however hoary—as virtual additions to Scripture undermines not only theological progress but prophetic correction by Word and Spirit.

While resisting doctrinal relativism and pluralism, reformists wish to remain open to prophetic voices from the “fringes” that may not have been heard as authentically evangelical before. The boundaries may remain relatively open and undefined so long as the center remains strong.

Reformist evangelical thinkers look to scholars such as Clark H. Pinnock and Stanley J. Grenz as pioneers of cautious, biblically committed evangelical reformism. Pinnock’s *Tracking the Maze* (Harper & Row, 1990) and *Flame of Love* (InterVarsity Press, 1996) and Grenz’s *Revisioning Evangelical Theology* (InterVarsity, 1993) and *Theology for the Community of God* (Broadman & Holman, 1994) are models of the centered-set concept of evangelicalism. While respectful of the Great Tradition of Christian theology and especially of the Reformers’ work in the sixteenth century, they recognize the fallibility of every human tradition and the need for ongoing reformulation of human perceptions of truth. Rather than look to the past for unchangeable landmarks and confessional standards, they look to the future and seek change within continuity for the sake of continuing evangelical vitality and viability.

Prescription. For evangelical theology to have a vibrant future it needs to have flexible boundaries with a strengthened center. Reformists are right to emphasize the center as the unifying force—the church is always strongest when it is emphasizing what it affirms—but they are wrong to emphasize inclusion without right affirmation. Reformists need to include in the center a cognitive content of core beliefs that are transcultural and translinguistic.

The cognitive content of the evangelical core identity need not be the jots and tittles of a full-blown systematic theology or any particular creed, confession, or catechism, but it must use the

spirit of these formulations to point to the foundational experience of being transformed by God’s spirit into Christlikeness and a confession of Jesus as God and Savior. The core of belief at the center will also include the unique inspiration of Scripture and salvation by Jesus Christ alone through God’s grace alone.

One of the tasks of theology will be to make this center so strong and attractive that many will move toward it into the “big tent” of evangelical Christianity and out of the night of heresy and doctrinal confusion. Still, it must be remembered that it is the experience of God’s transforming Spirit through encounter with Jesus Christ in conversion that best guarantees authentic Christianity—including orthodox belief.

Traditionalists need to recognize that affirmation of truth may take different forms. One is not necessarily or automatically pronouncing heresy just because the expected shibboleth comes out wrongly. G. K. Chesterton is supposed to have warned against liberal distortions of Christian truth by saying that if one wishes to draw a giraffe one can draw it many ways, but it has to have a long neck. A moment of genuine enlightenment occurred for me when I repeated this aphorism to a colleague who replied: “Unless one is viewing the giraffe from above.” Before condemning a Christian thinker for not drawing the giraffe correctly, it is worthwhile to inquire into his or her perspective. Traditionalists are right to affirm that Christianity—and especially evangelical Christianity—cannot be made compatible with any and every cognitive content. On the other hand, they need to recognize that viewpoints may give equally correct affirmations diverse forms.

The future of evangelical theology will be a “big tent” with definite but sometimes uncertain boundaries and a strong center stage. Exactly who is under the tent is not always easy to tell, but we should embrace and attempt to include those whose faces are turned toward the center and invite them to come forward. This is the positive mission of our theological leaders.

NATURE AND PROGRESS OF DOCTRINE

Another reason for this unfortunate rift is difference of understanding about the nature of, and progress in, doctrine and theology. Traditionalists stress the close identification of formulations of core doctrines with what is directly taught in Scripture and so see doctrine as lying at the center of Christianity’s enduring essence. For them, traditional theological formulations are a first-order language of revelation. God revealed doctrines.

Reformists, on the other hand, tend to emphasize the human instrumentality in articulating doctrine, seeing it as a second-order language—in other words, as a human interpretation of divine revelation. Reformists, then, see doctrinal and theological progress as discovering “new light” breaking forth from God’s Word.

Doctrine as revelation. What is it that makes Christianity identifiable across time and space and from culture to culture? For traditionalists, it is not so much experience or liturgy or forms of community but belief in a set of doctrinal affirmations that can be translated without substantial loss across cultures and languages throughout the centuries and across continents.

Because of heretical challenges to these doctrinal affirmations, the church has found it necessary at times to enshrine them in creeds, confessions of faith, and catechisms. They are the timeless truths that arise directly out of any correct reading of Scripture itself and define Christianity over against all false gospels. The affirmation that Jesus Christ is one person in two natures, for example, is since the Council of Chalcedon (A.D.

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TRADITIONALISTS
TEND TO SPECIFY
WHO IS “IN” AND
WHO IS “OUT”
OF THE
EVANGELICAL
COMMUNITY.

RESPONSE

CLARK H. PINNOCK



*For me, theology
is like a rich feast,
with many dishes to enjoy
and delicacies to taste.*

A PILGRIM ON THE WAY

I welcome Roger Olson's article and resonate with its analysis. There are different types of theologians, and we need to respect each other's work. We are being called to strive for the dynamic equilibrium of continuity and creativity that characterizes great theology. Olson believes, as I do, that fidelity to Scripture is consonant with innovation in formulating doctrine, and that it is all right at times to challenge assumptions that underlie certain of our traditions.

DOING THEOLOGY EN ROUTE

I also hear Olson saying (as a subtext) that, since more of our theologians are traditionalists, room needs to be made for reformists who are often under suspicion. I for one hope he is right in thinking that the evangelical movement is mature enough now to welcome both traditionalists and reformists.

As a reformist myself, I approach theology in a spirit of adventure, being always curious about what I may find. For me, theology is like a rich feast, with many dishes to enjoy and delicacies to taste. It is like a centuries-old conversation that I am privileged to take part in, a conversation replete with innumerable voices to listen to. More like a pilgrim than a settler, I tread the path of discovery and do my theology en route.

I also do theology contextually, recognizing that theology will reflect the culture in which it emerges. Everything I write is not only about something but is addressed to someone. I may have been unwise in introducing too many of my discoveries in too short a time since I have fallen under a cloud of suspicion on account of it. I know perfectly well that evangelicals are leery of innovation in theology (because it reminds them of liberalism), and that they expect their theologians to defend tradition, not challenge it. I have only myself to blame for calling too many things into question too quickly.

CONFRONTING PALEO-CALVINISM

We must realize that it will not be easy for traditionalists and reformists to live together in harmony. To illustrate, a few years ago a group of us proposed a model we called the openness of God. In it we portrayed God as a loving person and relational being, open to and interacting with the world. We thought it was scripturally serious, theologically fruitful, philosophically striking, and practically on target.

Though there were some who welcomed it, it was also attacked severely. The new *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology*, for example, saw it as a shot in a new battle over the doctrine of God. And the popular Reformed theologian R. C. Sproul warned that it was "an assault not merely on Calvinism, or even on classical theism, but on Christianity itself" (*Willing to Believe: The Controversy over Free Will*, p. 143).

I also heard an audiotepe from one of Sproul's conferences where he said, in answer to a question, that he does not consider me a Christian any longer (not to say an evangelical); and that he would not have fellowship with me because I have espoused a theological model at odds with his own variety of paleo-Calvinism in which there is no room for a vision of God as fully personal and involved, relational and passionate, mutual and reciprocal. Evidently Sproul is comfortable with perfections of stability but not with perfections of change in God. He appears to be blind to the need for a better balance between transcendence and God's suffering involvement in history. He loves the Reformation but does not appreciate hearing that maybe we need an ongoing reformation.

My point is that relations between traditionalists and reformists are threatened because some of the traditionalists insist on a more specific doctrinal component in the definition of evangelical orthodoxy than Olson describes. The

model of openness, for example, cannot be evangelical, they say, because it disputes the manipulative nature of the divine-human relationship held by paleo-Calvinism.

In part I understand how they feel. The early leaders of the postwar evangelical coalition were for the most part conservative Calvinists, and it was mostly understood that there would not be a swing away from that theology. But over time we have developed into much more diverse groups of people, and the hegemony of paleo-Calvinism has dissolved. It will be hard for those who think that is a good thing to live in harmony with those who think it is a major disaster.

CALLED TO MODESTY

In order for Olson's call for peaceful relations to succeed, two things have to happen. First, we must become more modest in our claims. I do not have the final answers; neither does Sproul. Theology is an unfinished task, and all of our efforts at interpretation are limited in insight. As Paul says, "We see through a glass darkly." There is more to be known about God than any of us presently knows.

Second, we need to look to the future as well as the past. Theology did not reach perfection when the Westminster Confession (or some other sectarian standard) was penned. Theology is a venture in hope for all of us; let us pray for and anticipate an ever-fuller understanding from the Spirit of God.

May God grant that we continue to grow as hearers of the Word and enlarge our vision of the truth through interaction with each other. For my part, I value the work of R. C. Sproul and wish him godspeed. 

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451) as much a part of authentic Christianity as the affirmation that "Jesus is Lord!"

In his widely used *Christian Theology*, Millard Erickson embodies this traditionalist mindset when he affirms doctrine as the "enduring essence" of Christianity. Experience is subjective and unable to provide the firm foundation for a community of faith. To be "evangelical," he argues, is to affirm certain beliefs about Scripture and God that are not open to revision or change in content. Only the forms in which they are expressed may change from culture to culture and time to time. In a recently published critique of *The Evangelical Left*, Erickson warns against what he sees as a growing tendency among some evangelical theologians to downplay and demote enduring, unchanging doctrinal commitments.

By defining *doctrine* as a first-order language of divine revelation, traditionalists naturally understand "progress" in evangelical thought as digging deeper into the historic sources and translating them for contemporary people. In other words, progress is effective spelling out of past achievements in theology.

Some traditionalists look back to an almost edenic period of theological reflection from the 1740s to the 1880s, with the works of Jonathan Edwards and Charles Hodge as its stalwart bookends, where Reformed theology clarified and solidified its basic confessional stance within the modern world, completing this constructive task of theology. The theologian's job today, then, is to carry forward the same basic methodology and guiding impulses by translating Edwards's and Hodge's doctrine of divine sovereignty, for example, within the conceptual and linguistic world of contemporary society.

Doctrine as interpretation. Evangelical reformists, on the other hand, tend to make a sharp distinction between doctrinal formulas and scriptural language itself. Theological constructions are the church's later interpretations of the stories and teachings of canonical Scripture and so are subject to judgment from Scripture and must constantly be held more lightly than the first-order language of the Bible and worship (e.g., "Jesus is Lord!").

For reformist evangelicals, the enduring essence of Christianity is a work of God in the life of the human person, variously called *conversion*, *regeneration*, or *being born again*. Doctrine serves the experience, not vice versa. This supernatural experience of conversion brings with it the conviction of the truth of Scripture and commitment to mission and service. Doctrines, then, are attempts to express faithfully and relevantly the implications of this experience. As authoritative as they may be, doctrines are never as central as the experience of meeting God.

A recent expression of this evangelical mindset is Grenz's *Revisioning Evangelical Theology*. Grenz calls for a recognition of the experience of conversion and conversional piety as the true enduring essence of evangelicalism, with doctrine as important—even essential—but secondary and revisable.

For example, says Grenz, whether one is premillennial or postmillennial or amillennial was once a major issue among evangelical Christians and divided the family into factions. But many evangelicals who once insisted on the enduring truth of premillennial doctrine as defining what is to be evangelical now recog-

nize ambiguity in Scripture on the meaning of the millennium (Rev. 20). Some premillennialists have even shifted toward amillennialism without in any way defecting from authentic evangelical Christian theology. According to Grenz and other reformist evangelical thinkers, we must remain open to such future shifts and changes in human interpretations and formulations of the meaning of God's inspired Word. What endures through change is commitment to the center—Jesus Christ and loyalty to him through the work of the Spirit called "conversion."

Reformists see doctrinal and theological progress as discovering "new light" breaking forth from God's Word. Through earnestly going back to the beginning and reflecting anew on the meanings of original revelation in the light of contemporary problems, theology can discover new solutions that may have even seemed heretical to earlier generations steeped in philosophies and cultures alien to the biblical thought world. Reformists want to clear away what they see as the tangled underbrush of human traditions in order to solve theological puzzles and conundrums.

Even "new solutions," however, would to reformists be at best temporary settlements—open to further reconsideration and possible revision as required by the biblical message, illumination from the Holy Spirit, and contemporary culture. For reformists, theology's constructive task is always incomplete this side of the kingdom.

A recent flash point of controversy arising out of these two distinct mindsets is the debate over the so-called openness of God proposal. Pinnock and others have suggested that the God of the Bible is obscured by such traditional attributes as simplicity, impassibility, and even immutability. In *The Openness of God* (InterVarsity, 1994), Pinnock and four other evangelical thinkers argued for reforming the classical doctrine of God in light of a fresh reading of the biblical narratives of God's interaction with people.

Many traditionalists see this as a clear-cut case of violating established tradition—especially when the reformists go so far as to suggest that God may not already know every future free decision yet to be made by every person. The Christian theological tradition, they argue, has settled that issue in favor of God's exhaustive and certain knowledge (if not foreordination) of every event past, present, and future.

Even reformists who do not agree with Pinnock and his cohorts on this particular issue, like Stanley Grenz, support re-examining assumed doctrinal formulas from time to time. That is part of theology's task. What makes reformist theology "evangelical" is that it is firmly committed to, and guided by, Word and Spirit in this process and is not seeking merely to accommodate to cultural standards of "truth" when it adjusts a part of the doctrinal heritage of the churches.

Traditionalists like Erickson look at their reformist counterparts within the evangelical family and warn of the dangers of subjectivism, pluralism, and even theological liberalism. After all, didn't the father of modern liberal Protestant theology, Friedrich Schleiermacher, also place experience rather than doctrine at the center and redefine doctrine as merely attempts to bring religious experience to speech?

Reformists look over at their traditionalist counterparts and warn of the dangers of dead orthodoxy and *theologism*—confusing doctrinal correctness with being transformed by encounter with God. Reformists point to some traditionalists' strange bedfellows; even some who reject such a traditional evangelical practice as solicitation of faith (witnessing) are con-

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REFORMISTS
WISH TO REMAIN
OPEN TO
PROPHETIC
VOICES FROM
THE "FRINGES."

RESPONSE

THOMAS C. ODEN

THE REAL REFORMERS ARE TRADITIONALISTS

If we are to engage in the "honest dialogue" to which Roger Olson calls us, we must ask: Is the traditionalist/reformist distinction the best way to name the conflict? Or does the deeper difference lie in inordinate accommodation to the assumptions of dying modernity over against the determination to grasp the opportunity of grace amid a dying culture? I think the latter is a more penetrating distinction.

THE WRONG TYPOLOGY

Olson's attempt at typological fairness actually has deep affinities with what he calls reformism. This is a somewhat tendentious typology that conservative evangelicals will find only partially illuminating but probably not perennially useful. For instance, Olson typifies traditionalism as having the view that "God has revealed doctrines." Classic Christian teaching is not best defined as unchangeable language or fixed propositions but as the living tradition of apostolic teaching that is always the same even as it penetrates various new cultural assumptions and languages. What is revealed in the Son is the Father's own merciful heart, not doctrines about mercy. Our vulnerable thoughts, language, and doctrinal reflections are always finally accountable to that revelation.

No evangelical could feel accurately described by the caricature of a "traditionalism" that views "historical doctrinal confessions as *absolute boundaries*," for the only absolute boundary to which evangelical confession can appeal is the apostolic testimony concerning God's own coming in the Incarnation, Cross, and Resurrection as a midrash upon Hebrew scriptures. The ecumenical councils play a role only insofar as they help identify long-agreed-upon, consensually received boundaries against false interpretations of Scripture. Since Mar-

cion it has been impossible for Christians to ignore the Hebrew Bible. Since Arius it has been impossible for Christians to say that the Son of God is not co-eternal with the Father, according to Scripture. These are landmarks that remain for Christians of all subsequent times and places, since once challenged they had to be met with serious exegetical debate and consensual definition of Christian truth, which is orthodoxy.

No evangelical I know elevates the "one person in two natures" formula to the same plane as the affirmation "Jesus is Lord," however true to Scripture the former may be. Nor would any patristic writer exalt the conciliar decision to parity with Scripture. Chalcedon itself constantly places its language and formulations under the sovereign judgment of Scripture. If this is doubted, please read the text!

TRADITION ENERGIZES REFORM

It is precisely the classic Christian tradition that is the best energizer of reform. Hence the polarities Olson proposes are, in my view, somewhat deficient, although well intended. Pitting tradition against reform is not sufficiently dialectical.

Tradition enables reform. Reformists often imagine that they can improve on the apostolic teaching. Evangelical reform does not come by removing the landmarks but by observing them anew in the present situation. Indeed, new light is always breaking forth from God's Word.

But this does not mean that the original apostolic testimony is itself incomplete or subject to being amended and corrected by the new light that the gospel is always newly refracting. The revelation of God the Father through the Son, finished on the cross and validated in the resurrection, does not stand in desperate need of further modern insight to make it sufficient for our justification. The

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A HYPER-AMERICAN TILT

There is indeed in the whole history of orthodoxy a contest between reformist and traditionalist tendencies (or, I would prefer to say, *accommodative* versus *resistant* tendencies), but Olson seems interested almost exclusively in its most recent history and its immediate future. This gives his description a hyper-American tilt that seems dated and biased from the viewpoint of the Two-Thirds World of evangelical Christians.

Olson is right about the centrality of the Holy Spirit in the recovery of evangelical theology, but he seems less interested in beholding the history of the Holy Spirit as the ground for assessing and grasping the present activity of the Spirit.

The bigger tent to which Olson does not refer is the communion of saints of all times and places, praising God in all languages and symbol systems. The Holy Spirit speaks all languages, as Augustine quipped. The tent of the *consensus fidelium* is vast and multicultural but not lacking boundaries. It is not very well understood by using Euro-American categories only.

The risk of dialogue with faithful Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholics is of a very different order than with waning theological liberals. The Evangelical-Catholic and Evangelical-Orthodox dialogues are a necessity and a requirement for our times. The liberal dialogue is largely a dated temptation and backward-looking accommodation to a dying modernity. The death of modernity is an

opportunity to proclaim the truth of the gospel.

A PIETISTIC BIAS

Olson shows a decidedly pietistic bias when he defines the enduring essence of Christianity not as God's grace in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit, but as the human experience of conversion. And a lingering pietism surfaces in his annoyance with "theological correctness." His polarities may also have the unintended consequence of tending to keep the evangelical theological dialogue trapped in the Protestant scholastic versus pietistic quarrel between doctrine and experience.

Evangelical teaching worthy of the gospel will frame both salvific experience and sacred doctrine as derivative from revelation, from God's own merciful presence in history. Revelation is not first thought then experienced but first occurs in history, and only then thought and experienced.

BACKWARD-LOOKING REFORMERS

As a newcomer to evangelical theology, I am humbled to find Olson viewing my efforts as hopeful for the future of what he calls an irenic traditionalism, and pleased to be counted along with Stan Grenz as reaching across the evangelical divide that Olson so deplors.

Although I am viewed by some as a traditionalist, I feel more at home with his definition of reform as "a mindset that values the continuing process of constructive theology seeking new light breaking forth from God's Word," provided God's Word itself is the judge and constant reference for the new light. There is no need to be afraid of constructive theological reasoning if it is solidly grounded in the Word of God as the norm of truth for Christian belief and practice.

I have no anxiety about the theological projects of Grenz and Pinnock as long as they remain centered in the apostolic testimony and not fixated upon modern accommodation. That is their intention, as I see it. Yet Olson may stretch their intention when he says of Grenz and Pinnock that "*rather than look to the past* for unchangeable landmarks and confessional standards they *look to the future* and seek change within continuity" (italics added). Both, as I see it, look to the Scriptures earnestly and, to some degree, though less sufficiently, to the history of exegesis. But I find neither of them simply or compulsively

looking "to the future" as if away from the past.

BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY TO NOVELTY

If "reformists" insist on keeping the boundaries of heresy open, however, then they must be resisted with charity. The fantasy that God is ignorant of the future is a heresy that must be rejected on scriptural grounds ("I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come"; Isa. 46:10a; cf. Job 28; Ps. 90; Rom. 8:29; Eph. 1), as it has been in the history of exegesis of relevant passages. This issue was thoroughly discussed by patristic exegetes as early as Origen's *Against Celsus*. Keeping the boundaries of faith undefined is a demonic temptation that evangelicals within the mainline have learned all too well and have been burned by all too painfully.

Whatever values may result from supposed reformists and revisionists, they cannot function long or intergenerationally without the boundaries set long ago in relation to the challenges of Marcionism, Arianism, and Pelagianism. It would be folly to try to reform those boundaries that have been celebrated for two millennia and repeatedly confirmed by the Reformers and revivalists themselves! Although I concede that there are other tasks more important than the exposure of heresy, I warn: If there is no immune system to resist heresy, there will soon be nothing but the teeming infestation of heresy. I speak as one who was once a lover of heresy.

The Babylonian captivity to novelty is the temptation of all modern reflection. It is invading evangelical leadership at an alarming rate in ways disturbing to evangelicals in the mainline who have suffered from its bewitchments for two centuries.

NECESSARY POLEMICS

Olson is more concerned than I would be about deepening conflicts among evangelicals. I do not regard polemics as a bad word. The tension Olson describes is intrinsic to the gospel. It is the perennial tension between memory and imagination, tradition and renewal, gift and task. Hence the tension is not something to be averted or circumvented but faced candidly. Could it be that one of the strengths and gifts given to North American evangelicalism by the Holy Spirit is the freedom to confront, challenge, argue, debate according to conscience under the Word?

I am less afraid of that conflict than the lack of it. I would like to see more astute, well-informed, sharper polemical efforts among young evangelicals. A theology that serves the grace of repentance needs to nurture good, tough, honest polemics, but *good* means charitable and accurate, and *tough* does not mean irascible.

I see little evidence of a fundamental split in the Evangelical Theological Society. There indeed remains a great gulf between the ETS and the Wesleyan Theological Society, which needs to be overcome with much patience and empathy.

I find myself in deep sympathy with Wells, Packer, Horton, Sproul, and others who call for deeper grounding within the Reformation faith and landmark documents, yet not without recognition that Luther and Calvin were themselves formed by patristic exegesis of Scripture passages that enabled them better to challenge certain distorted forms of medieval scholasticism. I regard these bold evangelicals as reformers of evangelicalism, not merely backward-looking traditionalists bound to unchanging or absolute formulations that do not allow for contextualization of the gospel within the collapse of modernity.

FOLLOWING THE SPIRIT

Evangelical theology today is being *reformed* by the Spirit so as to listen to the history of the Holy Spirit. My wish within evangelical theology is to bring evangelicals to an awareness of how powerfully God has acted in the centuries between Paul and Luther to enable belief and confession and community in Christ.

I do not wish to look only to the past, as Olson defines the fixed habit of traditionalists, but to look to the work of the Spirit in the present and the future as illumined by the history of the mission of God the Father through the Son by the power of the Spirit in the whole church. Without an awareness of how God the Spirit works in history, however, we cannot rightly behold the work of God in the present. In any case, Olson is right to call those whom he too undialectically names traditionalists and reformists to listen to one another and challenge one another in love and dialogue. **CT**

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sidered allies by some traditionalists so long as they are theologically correct and appropriately committed to the doctrines of the magisterial Reformation.

Traditionalists accuse reformists of hobnobbing with liberals and postmodernists of various kinds. Gradually, the threat of internecine warfare looms as a real and very serious danger as these two evangelical parties—marked by their own distinctive mindsets—pull apart and fall away from brotherly dialogue into harsh polemics.

Prescription. The reformist idea that doctrinal affirmation is second-order language is simply true. No doctrinal formula or theological system is identical with divine revelation itself. And yet the traditionalist idea that some doctrinal affirmations are part of the permanent and essential core of evangelical Christianity is also true. Some theological formulations are so closely tied with the church's understanding of what God has revealed that they function as being equivalent to divine revelation.

Anyone who seriously denies the trustworthiness of Scripture or the deity of Jesus Christ or the necessity of grace for salvation must be considered other than truly and authentically evangelical, even though these doctrines have been developed by humans on the basis of divine revelation rather than directly revealed. Even if they are not "revealed truths," they are "truths of revelation."

These careful distinctions between core affirmations and secondary and tertiary doctrines that mark denominational distinctives are extremely important to keep in mind. Modern debates within the church often treat disputes over secondary doctrines as if core doctrines were at stake. This skews the discussion.

On many matters, there is no one "traditional" evangelical view. Take the differing evangelical views of divine sovereignty as an example. So long as one affirms God's ultimate ability to intervene and control nature and history (core affirmation) it should not matter whether one affirms that God does or does not limit himself in order to allow for free human participation and partnership in partially determining them (secondary doctrines). It will not matter—as a test of fellowship—whether he or she believes in God's meticulous control of all events or opts for a broader understanding such that God is "in charge but not always in control."

As for the prospect of progress in doctrine, reformists' search for new light can and must be correlated with traditionalists' strong respect for formative periods of past theological creativity and the settlements that arose out of them. We must remain open to the possibility that the Spirit of God may lead contemporary, God-honoring thinkers into deeper insights into God's Word while still honoring and learning from what the same Spirit has done in the past. Neither kneejerk rejection nor glib embrace is the way forward.

ENGAGING THE REST OF THE WORLD

Finally, these two evangelical camps have different mindsets with regard to interacting with nonevangelical theologies and culture in general. Because traditionalists see their doctrinal formulations as communicating the essence of the faith, they tend to view nonevangelical theologies and belief systems as false and as objects of critical examination and exposure. For traditionalists, then, a major task of evangelical theology is the discovery and exposure of heresy.

Reformists tend to look upon nonevangelical theologies and non-Christian culture as ambiguous and flawed quests for truth. At worst, these belief systems raise appropriate questions without providing any sound answers; at best, they can stimulate fresh thinking on the part of evangelicals. Even such a clearly

nonevangelical thinker as Paul Tillich, for instance, can be seen by reformists as Luther's proverbial "crooked stick" with which God can strike a "heavy blow." Reformists live by the motto that "all truth is God's truth—wherever it is found" and attempt to remain open to the contributions of any and all serious thinkers who seek honestly after truth. They emphasize dialogue, rather than polemics, as the proper approach to nonevangelical theologians and philosophers.

To many traditionalists, reformists' openness to influence from nonevangelical theological sources is a further sign of doctrinal compromise. While one can study and talk to nonevangelicals, "dialogue" implies that you are willing to modify your positions, which traditionalists are unwilling to do. To reformists, the traditionalists' mindset smacks of triumphalism, elitism, and separatism, which is the hallmark of fundamentalism. Reformists also claim that the traditionalist stance calls into question the reality of common grace—God's sustaining power and light in the whole world that may break forth anywhere at any time.

Postmodernism as the enemy. One illustration of this divergence in mindset is their radically differing responses to the new cultural condition known

as postmodernity. Traditionalists focus on postmodernism's sometimes subtle but definite denial of absolute truth. To them, theology's task is to expose this new philosophy in all its forms and manifestation as antithetical to belief in truth and certainty. They argue that the heart of postmodernism is deconstructionism—the philosophy that all claims to truth are but masks for will to power. Traditionalists rightly criticize this denial of meaning and truth and call for other evangelicals to condemn it.

This traditionalist rejection of virtually everything "postmodern" is embodied in Gene Edward Veith's volume *Postmodern Times* (Crossway, 1994). According to Veith, while the Christian tradition affirms and is based on absolute truth, postmodernism denies absolute truth in favor of cognitive nihilism—a free-for-all, pragmatic chaos in which "truth" is merely what works and is viable within a particular context. The paradigm postmodern thinker in this evangelical estimation is philosopher Richard Rorty, a relativist who rejects any absolute truth in favor of truth defined pragmatically.

Postmodernism as dialogue partner. Reformists find postmodernity to be much broader than deconstructionism or even relativism. These, to them, are merely manifestations of postmodernity that evangelicals, of course, cannot endorse uncritically. But they see postmodernity in general as a new emphasis on holism in life and thought—a rejection of modernity's obsession with analysis and rationality as the summit of methods of discovery. They applaud postmodernism's recognition that something like faith is involved in all human thinking and see some benefits to postmodernism's discarding of the rationalistic mindset of the Enlightenment and

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modern secularism in favor of community-shaped perspective as a necessary ingredient in all knowledge. The paradigm postmodern thinker in this evangelical estimation is Notre Dame philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre, author of *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* (University of Notre Dame Press, 1984, second ed.) and *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (University of Notre Dame Press, 1988).

Reformist evangelical thinkers who cautiously value and exploit some aspects and types of postmodernity are Grenz, author of *A Primer on Postmodernism* (Eerdmans, 1996), Fuller Seminary professor Nancy Murphy, author of *Beyond Liberalism and Fundamentalism* (Trinity Press, 1996), and Canadian evangelical theologians Brian Walsh and Richard Middleton, who coauthored *Truth Is Stranger Than It Used to Be* (InterVarsity Press, 1995). Much to the chagrin of most evangelical traditionalists, these evangelical theologians find something of value in postmodern culture and philosophy and interpret it as an ally of Christian thought insofar as it rejects the modern project of elevating autonomous human reason above revelation and faith.

Prescription. Genuine dialogue involves sharing one's commitments, not shelving them in order to achieve meaningless agreement. Evangelical theology that is strong, mature, and unified can risk dialogue with nonevangelical theologies. Merely because an evangelical thinker goes into a setting of mostly liberal theologians to engage with them in earnest discussion does not mean he or she is compromising truth. Reformists are certainly right that such dialogue can produce benefits for both and all sides. Traditionalists are right, however, to warn of the dangers of dialogue that forbids tough-minded disagreement. An element of debate will always and inevitably mark evangelical encounters with nonevangelical thinkers.

The evangelical theology of the future will not look like a mere hybrid or synthesis of present-day traditionalism and reformism, in spite of how the foregoing vision may appear. Both parties must be willing to sacrifice vested interests and move toward the other with trust and openness. Each side will be transformed in the process as extremes are sloughed off and middle ground is explored and cleared away for new settlement.

CIVIL DIVIDE OR CIVIL WAR

Some will no doubt wonder how two such diverse mindsets can both be considered "evangelical." Some in both parties wonder the same and question the authenticity of the other party's evangelical credentials. This civil divide is gradually building up to uncivil war within the household of evangelical theology, and many civilians and a few evangelical theologians are caught in the middle, unsure which side to join or even if one must take sides at all. No doubt many readers of this article see themselves as "betwixt and between"—able to side neither with the Scylla of traditionalism nor the Charybdis of reformism.

The future of evangelical theology lies in calming these troubled waters through a peaceful settlement. There are genuine signs of hope for such a rapprochement. On the traditionalist side, Oden expresses cautious approval and support for moderate reformist theology so long as it remains faithful to the basic contours of the Great Tradition of Christian thought. On the reformist side, Grenz expresses respect for the Christian heritage of thought as a source and norm for the ongoing reforming of evangelical thought in new cultural situations. Irenic traditionalism and moderate reformism can be seen as allies in the task of revitalizing and renewing evangelical theology for the twenty-first century.

To close the divide more completely, evangelical thinkers on both sides will need to reaffirm, with clarity and resolve, their

strong commitments to the four major unifying themes of evangelical Christianity: Scripture as the highest authority for faith and practice, the supernatural involvement of a personal God in nature and history, the experience of conversion by God's Spirit through Jesus Christ as the gateway into authentic Christian existence, and the proper task of theology as serving the church in its mission and service. Without these four pillars clearly and unambiguously affirmed, evangelical theology has no future.

But even more is required. For evangelical theology to rise above these current challenges, it must also refocus on lost dimensions of Christian truth. The main one that I propose is the person and work of the Holy Spirit. Future evangelical theology must take its cue from the dynamic movements of God's Holy Spirit among charismatic evangelicals of all kinds around the world and begin to explore the unpredictable sovereignty of the third person of the triune God and his transforming power.

Future evangelical theology, in my view, must plumb the depths and mine the riches of the Holy Spirit's work in Scripture (beyond past inspiration and into present and future illumination) and in community (beyond fellowship and into signs and wonders of God's reign). The true transformation that awaits evangelical theology in the twenty-first century lies in following the Spirit's lead and tracing his footsteps in the multifaceted worldwide revival that is energizing Christians in Africa, Latin America, and Asia. Without in any way abandoning the authority of Scripture or the centrality of Jesus Christ, evangelical theology must find ways to open itself to the dynamism of the Spirit who makes all things new.

A Spirit-energized evangelical theology will be less obsessed with theological correctness and uniformity and more focused on spiritual transformation. Without denying past accomplishments and glories, Spirit-led theology will look for new ways to serve the church's mission by reflecting on the liberating aspects of ministry, worship, proclamation, and service.

What exactly will this look like? My guess (only a guess) is as follows. Fewer systematic theologies will flow from great evangelical intellects and more integrative and multidisciplinary works will come forth from evangelical thinkers' pens. Theological reflection will bring the Spirit's past transforming power and activity to bear on present problems of spirituality, ecology, community, wealth, and power. Fewer articles of doctrinal polemics will appear from great evangelical minds, and more prophetic tracts and monographs will be published and disseminated that promote the Spirit's work on behalf of marginalized portions of God's creation. Above all, and most noticeably, future evangelical theology will speak in new and different "tongues" as the Spirit of God gives utterance. Voices will rise and be heard speaking out of cultures and from a gender that have traditionally been largely silent within the evangelical academy.

What will evangelical theology look like in the next century? Only God knows for sure. But there is a great and glorious future for it if two things happen soon: first, the almost-warring parties of traditionalists and reformists must lay down their polemical weapons and enter into constructive dialogue toward a new, unified, and energized evangelical academy; second, evangelical theology must throw open the stained-glass windows of the academy to let the Holy Spirit blow in and across its dusty desks and volumed-lined shelves with new life and unexpected freshness. ■

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SUMMING UP

TIMOTHY GEORGE



Theologians

are not freelance

*scholars of religion, but trustees
of the deposit of faith.*

A THEOLOGY TO DIE FOR

Theology that is both Christian and evangelical arises out of the wonder and terror of having been confronted with the living God. It issues in confession, thanksgiving, and praise. As Martin Luther declared: "It is not by reading, writing, or speculation that one becomes a theologian. Nay, rather, it is living, dying, and being damned that makes one a theologian."

What I find most missing in Roger Olson's analysis of evangelical theology is this note of passion. He depicts the contemporary landscape as a kind of range war between the settlers and the explorers. As in the old Zane Grey novels, of course, there is a little drama: fences to mend, turf to protect, a gunslinger on the loose, and maybe a shootout at the OK Corral. But for what? Where is the sense that anything of ultimate importance is at stake in these squabbles? Who is willing to die for a postmodern paradigm?

When Harvey Cox was a student minister in Berlin in 1962, one year after the erection of the Wall, he was able to travel back and forth between East and West because he held an American passport. He thus became a courier for pastors and Christian laypeople on both sides of that divide and was sometimes able to smuggle theological books into the East. What the people wanted most were copies of Barth's *Church Dogmatics*. "To carry in something by Bultmann would have been a wasted risk," Cox said. "Let the bourgeois preachers in West Germany agonize about the disappearance of the three-decker universe and existentialism. We had weightier matters to confront." This is a parable for us today. A theology more enamored with novelty than fidelity is not worth smuggling, for it will not nourish the mission of the church nor build up the people of God.

I agree with Olson that there is an inner cleavage in contemporary theology, but the basic difference is not between forward-looking "reformists" and back-

ward-looking "traditionalists." The more important distinction is between those who see theology connected intrinsically to the life of the church, and those who see theology as an academic discipline whose basic norms and values come from the secularized academy. The question is not whether a theologian is personally pious and attends church on Sunday, nor whether one teaches in a theological seminary or a university-based divinity school. The question is: What is the spiritual foundation and ecclesial identity of one who is called to be a theologian? Theologians are not freelance scholars of religion, but trustees of the deposit of faith that they, like pastors, are charged with passing on intact to the rising generation. In the pluralistic culture of the academy, evangelicals must become subversives or else lose their souls.

The utter impossibility of Christian theology as a detached, theoretical discipline was driven home to me when I entered Harvard Divinity School in 1972. I found myself in a systematic theology class team-taught by two remarkable professors, Gordon Kaufman and the late Arthur McGill. Among other things, I was struck by how fiercely my teachers could disagree with one another in class and then go out together for a friendly cup of coffee. I learned it is possible to engage in vigorous theological argument without resorting to personal attack. Among the students, the turf was divided rather evenly between the Kaufmanians and the McGillites. Kaufman had just published *God the Problem*, where he insisted that the object of theology was not the "real God" who remained impenetrable and unknown but rather the "available God," an imaginative construct and symbol of religious self-consciousness.

This was heady, academic stuff, but McGill would have none of it. He insisted that the God with whom we had to do was not a God we could discuss or argue

about, much less "construct" by means of our meager theological musings. He liked to quote Luther's dictum that the most important organs for a theologian are his ears! Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. Theology possesses no independent knowledge. It lives by what it has been told. Thus the first task of theology is to listen—to listen to the Word of God revealed—incarnate in Jesus Christ, recorded indelibly in inspired Scriptures, and witnessed to through the faithful proclamation of the church. In retrospect, I can now see that McGill was deconstructing the myths of modernity and what we were just then beginning to call postmodernity, with a little help from Augustine, Anselm, Luther, and Pascal.

SHIPS PASSING IN THE NIGHT

When the history of evangelical theology in the last half of the twentieth century is written, the intellectual biographies of Clark Pinnock and Tom Oden will loom large. Like two ships passing in the night, they have crisscrossed the theological landscape with abandon. Oden, a Methodist, coming from the wasteland of liberalism, heresy, and doctrinal confusion into the embrace of paleo-orthodoxy, Pinnock from the tutelage of Francis Schaeffer and F. F. Bruce into the open future of theological innovation.

Pinnock presents himself as a wayfarer at a theological smorgasbord, a theologian of potluck. Although he does not mention it here, he was once an advocate of the "paleo-Calvinism" he now eschews. As a professor at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary in the 1960s, he also played a key role in the early stages of the conservative resurgence in the SBC. In 1970, he published one of the best books on biblical inerrancy written in this century. I hope that he may yet return, chastened and wiser for the journey perhaps, to the recognition that some of his former thoughts are better than his latter.

I am one of those who criticized *The Openness of God* project as a misguided, though well-meant, effort to construct a user-friendly God for a North American elite. I still stand by that assessment. The legitimate questions posed by these scholars—how the sovereign Lord can hear and answer prayer or interact meaningfully with the world in nature and history—have been fully considered and answered by orthodox theologians from the Cappadocians through Wesley without recourse to semiprocess theism. While it is always appropriate to question received formulations in the light of the Bible, the classical Christian doctrine of God shouldn't be dismantled without weighing it far more seriously than this proposal does.

Still, I find it hard to believe that R. C. Sproul would declare Pinnock not to be a Christian—especially “no longer” a Christian! From the Reformed perspective, if he were ever truly a Christian, he is surely still one now. For those of us who believe in divine sovereignty, such discernments are better left to God. I choose to believe that either Sproul misspoke or Pinnock misheard this remark.

From my perspective, Oden's pilgrimage is more encouraging for the future of evangelical theology. Oden's vision of a theological renaissance based on a sustained engagement with historic Christian orthodoxy can help to liberate evangelicalism from its myopic self-preoccupations. Oden's burden for a return to the sources is evident in one of the most promising publishing ventures in evangelical scholarship, *The Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture*.

In the history of the church, theological renewal has frequently involved the recovery of a forgotten past. Spurgeon fell in love with the Puritans, Wesley drank deeply from the Fathers of the East, Luther and Calvin were Augustinians with a passion, and the Doctor of Grace himself recovered an authentic Paulinism for his own day. None of these were mere repeaters of the past. No, they looked to the past in order to find the answer to the question, “What will be?” This is also the task of faithful evangelical theology today: it anticipates and illuminates the future while remaining faithful to the scriptural pattern of divine truth.

ROBUST EVANGELICALISM

A robust evangelical theology can transcend the polarities Olson has identified if we begin with an enriched core of evan-

gelical essentials. The four minimalist affirmations Olson offers can be read in an orthodox way, and this is doubtless how he intends them. But they could also be affirmed in good conscience by Arius, Pelagius, Socinus and, perhaps with a gloss on the word *supernatural*, even Bishop John Shelby Spong! Such a porous core will not support a very stable tent however far we may try to stretch it. The evangelical faith is rooted in the Trinitarian and Christological consensus of the early church and includes the Reformation doctrines of *sola scriptura* and justification by faith alone.

The way to evangelical unity is not to define the smallest number of doctrines possible and hold them as lightly as one can. Evangelicals are not sectarians. We belong to the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church and are called to “a constant adhering, affirming, confessing, maintaining, and persevering” (Luther) in the faith once for all delivered to the saints.

Within this core identity, there is much room for variety and charity in our fellowship with one another. Absolute agreement in every detail of faith and life is only an eschatological possibility, as anyone who has attended a church business meeting knows. As a Reformed Baptist, I agree with much that the Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals stands for, and I welcome their call for theological consistency based on the doctrines of grace. But I also share fellowship with many other Bible-believing evangelicals, including five-point Arminians, Bible-church dispensationalists, and charismatic Pentecostals. We try to speak the truth to one another in love, neither homogenizing our differences nor minimizing our core beliefs.

Also, evangelicals have no need to fear the development of doctrine, for this is how the Holy Spirit has led the church into all truth, as Jesus promised (John 16:13). When John the Baptist sent his disciples to ask Jesus who he was, Jesus did not say, “Go back and tell John: I am God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God, begotten not made, of one substance with the Father.” But the doctrine of the Trinity in its classic expression “developed” out of the stubborn

WE NEED THE WISDOM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT TO DISCERN THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN DEVELOPMENT AND DEVIATION.

intention of the church to remain faithful to the New Testament teaching about Jesus Christ.

This is why creeds and confessions are so important in evangelical theology: they are trademarks of biblical faith through the ages. But unlike Roman Catholics, we do not hold Scripture and tradition with equal reverence. We subject all of our confessions and theolo-

gies to the Bible and hold them revisable in the light of its teaching. We need the wisdom of the Holy Spirit to discern the difference between development and deviation. Not just “anything goes” in theology! Every theology that claims to be evangelical—from Pinnock to Sproul—must be judged in the light of its faithfulness to the total witness of Scripture.

Finally, it is naïve to think that polemics can be divorced from dogmatics, for at the heart of biblical faith is the single-minded pursuit of truth, which becomes clear only in confrontation with competing loyalties and affirmations. But this is not a damper to dialogue. The apostles and early missionaries went everywhere, from the marketplace to Mars Hill, talking with everyone they met about Jesus and the Resurrection. In the sixteenth century, Calvin, Bucer, and Melancthon met with Roman Catholic theologians to discuss the great doctrines of the Reformation. We do not risk the loss of conviction when we enter into dialogue with those with whom we differ so long as our confidence is not in ourselves but in the God of the gospel who alone makes us “sufficient” for such a task.

Theology used to be called the “gay” science before that word was highjacked by gender babblers. My hope is that evangelical theology in the future will become gay again, in the good, old-fashioned sense of the word: exuberant, bright, lively, cheerful, happy, filled with joy. For only this kind of theology, born in prayer and nourished in worship, can be truly evangelical. **CT**

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What's Wrong With Allegra?

The Company It Keeps.

Allegra and RU 486: The Connection.

Allegra is a new allergy medication that is being pushed to replace the antihistamine Seldane. **What many people don't know is that the company that made Seldane and now makes Allegra has ties to the European company responsible for bringing RU 486, the abortion pill, into the United States.**

In 1995, the European companies responsible for originally developing and producing RU 486, Hoechst AG and Roussel Uclaf, acquired the American pharmaceutical company, Marion Merrell Dow. The company that resulted from this merger, Hoechst Marion Roussel, produces many popular pharmaceuticals, including the antihistamine **Allegra**.

Profits from the sale of Allegra ultimately benefit those companies which still produce RU 486 in Europe, where it has killed over 200,000 unborn children.

The National Right to Life Educational Trust Fund has spearheaded a consumer boycott against the American subsidiaries of the European company which manufactures RU 486 in France, including Hoechst Marion Roussel, the maker of Allegra.

For a list of the other products included in the consumer boycott, please contact the National Right to Life Educational Trust Fund at (202) 626-8800, ext. 129.

Help Stop RU 486.

Join The Consumer Boycott Against Hoechst Marion Roussel Today!

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CT2/98

RU 486 Kills Unborn Children.

RU 486 takes the life of an unborn child after its tiny heart has begun to beat. It has been used up to seven weeks of pregnancy, when the baby has measurable brain waves and tiny arms and legs.

RU 486 may also pose serious health risks to the women who take it, including hemorrhage. One woman who participated in the Iowa tests of RU 486 hemorrhaged so severely she lost over one-half of her blood volume and nearly died.

We Need Your Help.

Ask your doctor if another comparably priced non-sedating antihistamine such as Claritin or Hismanal will work as well or better for you than Allegra. Where your health and safety are concerned, follow medical advice. If Claritin, Hismanal or another alternative would be right for you, you can ask to have your prescription changed.

Your participation in the consumer boycott could help pressure the European companies that have produced RU 486 to withdraw permission for its production in the U.S. as well as permanently stop its production and use in Europe.

The 'Jackie Robinson' of Evangelism

*When **Howard Jones** broke the race barrier on Billy Graham's platform, he faced rejection from both sides.*

EDWARD GILBREATH

If Billy Graham is the paragon of evangelical Christianity in America, then Howard Owen Jones is the "Jackie Robinson" of American evangelicalism. Jones has learned that there is a mixed blessing that comes with being the first African American to realize some key achievement in this nation. On the one hand, it is a high honor to overcome a barrier that has long kept blacks on an unequal footing with whites. But there is also the pain of living with the often unfriendly fallout of being a pioneer in the fragile chronicle of racial progress in America.

"It's an awareness that you're a living test, a human experiment," the evangelist explains. "It's knowing that your every word, your every action, has the potential to either make or break the hopes of your race."

Jackie Robinson knew this angst when he became the first African American to break the color barrier in major-league baseball in 1947. Martin Luther King, Jr., felt it when he led the American civil-rights

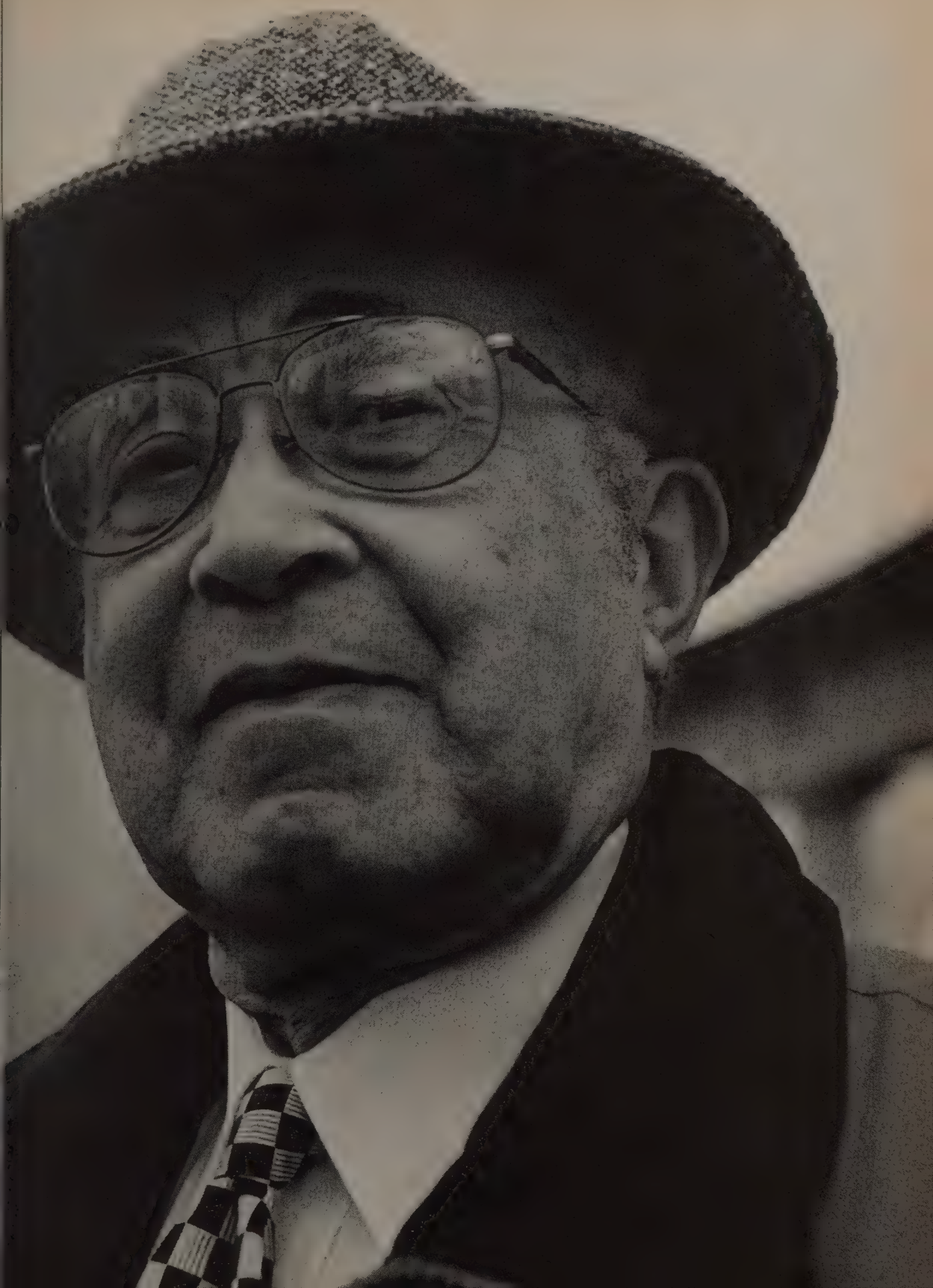
movement in the sixties. And Howard Jones experienced it when, in 1957, he became the first black preacher to join evangelist Billy Graham's crusade team.

Last year marked the fortieth anniversary of Jones's important breakthrough. It did not receive the same media fanfare as the 50-year observance of Jackie Robinson's symbolic accomplishment, but in a day when *racial reconciliation* was not a buzzword in the Christian lexicon and when Martin Luther King had not yet reached the zenith of his national fame, Jones was going where no black man had gone before.

TO AFRICA AND HARLEM

If Howard Jones had had his way 60 years ago, he would not have been the first black preacher to hold rallies in Africa or the first African-American associate to join Graham's crusade team. "I played clarinet and alto saxophone in dance bands," he says, "and wanted to become the next big name in jazz music."

Fortunately for Africa, Graham, and the believing



community, Jones's dreams of swinging with Ellington and Basie were cut short by the bigger plans of God—and the prayers of the young woman who would become his wife.

"Wanda challenged me to examine my life," says Jones. "She told me, 'I love you, but I love Christ more. You keep playing, and I'll keep praying.' That got my attention."

"She finally won me over," he says. "She helped me understand that when you give your dreams to the Lord, he'll multiply them in ways you could have never imagined."

At 22, newly graduated from Nyack College in New York (the Christian and Missionary Alliance's oldest school), Jones pastored his first congregation, Bethany Alliance Church on Harlem's Lower East Side. Not content with in-house services alone, Jones took his preaching "on location," forming Soldiers for Christ, an evangelistic outreach to teens and others in New York's inner-city neighborhoods. Along the way, Jones became acquainted with Jack Wyrzten, a noted New York bandleader-turned-minister, whose Word of Life youth radio broadcast and evangelistic rallies regularly packed venues like Carnegie Hall. It was a friendship that would prove significant later in Jones's career.

After a fruitful eight-year stint in Harlem, Jones returned to his home turf of Cleveland where he assumed pastoral duties at Smoot Memorial Alliance Church in 1952. It was during this period that the preacher came upon a small advertisement by a radio station in Liberia, West Africa, in *Christian Life* magazine. "The station was interested in receiving recordings of Negro spirituals produced by black churches," Jones recalls. According to the ad, the Africans loved Negro spirituals. Jones rallied his church choir and recorded some tunes. He was surprised when, a few weeks later, the radio station responded enthusiastically about the tape.

"They said, 'We want to put you on prime time with both singing and a short message,'" Jones recalls. "They told us we'd be able to reach a good portion of Africa with the program. So, naturally, we were very excited about it."

Jones and his congregants began sending tapes on a regular basis. After a few weeks they were inundated with mail from Africans who had been converted through the program. "They said it was the first time they had ever heard the voice of an American black man," he says. "From there, it mushroomed to the point where the radio ministry invited us to come to Africa to preach to the people in person."

With his church's blessing, Jones, with his wife, Wanda, embarked on a three-month evangelistic tour of Liberia, Ghana, and Nigeria, becoming the first black clergyman to hold major rallies in Africa.

"When we got over there those people went wild," recalls Jones. "They beat drums, chanted, and said, 'Praise the Lord, the big bird has brought our brother and sister from America. We've seen the white missionary, but we've never seen a black preacher from America.'"

Throughout the cities and bush countries, people turned out

by the thousands, some walking as far as 40 miles to get to the meetings. "For too long," says Jones, "white evangelicals carried an ill-conceived notion that Africans would not respond to black American missionaries. We helped change that perception."

THE LETTER

"The last thing I was expecting when we returned from Africa in 1957 was a letter from Billy Graham," says Jones. "But a month after we got back, there it was."

Graham, who was then in the early weeks of his massive 68-day crusade at New York's Madison Square Garden, had had breakfast one morning with Jack Wyrzten, with whom he discussed his dilemma: The minority turnout had been dreadful, and Graham, who had pledged never to conduct another segregated crusade following the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* ruling banning segregation in public schools, wanted to practice the social justice he had been espousing. The evangelist had already integrated his team with Akbar Abdul-Haqq, a gifted preacher from India, but he wanted to add a black team member to his lineup.

Wyrzten recommended Jones.

Jones remembers his first meeting with Graham: "Billy jumped up and grabbed me and said, 'God bless you, my friend. I've heard a lot about you and your ministry, and I want you to come be with us for a few weeks at the New York crusade.' I said, 'I don't know, Billy. I've already been away from my church for three months.' I was afraid that if I asked for any more time off they'd kick me out."

Graham persisted and even offered to send a letter to Jones's parishioners, requesting their pastor's services. It was all that was needed. In fact, Jones's congregation was delighted that their pastor was being "borrowed" by the world's most famous preacher.

"It was a tough decision," says Jones. "As a pastor you want to be there for your people. But as an evangelist I had to be open to going wherever God called me. I knew I would eventually have to make a decision for one or the other."

THE EVANGELISM EXPERIMENT

When Jackie Robinson began baseball's historic "experiment" in racial integration in America, he was well aware of the inevitable consequences from unsympathetic whites: vicious racial put-downs, death threats, hate mail, "wild pitches" aimed at his head, fellow players refusing to shake his hand. Through it all, Robinson's assignment was to turn the other cheek.

Jones faced a similar challenge once word hit the street regarding his addition to Graham's New York crew. Immediately, Graham began getting "static" from some New York clergymen, says Jones. "You should not have that Negro on your team," came the impassioned warnings. "You're going to ruin your ministry by adding minorities." "If you have him, we're going to stop supporting you."

Graham persevered. "There was never any hesitation on Billy's part," says Jones. "He had dug the trench, you might say, and he



was going through. He knew it was what God was calling him to."

Graham looked to Jones for advice on boosting minority turnout at the New York crusade, and Jones gave him the hard truth. "If they're not coming to you, you have to go where they are," Jones explained to Graham. "Billy," Jones continued, "you need to go to Harlem."

White Christians warned that it was too dangerous—"Those savages up there will kill you!"—but Graham made plans to hold a rally in Harlem. "The funny thing is," says Jones today, "some of those whites who were saying 'Don't go to Harlem' were members of evangelical churches that were sending white missionaries to Africa. They weren't afraid of the blacks over there."

Using his New York contacts, Jones spearheaded a successful rally of more than 8,000 people in Harlem, followed the next week by a similar event in Brooklyn, where more than 10,000 blacks and other minorities came out to hear Graham. Jones's plan worked. The events resulted in increased black attendance at

"We stayed at the church for another year," he says. "But during that year, we prayed and fasted for a clear signal from God. And finally we felt led to accept Billy's invitation."

Some ten years later, he would need to summon that special strength again when he was attacked by critics from the other side—advocates of the Black Power movement who felt Jones was a "sell-out" or in the "hip pocket of the white man," and that Graham was too soft on the issues of race and social activism.

"I lost a lot of my black friends who thought I should leave Billy," Jones recalls. "But I knew the right thing was to stay. The people who accuse Billy of not being vocal enough against racism and other social issues have not seen what goes on behind the scenes. They do not know that man's heart."

Jones served as an associate with the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA) for more than 35 years, until his retirement in 1994. During that time he participated in additional evangelistic campaigns to Africa and many other nations,

**"Those whites who were saying, 'Don't go to Harlem,'
were members of churches that were sending white missionaries
to Africa. They weren't afraid of blacks over there."**

the crusade. *U.S. News & World Report* estimated that by the conclusion of the New York campaign, blacks composed 20 percent of the 18,000 people who attended the crusade each evening.

Jones was happy to see God bless the crusade with an increased minority turnout, but he remembers that period as being one of the hardest times of his life. "I was overwhelmed with a sense of loneliness," he says. "The stares, the people muttering under their voices. In the crusade there were nights when it was palpable."

With his wife and kids back in Cleveland, Jones was often the only African American around during the long days prior to the evening meetings. And the evenings were not much better. "I remember sitting on the crusade platform on various occasions with empty seats next to me because some white crusade participants had decided to sit on the other side of the stage."

At other times, Jones would go down to counsel new believers during the altar calls only to see white counselors move in the other direction. One night he remembers hearing two white pastors seated behind him murmuring: "How did he get up here?" one of them asked. The other replied, "That's Graham's ew associate."

Jones sported a steely demeanor while in public, but once the mask came down. "There were nights when I went back to my hotel room and literally wept before God and told him, 'Lord, I can't take this pressure,'" he says. "I felt like telling him that it was too much. But I knew his heart and I knew the heart of the team, and God gave me the strength to endure."

A month after the New York crusade, Graham approached Jones about joining his staff full-time. "It was an honor," Jones says, "but I was torn. I returned to the church in Cleveland, but in my heart there was a restlessness that God was calling me as a full-time evangelist.

helped bring Canadian evangelist Ralph Bell on board as Graham's second black associate, and he was instrumental in launching various humanitarian initiatives on behalf of the BGEA, such as raising \$80,000 for famine-stricken West Africa in 1975. Still, according to Bell, Jones's efforts to promote social activism were not always greeted with enthusiasm by the BGEA. "Like any organization, there were those who were all for it, and those who had problems with anything besides traditional outreach," Bell explains. "Howard played a strong role in showing Billy the importance of meeting physical needs as well as the spiritual."

TOWARD SPIRITUAL RENEWAL

At 76, Jones is a lanky, yet solid figure. Old recordings reveal his straightforward, though passionate preaching—he did not embrace the "whooping" style of many African-American preachers. His passion is also conveyed in his commitment to go wherever the Lord led him. These days, Jones is a father of five and grandfather of six, living in a modest, two-story home in Oberlin, Ohio.

Though retired, Jones's current concern is what he calls the "troubling" condition of the African-American church. "Too many churches today still are not delivering the goods—the whole gospel," Jones says. "And it bothers me, because I see Muslim groups coming in and taking our young men because we've been unable to show them the true power of Christ's gospel."

Jones's most recent book (coauthored with Wanda), *Heritage and Hope: The Legacy and Future of the Black Family in America* (Victor Books, 1992), addresses his concern over the African-American community "entrenched in cycles of despair and hopelessness."

"Some folks may be tired of hearing those depressing statistics repeated over and over," Jones says, "but it's an important reminder to me of how far we've moved away from God and

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John L. Ubels

Ph.D. in physiology from Michigan State; internationally known expert in ophthalmology; awarded major research grants from the National Institutes of Health; former faculty member at University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine and the Medical College of Wisconsin in Milwaukee; now teaching in Calvin's biology department.



Janel M. Curry-Roper

Ph.D. in geography from the University of Minnesota; authority on natural resource policy and agriculture; awarded Fulbright Research Fellowship; former chair of the board for the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture at Iowa State University; second occupant of William Spoelhof Teacher/Scholar-in-Residence Chair at Calvin.



David H. DeHeer

Ph.D. in molecular biology from the University of Arizona; awarded fellowships at Scripps Clinic and Research Foundation in La Jolla, California; author of numerous articles in the fields of immunology and investigative pathology; director of research for Grand Rapids' Orthopaedic Surgery Residency Program; Calvin professor of biology.

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CLOTHBOUND NONFICTION

- (1) 1. *The Great House of God*, Max Lucado, Word
- (7) 2. *Butterfly Kisses*, Bob Carlisle, J. Countryman/Word
- (2) 3. *Streams in the Desert, Updated Edition*, L.B. Cowman & edited by James Reimann, Zondervan
- (19) 4. *Complete Book of Baby & Child Care*, Focus on the Family/Tyndale
- (4) 5. *Joy for the Journey*, J. Countryman/Word
- (6) 6. *What's So Amazing About Grace*, Philip Yancey, Zondervan
7. *Esther*, Charles Swindoll, Word
- (3) 8. *Managing Your Emotions*, Joyce Meyer, Harrison House
- (5) 9. *Prayers That Avail Much*, commemorative gift edition, Word Ministries, Harrison House,
- (18) 10. *Just As I Am*, Billy Graham, HarperCollins (Zondervan)

PAPERBACK NONFICTION

- (2) 1. *Apocalypse Code*, Hal Lindsey, Western Front Ltd.
- (1) 2. *Living Somewhere Between Estrogen and Death*, Barbara Johnson, Word
3. *Answers to WWJD*, Beverly Courge, Honor Books
4. *The Handwriting of God*, Grant Jeffrey, Frontier Research Publications
- (3) 5. *The Final Quest*, Rick Joyner, Whitaker House
- (4) 6. *A Divine Revelation of Hell*, Mary Baxter, Whitaker House
- (15) 7. *Stories for the Heart*, Alice Gray, Multnomah
- (8) 8. *I Kissed Dating Goodbye*, Joshua Harris, Multnomah
- (12) 9. *God's Little Instruction Book for Women*, Honor Books
- (6) 10. *Five Love Languages*, Gary Chapman, Moody

CLOTHBOUND FICTION

- (1) 1. *Nicolae*, Tim LaHaye & Jerry Jenkins, Tyndale
- (4) 2. *Only the River Runs Free*, Bodie & Brock Thoene, Nelson
- (3) 3. *This Present Darkness/Piercing the Darkness*, Frank Peretti, Budget Book Service
- (5) 4. *Solar Flare*, Larry Burkett, Northfield (Moody)
5. *The Matchmakers*, Janette Oke, Bethany House

PAPERBACK FICTION

- (1) 1. *Left Behind*, Tim LaHaye & Jerry Jenkins, Tyndale
- (2) 2. *Tribulation Force*, Tim LaHaye & Jerry Jenkins, Tyndale
3. *In the Twilight, In the Evening*, Lynn & Gilbert Morris, Bethany House
- (3) 4. *The Confession*, Beverly Lewis, Bethany House
- (7) 5. *Redeeming Love*, Francine Rivers, Multnomah

* Indicates last month's position.

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how racism and oppression have left a scar on the black family. But through Christ, we have a hope of ending the cycle of these types of numbers."

In addition to his work at the BGEA, Jones served as the first president of the National Black Evangelical Association (NBEA). Recently he became the first African American named to the National Religious Broadcasters' Hall of Fame. Aaron Hamlin, president and executive director of the NBEA, calls Jones "a key figure in the maturation of the evangelical church. Reverend Jones has both encouraged the growth of black ministers and ministries and facilitated relationships between black and white organizations."

"Things have definitely improved from the days when I first joined Billy," Jones says. "But, at the same time, it's a bit dis-

heartening to realize that many of the prejudiced attitudes that thrived back then are still very much alive in a more covert way.

"The greatest need for Christians today is a moral and spiritual awakening," he says, "but I don't think we're going to see an outpouring of the Holy Spirit like we need until the church comes to grips with its race problem, because Jesus said, 'By this shall all men know that you are my disciples—because you love one another.'"

In pursuit of that Christian ideal, Howard Jones has seen it all—both the triumph of progress and the pain of prejudice.

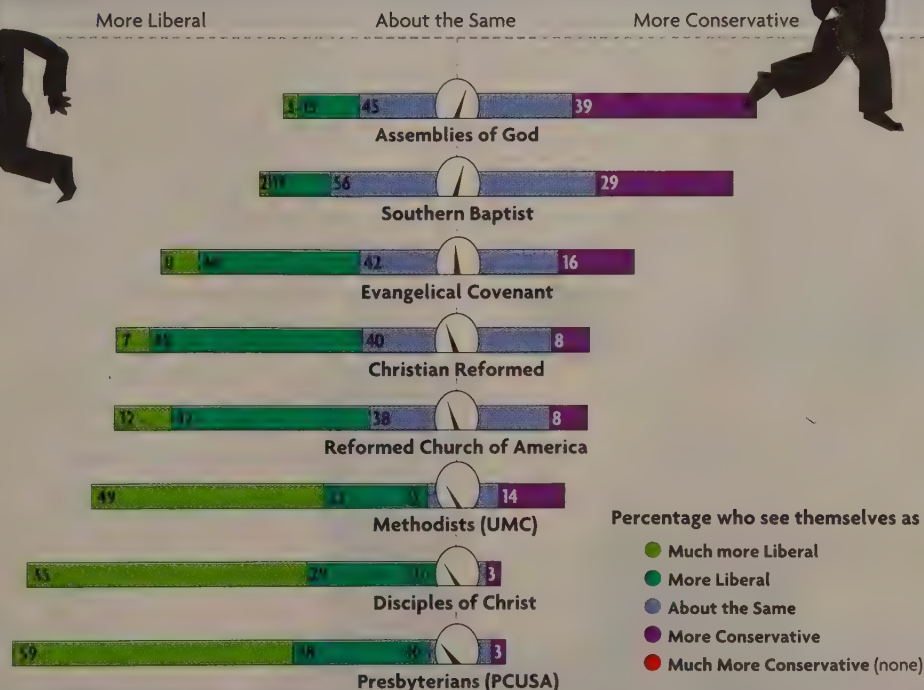
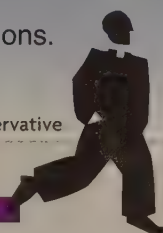
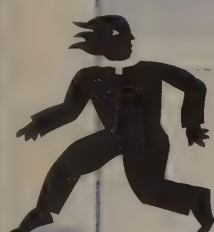
"But the promise of being a whole church one day is worth the pain," says Jones. "It's worth the pain." CT

Edward Gilbreath is associate editor of New Man magazine.

REALITY CHECK

Out of Step?

Pastors in eight denominations compare their personal politics to those of their congregations.



SOURCE: *The Bully Pulpit: The Politics of Protestant Clergy* (University of Kansas Press, 1997), by James Guth, John Green, Corwin Smidt, Lyman Kellstedt, and Margaret Poloma. Chart design: Carla Sonheim.

Seeker Sensitive in Komi

Russian Baptists blend Orthodox culture with evangelical outreach.

Among the few Baptist churches in Syktyvkar, capital of the Komi Republic at the doorstep of Russia's frigid North, the Church of Christ the Savior is testing new ways to blend cultural tradition and Christian outreach. But not all Russians are warming up to the idea.

Standing majestically on a hilltop surrounded by the woods of Michurinski Park, the new sanctuary of Church of Christ the Savior is most certainly Syktyvkar's most beautiful structure, a striking contrast to the surrounding unadorned architecture of the Soviet era.

Further into Michurinski Park and nestled among the trees sits a four-story theological training school. The first floor is dedicated to what promises to be the most modern rehabilitation facility in the region for persons with physical handicaps. The next two floors provide space for classrooms, libraries, and study areas to equip future pastors, missionaries, and church workers to reach Komi and Siberia. And on the top floor is a dormitory that will be home for 100 seminary students.

But it's the mud, silenced construction equipment, and piles of building materials immediately surrounding these buildings that tell a story of how the church's innovative plans have run afoul of Russians' growing ambivalence toward non-Orthodox Christians.

Towering over
the city of Syktyvkar:
The new Church of
Christ the Savior.

UNFINISHED LANDMARK

In 1990, when Pavel Kobzar, the church's pastor, approached city officials with plans to build a modest Baptist church building, they instead offered him prime real estate in the city's central park with one condition: That the Baptists build a landmark structure that testifies to the hoped-for progress of Syktyvkar.

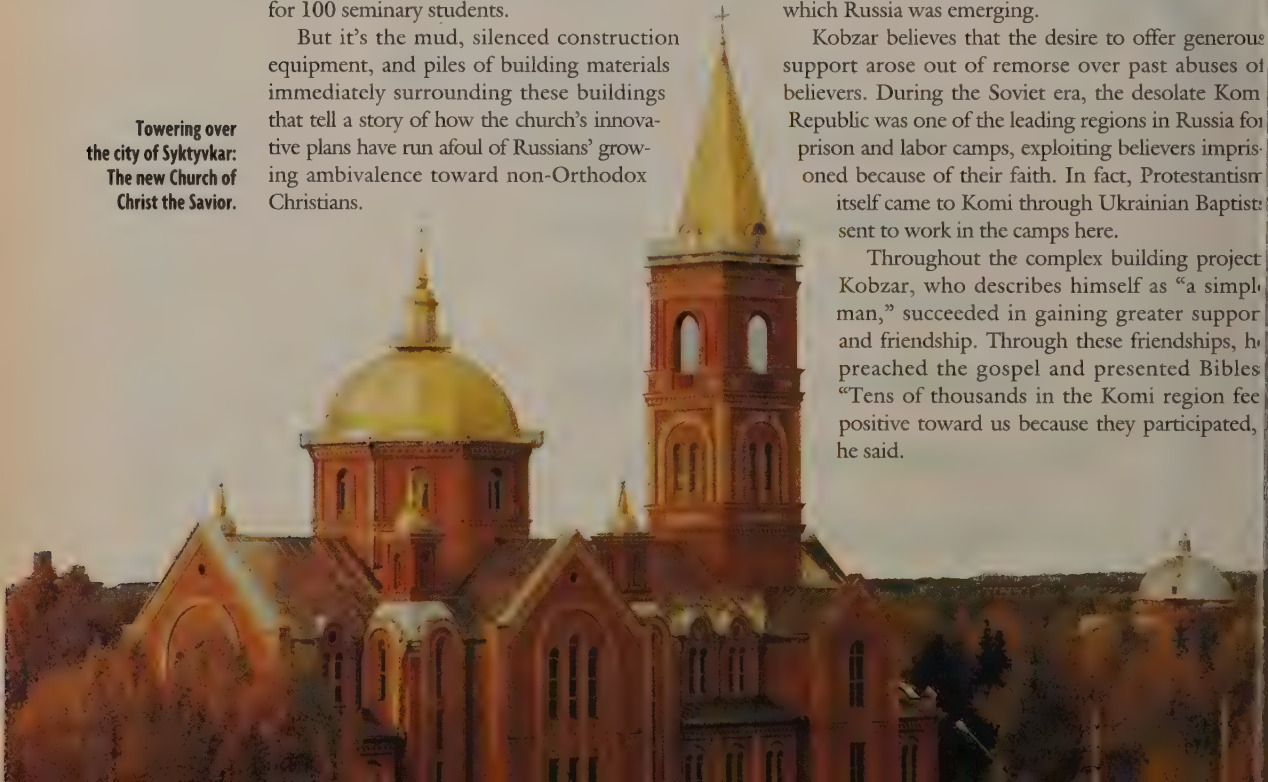
Church leadership boldly threw out their modest plans and launched into a building project, the dimensions of which they hadn't dared to dream before.

At the time, the mood in Russia seemed like a fantasy to believers who had lived with intense discrimination and persecution. But with *perestroika* in full bloom, believers experienced unimagined freedom and opportunities.

Komi factories and organizations donated massive quantities of bricks, wood, metal, oil, and other materials toward the project. Many local leaders contributing to the project were the same ones who persecuted the church during the communist era from which Russia was emerging.

Kobzar believes that the desire to offer generous support arose out of remorse over past abuses of believers. During the Soviet era, the desolate Komi Republic was one of the leading regions in Russia for prison and labor camps, exploiting believers imprisoned because of their faith. In fact, Protestantism itself came to Komi through Ukrainian Baptists sent to work in the camps here.

Throughout the complex building project Kobzar, who describes himself as "a simple man," succeeded in gaining greater support and friendship. Through these friendships, he preached the gospel and presented Bibles "Tens of thousands in the Komi region feel positive toward us because they participated," he said.



A RUSSIAN TO THE RUSSIANS?

As Kobzar meditated on the Pauline teaching of becoming like a Jew to the Jews and a Greek to the Greeks, this son of a Ukrainian Baptist pastor knew he wanted a genuinely Russian church building.

Two local architects donated their time and talents to designing a church in "architectural harmony with the soul of Russian people." Elements of traditional Russian Orthodox church style were reflected in both the exterior and interior designs.

Elements of Russian Orthodox worship were incorporated into the church services, such as the style of singing. And a respectful spirit was expressed toward God during worship and preaching services. "If you speak for God, then stand before God," Kobzar said. During the euphoric early 1990s, local leaders were excited and proud of this prominent landmark rising up so quickly in their capital. Yet politics, the economy, and the public's mood began to sour.

SUPPORT DWINDLES

Since 1995 the economy has been in a slump, and Komi business and industry cut back their contributions.

In addition, some Russian Orthodox fundamentalists pressured local political authorities to withdraw support for such a prominent Protestant church on Russian soil.

Problems between the church and local authorities intensified in 1997 when the religion restrictions law first passed in the Russian Parliament. The church's right to build on the property was challenged as was their ministry to the Invalid Society. The church won in both cases. But recently, tax authorities froze all of the church's financial accounts while they conducted an examination.

With few remaining options, Kobzar last October sent construction workers home until the problems are ironed out.

With the project 80 percent complete, construction came to a standstill after having moved quickly for six years.

Yet, local authorities now want to know, "When will you finish?" Both buildings stand solemnly, awaiting interior finish, furniture, and equipment.

In the meantime, Kobzar has refocused his congregation on the basics, strengthening the church spiritually and ministering to the needy. Also, Kobzar is redoubling his efforts to develop local

volunteers and support from missionaries in Europe and America.

FAITHFUL WORSHIPERS

Dwarfed in their new sanctuary built to accommodate 1,200 worshipers, the Church of Christ the Savior's congregation of 250 steadfastly gathers for worship.

They cluster inside the two-story-high, unfinished sanctuary walls. Overhead lighting hangs from a network of ropes and wires. They worship, pray, and sing dressed in coats and winter gear. The choir stands bundled up on the platform.

But the arctic winter has not frozen their enthusiasm for carrying on their work. Kobzar's vision for their ministry extends far beyond the boundaries of Syktyvkar.

In addition to reaching this capital city's population of 230,000, they hope to train pastors, missionaries, and other church leaders to reach the 1.3 million residents of the Texas-sized Komi Republic, becoming a gateway for church planting in the vast and unreached population of Siberia.

The Syktyvkar ministry is part of the All-Russian Union of Baptists and enjoys the union's approval and encouragement. The church itself was registered about 50 years ago during Stalin's reign. Kobzar serves as the Baptist Union's senior pastor in Komi.

Persons with physical handicaps became an important part of the church's ministry a few years ago when 15 members of the City Society of Invalids attended the church. Several of them came to Christ, were baptized, and became members.

Pastor Kobzar envisions the training center as becoming a base to train indigenous pastors, missionaries, evangelists, teachers, and musicians to strengthen and plant churches in Komi.

The center accommodates up to 300 students. Students and teachers from the theological center will teach new converts and perform other services in the church and community.

But all the church's ministry hangs in the balance as they attempt to resolve their political difficulties and finish the buildings themselves. "God made it possible for these two buildings to exist without leaning on our own strength and money. We believe in him. It goes beyond the rational and into the spiritual," Kobzar said. 

By Beverly Nickles in Syktyvkar, Russia.

CHRISTIANITY TODAY

Web Site Directory

Calvin College (Alumni)
www.calvin.edu
Devotional E-mail
www.electricti.com/pkennedy
George Fox College
www.georgefox.edu
Gordon Conwell Theo. Seminary
www.gcts.edu
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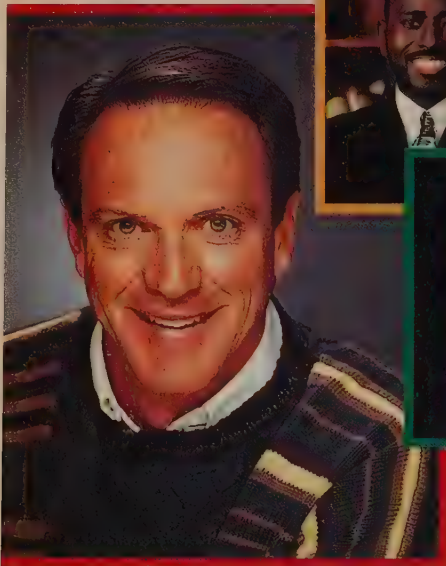


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Why We Love This Deadly Sin

Staying angry protects us from getting hurt again, but at what price?

BARBARA BROWN TAYLOR

Then Peter came and said to him, "Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?" Jesus said to him, "Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times."

(Matt. 18:21-22, NRSV)

In case you have not noticed, Christianity is a religion in which the sinners have all the advantages. They can step on your feet 50 times and you are supposed to keep smiling. They can talk bad about you every time you leave the room and it is your job to excuse them with no thought of getting even. The burden is on you, because you have been forgiven yourself, and God expects you to do unto others as God has done unto you.

This is not a bad motivation for learning how to forgive. If God is willing to stay with me in spite of my meanness, my weakness, my stubborn self-righteousness, then who am I to hold those same things against someone else? Better I should confess my own sins than keep track of yours, only it is hard to stay focused on my shortcomings. I would so much rather stay focused on yours, especially when they are hurtful to me.

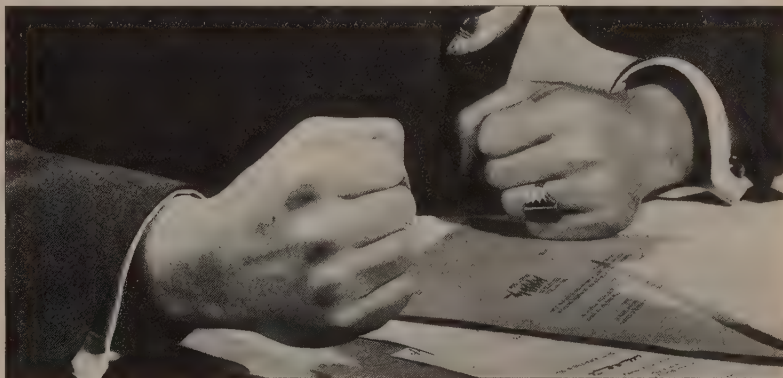
Staying angry with you is how I protect myself from you. Refusing to forgive you is not only how I punish you; it is also how I keep you from getting close enough to hurt me again, and nine times out of ten it works—only there is a serious side effect. It is called bitterness, and it can do terrible things to the human body and soul.

Once on a trip into Atlanta I stopped at a gift shop to buy a couple of wedding presents, some nice brass picture frames, which I asked the clerk to wrap. "Well, what is the occasion?" she snarled. "Are you going to tell me or am I supposed to

guess?" I looked at her then for the first time and saw a heavy, middle-aged woman whose brow was all bunched up over two hard, cold eyes. Her mouth turned down at the sides like she had just tasted something rancid, and she had both her hands planted on the glass counter, leaning against it with such malice that I thought she might push it over on me if I irritated her any further.

Generally speaking, I get mad when someone comes at me like that, but this time I just got scared because I could see what her anger had done to her, and I

for change in myself or in my relationships with others. Often I can see my own part in what I am angry about, and that helps, because if I had a hand in it, then I can concentrate on getting my hand back out of it again instead of spinning my wheels in blame. I can, in other words, figure out what my anger has to teach me and then let it go, but when my anger goes on and on without my learning or changing anything, then it is not plain anger anymore. It has become bitterness instead. It has become resentment, which a friend of mine calls "arthritis of the spirit."



wanted to get away from it before it did something similar to me. Actually, it was something stronger than plain anger that had twisted that woman's face. All by itself, anger is not that damaging. It is not much more than that quick rush of adrenaline you feel when you are being threatened. It tells you that something you hold dear is in danger—your property, your beliefs, your physical safety. I think of anger as a kind of flashing yellow light. "Caution," it says, "something is going on here. Slow down and see if you can figure out what it is."

When I do slow down, I can usually learn something from my anger, and if I am lucky I can use the energy of it to push

So there is another motivation for learning how to forgive—not only because we owe it to God, but because we owe it to ourselves. Because resentment deforms us. Because unforgiveness is a boomerang. We use it to protect ourselves—to hurt back before we can be hurt again—but it has a sinister way of circling right back at us so that we become the victims of our own ill will.

One summer the *New York Times Book Review* ran a series on the deadly sins. Joyce Carol Oates wrote on despair, Gore Vidal wrote on pride, and John Updike, of all people, wrote on lust. Mary Gordon's essay on anger was a real beau-

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ty, chiefly because she was willing to admit she knew a lot about it. One hot August afternoon, she wrote, she was in the kitchen preparing dinner for ten. Although the house was full of people, no one offered to help her chop, stir, or set the table. She was stewing in her own juices, she said, when her two small children and her 78-year-old mother insisted that she stop what she was doing and take them swimming.

They positioned themselves in the car, she said, leaning on the horn and shouting her name out the window so all the neighbors could hear them, loudly reminding her that she had promised to take them to the pond. That, Gordon said, was when she lost it. She flew outside and jumped on the hood of the car. She pounded on the windshield. She told her mother and her children that she was never, ever going to take any of them anywhere, and none of them was ever going to have one friend in any house of hers until the hour of their death—which, she said, she hoped was soon.

Then the frightening thing happened. "I became a huge bird," she said. "A carrion crow. My legs became hard stalks, my eyes were sharp and vicious. I developed a murderous beak. Greasy black feathers took the place of arms. I flapped and flapped. I blotted out the sun's light with my flapping." Even after she had been forced off the hood of the car, she said, it took her a while to come back to herself, and when she did, she was appalled, because she realized she had genuinely frightened her children. Her son said to her, "I was scared because I didn't know who you were."

"Sin makes the sinner unrecognizable," Gordon concluded, and the only antidote to it is forgiveness; but the problem is that anger is so exciting, so enlivening, that forgiveness can seem like a limp surrender. If you have ever cherished a resentment, you know how right it can make you feel to have someone in the world whom you believe is all wrong. You may not be up to admitting it yet, but one of the great benefits of having an enemy is that you get to look good by comparison. It also helps to have someone to blame for why your life is not turning out the way it was supposed to.

Several years ago on National Public Radio I heard Linda Wertheimer talking to a correspondent in the Middle East about the amazing moves toward peace that were then happening there between Israelis and Pales-

tinians. "How are people reacting?" she asked him. "After all, losing an enemy is as upsetting as losing a friend." I hadn't thought about it that way before, but she is right. When you allow your enemy to stop being your enemy, all the rules change. Nobody knows how to act any more, because forgiveness is an act of transformation. It does not offer the adrenaline rush of anger, nor the feeling of power that comes from a well-established resentment. It is a quiet revolution, as easy to miss as a fist uncurling to become an open hand, but it changes people in ways that anger only wishes it could.

So why don't we do it more often. Because it is scary, to lay down your arm like that, to trade in your pride and your power on the off-chance that you may discover something more valuable than either of them. "To forgive," writes Mary Gordon, "is to give up the exhilaration of one's own unassailable rightness." And there is loss in that, only it is the loss of an illusion, and what is gained is unmistakably real: the chance to live again, free from the bitterness that draws the sweetness from our lives, that gives us scary faces and turns us into carrion crows who blot out the sun with our flapping. No one else does this to us. We do it to ourselves, but we do not have to.

We are being forgiven every day of our lives. We are being set free by someone who has arranged things so that we have all the advantages. We have choices. We have will. And we have an advocate who seems to know that we need lots of practice at this forgiveness business. How often should we forgive? Will seven times take care of it? "Not seven times," Jesus says, "but, I tell you, seventy-seven times." This is no chore. This is a promise, because forgiveness is the way of life. It is God's cure for the deformity our resentments cause us. It is how we discover our true shape, and every time we do it we get to be a little more alive. What God knows and we don't yet is that once we get the hang of it, seventy times seven won't be enough, not to mention seventy-seven. We'll be so carried away by it that we'll hope it never ends. 

Barbara Brown Taylor has been named one of the most effective preachers in the English-speaking world by Baylor University. This article is reprinted with permission from Gospel Medicine, published by Cowley Publications, 28 Temple Place, Boston, Massachusetts. To order, call 1-800-225-1534.

Don't Blame the Publishers!

Get a bunch of Christian intellectuals together and pretty soon they'll start in deploring the CBA. The initials stand for the Christian Booksellers Association, the organization that links Christian bookstores across the nation. Secular bookstores form the American Booksellers Association, or ABA.)

The shorthand is a little inaccurate, because it's not actually the booksellers themselves that us elbow-patch types deplore. It's the poor quality of many of the books they sell. These books are generally described as shallow, pious, self-indulgent, and trivializing; they're thought to be embarrassingly below the standards of the ABA (no pinnacle of wisdom itself).

Who is to blame for this sorry state of affairs? Those scoundrels, the publishers. These are the guys responsible for producing the physical books; they decide that a project is worth the investment, coax it from a writer, run it through an editor, and stamp their name at the bottom of the spine (of the book, that is). CBA publishers, it is said, are too enamored of profit and don't care enough for the nurture of souls.

I agree that much of what is on display in a Christian bookstore falls short of edifying, especially when a lot of it isn't even books. If you walked into our local secular bookstore and found a third of the floor space given over to plastic gewgaws and T-shirts with ringeworthy puns about your deepest beliefs, you would gather that they don't think of you as Mensa material.

But I am not convinced that publishers are the bad guys in this story. Book publishing looks like a glamorous, big bucks biz, but on the inside it's a lot more love than money. As Ken Auletta explained in a *New Yorker* magazine interview of publishing aptly titled "The Impossible Business," books require more expensive production and deliver tinier profits than most consumers realize. Manufacturing the

physical book costs 10 percent of the cover price; distribution is 8 percent, marketing is another 7½, and business overhead adds 8 more. (Of course, these figures will vary in accord with the number of books sold. The more books printed, the lower the per-book manufacturing price; the more books sold, the lower the per-book overhead.)

The author gets a shockingly low 10 percent "royalty," rising to 15 when sales pass a certain number. A complicating factor: before the book is published



Publishers are not forcing shallow books on an unwilling community.

(and, in many cases, before it is even written), the publisher often pays the author an advance, based on an estimate of how many copies will eventually sell. These estimates are routinely overgenerous; in 1996, inflated advances that didn't "earn out" cost New York publishers \$20 to \$50 million.

We've already got a typical-book cost to the publisher of 43–48 percent before we add two more factors: stores and distributors enjoy discounts of 40–50 percent, and—the surprise killer—unsold books can be returned for a full refund. Auletta writes, "Most content businesses [those that deal in entertainment or information, like TV, music, and software] expect to make profits of at least fifteen to twenty per cent, but publishing has never seen returns of that size."

Doing the math makes me reluctant to pin the blame on publishers. I can understand their pursuit of the blockbuster, since a big success provides coat-tails wide enough for smaller books to

get a ride. Conservatives who favor the "free market" should be most sympathetic here. If manufacturers of everything from peanut butter to paint have the right to produce those goods they think will bring the best return, why can't publishers do the same? Are publishers the only group duty-bound to bring out products that won't break even in sales? We don't expect churches and ministries to be run on such a basis; we expect wise stewardship instead.

If not the publishers, who is to blame?

As with any commodity, it's a situation of supply and demand. Publishers are not forcing shallow books on an unwilling community. Buyers vote with their dollars as to which books they prefer. The depressing fact is that qualities deplored on the typical CBA shelf are exactly the ones consumers have demanded.

How can things be improved?

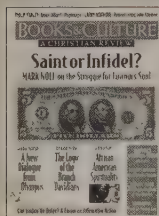
- Read book reviews, and when something sounds good to you, buy it. If you really like it, buy extra copies for your church library, your pastor, your best friend. Reward the industry for taking chances on more thoughtful books by proving that there is a market for them.

- Buy in hardback, if possible. I know, this is a crunch. But the initial hardback sales, before a book goes to paper, are where the numbers really count. Tell friends anytime they are buying you a gift to make it a hardback book. Give hardbacks yourself. Annie Dillard points out that current mainstream fiction is aimed at a single reader: the wealthy woman over 50. She's the only one thought to be buying hardback fiction. Change this.

- Start a book study group at your church. This not only increases book sales but also raises reader expectations as to what constitutes a worthwhile book.

An educated consumer is the direct cause of an improved CBA bookshelf. Let's roll up our elbow patches and get to work.

The Struggle for Lincoln's Soul



Was Abraham Lincoln a Christian? In this article, excerpted from BOOKS & CULTURE (one of ten magazines published by Christianity Today, Inc.), Wheaton College historian Mark Noll probes the complex character of Lincoln's faith.

Lincoln's religion has been debated almost from the moment of his assassination 130 years ago. Even today, conservative preachers and broadcasters who bemoan the decline of Christian America repeat moving stories of Lincoln's deep piety, while populist naysayers deny such claims. Both groups seem to feel that if only Lincoln could be enlisted on their side—whether of evangelical faith or naturalistic rationalism—it would amount to a great victory for them. But what does the evidence show? The following are facts now well established:

- Lincoln was exposed to Calvinistic Baptist preaching as a child and to a clamor of competing Protestant preachers as a young man. In a strange way, he seems to have been both absorbed and repelled by these early influences.

- As a young man, Lincoln expressed views that differed from Christian orthodoxy—perhaps a thorough skepticism or maybe only the hypothesis of universal salvation.

- Lincoln only once wrote directly about his faith. When opponents in a race for Congress in 1846 accused him of lacking faith, Lincoln penned these careful, noncommittal words: "That I am not a member of any Christian Church, is true; but I have never denied the truth of the Scriptures; and I have never spoken with intentional disrespect of religion in general, or of any denomination of Christians in particular."

- Lincoln knew and quoted the Bible. Sometimes this quoting was only to find a striking metaphor, as in the House Divided speech of 1858. Other times the quotations were integral to the very sub-

stance of what he wanted to say. In 1864, Lincoln told a group of African Americans who had presented him with a Bible: "All the good the Saviour gave to the world was communicated through this book. But for it we could not know right from wrong."

- Lincoln valued prayer.

Many instances are recorded in diaries and letters written before Lincoln's death where the president either allowed White House visitors to pray with him or solicited their prayers. There are also several accounts, though less securely based, of Lincoln himself praying.

- After the deaths of his young sons in 1850 and 1862, Lincoln was comforted by two thoroughly conservative Presbyterian ministers (neither of whom was given to overstatement). They testified that, after these traumatic experiences, they witnessed a deepening of Lincoln's faith.

- In Washington, especially after the death of his son, Lincoln regularly attended New York Avenue Presbyterian Church. Sometimes he even came to the midweek prayer service but remained in a side room out of view of the congregation.

- Lincoln did not practice what might be called a "Christian lifestyle." Historian Philip Schaff lectured to European audiences in 1865 on the meaning of the Civil War. He said that when Lincoln was assassinated on Good Friday at Ford's Theater, European pietists were aghast that he was not observing the Holy Festival (which, in their experience, only infidels neglected), while American evangelicals were aghast that he was in a theater (which, in their experience, was associated with licentiousness, secularism, and prostitution).

If the above matters have proved factual, the following stories have proved bogus:

- Lincoln almost certainly was not converted in a Methodist camp meeting in 1839 as the organizer of the meeting claimed in 1897.

- Lincoln almost certainly did not write to a certain judge during his White House years to affirm, "My earlier views of the

unsoundness of the Christian scheme of salvation and the human origin of the scriptures, have become clearer and stronger with advancing years and I see no reason for thinking *I shall ever change them.*" This "document" was first produced in 1924 by Joseph Lewis at the annual banquet of New York's Freethinkers Society.

- An 1883 book includes an oft-quoted testimony to Lincoln's personal faith. The author wrote that he had taken the word from a newspaper, which in turn extracted them from a letter Lincoln wrote to an old friend in Illinois sometime in 1864 or early 1865. The quotation ran, "When I left Springfield I asked the people to pray for me. I was not a Christian. When I buried my son, the severest trial of my life, I was not a Christian. But when I went to Gettysburg and saw the graves of thousands of our soldiers, I then and there consecrated myself to Christ. Yes, I do love Jesus. No corroborative evidence has ever been found to legitimate this letter.

So, what was Lincoln's religion? Whether the solid have been separated from the spurious, the stories show Lincoln's respect for God, his own personal sense of living under the authority of divine providence, and his eagerness to commit to the Civil War to divine rule.

When it came to the war, Lincoln often displayed a higher, finer theology than did the nation's professional Christian theologians. Lincoln knew that God had not entered on either side. As early as 1862, he would write in a private memorandum "In the present civil war it is quite possible that God's purpose is something different from the purpose of either party."

Still, what this account and the other stories do not show is a clear-cut profession of *orthodox* faith: his faith was genuine, but only partially Christian. That was the testimony of those who knew Lincoln best, including his wife, who said shortly after his death that he was "a religious man always" but not "a technical Christian."

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CHARLES H. SPURGEON

Our ancestors in Christ did not, by and large, learn the faith from the works of professional theologians. Their faith came by hearing (and reading), most often through the hearing of sermons.

As part of its occasional series of spiritual classics, CHRISTIANITY TODAY offers this vivid and image-rich exposition of justification by grace, delivered by Charles Haddon Spurgeon on April 5, 1857, at the Music Hall, Royal Surrey Gardens, England. Earlier generations of Christians were in the habit of reading printed sermons. This one is condensed from the New Park Street Pulpit, Vol. 3, No. 126.

"Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."

—Rom. 3:24

No scene in sacred history gladdens the soul like Calvary. Nowhere does the soul find such consolation as on that spot where misery reigned and agony reached its climax. There grace dug a fountain, which ever gushes with waters pure as crystal, each drop able to alleviate the agonies of mankind.

We have, this morning, a subject that may be the means of comforting God's saints seeing it takes its rise at the Cross and runs on in a rich stream of perennial blessing to all believers. We have in our text, first of all, *the redemption of Christ Jesus*; secondly, *the justification of sinners flowing from it*; and then thirdly, *the manner of the giving of this justification*, "freely by his grace."

First, then, we have *the redemption that is in or by Christ Jesus*.

The figure of redemption is very simple and has been frequently used in Scripture. When a prisoner has been made a slave it has been usual, before he could be set free, that a ransom should be paid. Now we, being, by the fall of Adam, prone to guiltiness and virtually guilty, we were by the irreproachable judgment of God given up to the vengeance of the law; justice claimed us to be his slaves forever unless we could pay a ransom, whereby our souls could be redeemed. We were poor as owlets. We were bankrupt debtors; all we had was sold; we were left naked, and poor, and miserable, and we could by no means find a ransom; it was just then that Christ stepped in, and, in the stead of all believers, paid the ransom that we might in that hour be delivered from the curse of the law and the vengeance of God and go our way free, justified by his blood.

Let me show you some qualities of the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. He has redeemed *the multitude*; not me alone, nor you alone, but "a multitude that no man can number." Christ hath bought for himself some out of every kingdom, and nation, and tongue, under heaven; he hath redeemed some of every rank, from the highest to the lowest; some of every color—black and white; some of every standing in society, the best and the worst.

Now, this ransom was *all paid*, and all paid *at once*. When Christ redeemed his people, he did not leave a single debt unpaid, nor yet one farthing for them to settle afterwards. The sacrifice of Calvary was not a part payment; it was a complete and perfect payment, and it obtained a complete and perfect remittal of all the

debts of all believers that have lived, do live, or shall live, to the very end of time. On that day when Christ hung on the cross, the whole of the demands of the law were paid there and then by Jesus, the great high priest of all his people. And he paid it all at once too. So priceless was the ransom, so munificent the price demanded for our souls, one might have thought it marvelous had Christ paid it by installments. King's ransoms have sometimes been paid part at once, and part in dues afterwards, to run through years. But not so our Savior: once for all he gave himself a sacrifice and said, "It is finished," leaving nothing for him to do, nor for us to accomplish. Christ nailed that receipt to his "It is done, it is done; I have taken away the handwriting of ordinances, I have nailed it to the cross; who is he that shall condemn my people, or lay anything to their charge? for I have blotted out like a cloud their transgressions, and like a thick cloud their sins!"

And when Christ paid all this ransom, *he did it all himself!* Simon, the Cyrenian, might bear the cross; but Simon might not be nailed to it. That sacred circle of Calvary was kept for Christ alone. Two thieves were with him there; not righteous men, lest any should have said that the death of those two righteous men helped the Savior. No disciples shared his death; Peter was not dragged there to be beheaded, John was not nailed to a cross side by side with him; he was left there alone. He says, "I have trodden the wine press alone; and of the people there was none with me." The work was completely done by himself, without a helper.

And *it was accepted*. It was a goodly ransom. What could equal it? A soul "exceeding sorrowful even unto death"; a



body torn with torture; a death of the most inhuman kind; and an agony of such a character that tongue cannot speak of it, nor can even man's mind imagine its horror. It was a goodly price. But say, was it accepted? There have been prices offered which never were accepted by the party to whom they were offered, and therefore the slave did not go free.

But this was accepted. When Christ declared that he would pay the debt, God sent the officer to arrest him, the payment was made, and Christ was locked up until the acceptance should have been ratified in heaven. Let your minds picture the buried Jesus. He slumbers in that narrow tomb. Now is the crisis of this world; it hangs trembling in the balance. Will God

accept the ransom, or will he not? An angel comes from heaven with exceeding brightness; he rolls away the stone; and forth comes the captive, with no manacles upon his hands, with the grave clothes left behind; free, never more to die.

If God had not accepted his sacrifice, he would have been in his tomb at this moment; he never would have risen from his grave. But his resurrection was a pledge of God's accepting him.

Second, let me address myself to the effect of the ransom; being "justified freely by his grace through the redemption."

Now, what is the meaning of justification? Justification is a forensic term, employed

always in a legal sense. A prisoner is brought to the bar of justice to be tried. There is only one way that prisoner can be justified; he must be found not guilty—proved to be a just man. If you find that man guilty, you cannot justify him. The Queen may pardon him, but she cannot justify him. He is as much a real criminal when he is pardoned as before.

Now, the wonder of wonders is that we are proved guilty, and yet we are justified. Can any earthly tribunal do that? No; it remained for the ransom of Christ to effect that which is an impossibility to any tribunal upon earth. We are all guilty. Read Romans 3:23—"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." There the verdict of guilty is brought in, and yet we are immediately afterwards said to be justified freely by his grace.

Now, allow me to explain the way whereby God justifies a sinner. A prisoner has been tried and condemned to death. He cannot be justified, because he is guilty. But now suppose that some second party could be introduced who could take all that man's guilt upon himself, who could change places with that man and by some mysterious process become that man—the righteous man putting the rebel in his place and making the rebel a righteous man. We cannot do that in our courts. If I were to go before a judge, and he should agree that I should be committed for a year's imprisonment instead of some wretch who was condemned yesterday to a year's imprisonment, I might take his punishment, but not his guilt.

Now, what flesh and blood cannot do, that Jesus Christ did. Here I stand, the sinner. God says, "I will condemn that man; I will punish him." Christ puts me aside and stands in my stead. When the plea is demanded, Christ takes my guilt to be his own. When the punishment is to be executed, Christ says, "Punish me. I have put my righteousness on that man, and I have taken that man's sins on me. Father, consider that man to have been me. Let me endure his curse, and let him receive my blessing."

This marvelous doctrine of Christ's changing places with poor sinners is a doctrine of revelation, for it never could have been conceived by nature. No earthly monarch could have power to consent to such an exchange. But the God of heaven had a right to do as he pleased. In his infinite mercy he said, "Son of my love, you must stand in the sinner's place." This is the way we are saved, "being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus."

And now, let me further *explain some of the characteristics* of this justification. As soon as a repenting sinner is justified, his sins are cast into the depths of the sea. The man stands a guiltless man in the sight of God, accepted in the beloved. "What!" say you, "do you mean that literally?" Yes, I do. That is the doctrine of justification by faith.

*When a prisoner has been
made a slave it has been usual,
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Christ took our guilt to be his own.*

But I am going a step further. The moment the man believes in Christ, he becomes righteous, he becomes meritorious, for, in the moment when Christ takes his sins he takes Christ's righteousness, so that, when God looks upon the sinner who but an hour ago was dead in sins, he looks upon him with as much affection as he ever looked upon his Son. He himself has said it—"As the Father loved me, so have I loved you." He loves us as much as his Father loved him. Can you believe such a doctrine as that? Does it not pass all thought? Well, it is a doctrine of the Holy Spirit whereby we must hope to be saved.

"But," says one, "no one is justified like that till he dies." Believe me, he is. If that young man over there has really believed in Christ this morning, he is as much justified in God's sight now as he will be when he stands before the throne. The glorified spirits above are no more acceptable to God than the poor man below, who is once justified by grace. It is a perfect washing, it is perfect pardon, perfect imputation; we are fully, freely, and wholly accepted, through Christ our Lord.

Just one more word here: Those who are once justified are justified irreversibly. As soon as a sinner takes Christ's place, and Christ takes the sinner's place, there is no fear of a second change. If Christ has once paid the debt, it will never be asked for again; if you are pardoned, you are pardoned forever. God does not give man a free pardon and then afterwards

retract it and punish man: that be far from God. He says, "I have punished Christ; you may go free." And after that, we may rejoice that "being justified by faith we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

And now I hear someone cry, "That is an extraordinary doctrine." But it is a doctrine professed by all Protestant churches,

though they may not preach it. It is the doctrine of the Church of England, of Luther, of the Presbyterian church; it is professedly the doctrine of all Christian churches; and if it seems strange in your ears, it is because your ears are estranged. It is the doctrine of Holy Writ, that none can condemn whom God justifies, and that none can accuse those for whom Christ died.

Third, I now close with *the manner of giving this justification*. There are some whose mouths are set awatring for this great gift of justification, some here who are saying, "Oh! if I could be justified! But, Sir, can I be justified?" Yes, poor soul, if you desire it; if God has made *you willing*, if you confess your sins, Christ is willing to take your rags and give you his righteousness forever.

"Well," says one, "must I be a holy man for many years, and then get it?" Listen! "Freely by his grace"; "freely," because there is no price to be paid for it; "By his grace," because it is not of our deservings.

"But, O Sir, I do not think God will forgive me unless I do something to deserve it." I tell you, if you bring in any of your deservings, you shall never have it. God gives away his justification freely; if you bring anything to pay for it, he will throw it in your face.

If I could preach justification to be bought by you at a sovereign apiece, who would go out of the place without being

justified? If I would preach justification by walking a hundred miles, would we not be pilgrims tomorrow morning, every one of us? If I were to preach justification by whippings and torture, there are very few here who would not whip themselves severely. But when it is freely, freely, men turn away. "What! am I to have it for nothing at all, without doing anything?" Yes, Sir, you are to have it for nothing, or else not at all.

"But may I not go to Christ, lay some claim to his mercy, and say, Lord, justify me because I am not so bad as others?" It will not do, Sir, because it is "by his grace."

"But may I not offer this plea, I mean to be better?" No, Sir, it is "by his grace." You insult God by bringing your counterfeit coin to pay for his treasures. What poor ideas men have of the value of Christ's gospel if they think they can buy it! A rich man once, when he was dying, had a notion that he could buy a place in heaven by building a row of almshouses. A good man stood by his bedside, and said, "How much more are you going to leave?"

"Twenty thousand pounds."

Said he, "That would not buy enough for your foot to stand on in heaven; for the streets are made of gold there, and therefore of what value can your gold be?" Nay, friends, we cannot buy heaven with gold nor good works, nor prayers, nor anything in the world.

But how is it to be got? Why it is to be got for asking only. As many of us as know ourselves to be sinners may have Christ for asking for him. Do you know that you want Christ? You may have Christ! "Whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely." But if you say, "No, Sir, I mean to do a great many good things, and then I will believe in Christ," then you will be damned if you hold by such delusions. I earnestly warn you.

"But are we not to do good works?" Certainly you are; but you are not to trust in them. You must trust in Christ wholly, and then do good works afterwards.

"But," says one, "I think if I were to do a few good works, it would be a little recommendation when I came." It would not, Sir; they would be no recommendation at all. Let a beggar come to your house in white kid gloves and say he is very badly off; would the white kid gloves recommend him to your charity? "No," you would say, "you are a miserable impostor; you do not want anything, and you shall not have anything, either! Out with you!" The best uniform for a beggar is rags, and the best uniform for a sinner to go to Christ in is for him to go just as

is, with nothing but sin about him.

I do not say this to urge any man to continue in sin. God forbid! If you continue in sin, you must not come to Christ; you cannot; your sins will hamper you. No, Sir, it is repentance; it is the immediate leaving off the sin. But neither repentance nor by leaving off your sin can save you. It is Christ, Christ, Christ only.

But I know many of you will go away and try to build up your own Babel-tower to get to heaven. Some of you will do the ceremony way: you will lay the foundation of the structure with infant baptism, build confirmation on it, and the Lord's Supper. "I shall go to heaven," you say. "Do not I keep Good Friday and Christmas Day? I am a better man than those dissenters. Do I not say more prayers than anyone?" You will be a long mile going up that treadmill before you get an inch higher.

Another one says, "I will go and study the Bible and believe right doctrine, and I have no doubt that by believing right doctrine I shall be saved." Indeed you will not! You can be no more saved by believing right doctrine than you can by doing right actions.

"There," says another, "I like that; I will go and believe in Christ and live as I live." Indeed, you will not! For if you believe in Christ he will not let you live as your flesh likes; by his Spirit he will constrain you to mortify its affections and lusts. If he gives you the grace to make you believe, he will give you the grace to live a holy life afterwards. You cannot believe in Christ unless you renounce every fault and resolve to serve him with all purpose of heart. What have you to do but to believe this and trust in him?

Faith is like this: There was a captain of a man-of-war whose young son was very fond of running up the ship's rigging; and one time, running after a monkey, he ran up the mast, till at last he got to the maintruck. Now, the maintruck is like a large, round table put on to the mast, so that when the boy was on the maintruck he had plenty of room; but the difficulty was that he could not reach the mast under the table; he was not tall enough to get down from this maintruck, reach the mast, and so descend. He managed to get up there, but he never could get down. His father looked up in horror.

A few moments his son would fall down, and be dashed to pieces on the deck! The captain shouted, "Boy, the next time the ship lurches, throw yourself into the sea." It was his only way of escape; he

might be picked up out of the sea, but he could not be rescued if he fell on the deck. The poor boy looked down on the sea; it was a long way; he could not bear the idea of throwing himself into the roaring current; he thought it looked dangerous. So he clung to the maintruck with all his might, though there was no doubt that he must soon let go and perish.

The father called for a gun, and pointing it up at him, said, "Boy, the next time the ship lurches, throw yourself into the sea, or I'll shoot you!" The boy knew his father would keep his word; the ship lurches, over went the boy, splash, into the sea, and out went brawny arms after him. The sailors rescued him and brought him on deck.

Now we, like the boy, are in a position of extraordinary danger, which neither you nor I can possibly escape of ourselves. Unfortunately, we have got some good works of our own, like that maintruck, and we cling to them so fondly that we never will give them up. Christ knows that unless we do give them up, we shall be

dashed to pieces at the last. He, therefore, says, "Sinner, let go of your own trust, and drop into the sea of my love." We look down and say, "Can I be saved by trusting in God? He looks as if he were angry with me, and I could not trust him."

Must the weapon of destruction be pointed directly at you? Must you hear the dreadful threat—"He that believeth not shall be damned?" It is with you now as with that boy—your position is one of imminent peril, and your slighting the Father's counsel makes peril more perilous. You must do it or else you perish! Let go your hold! That is faith when the poor sinner lets go, drops down, and is saved; and the very thing which looks as if it would destroy him is the means of his being saved. Oh! believe on Christ, poor sinners; believe on Christ. You who know your guilt and misery, come, cast yourselves upon him; come, and trust my Master and you shall never trust him in vain; but you shall find yourselves forgiven, and go your way rejoicing in Christ Jesus. **CI**

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THE NORTON ANTHOLOGY
OF AFRICAN AMERICAN LITERATURE
Edited by Henry Louis Gates, Jr., and Nellie Y. McKay

THE FRIENDSHIP OF THE LORD
By Deryck Sheriffs

ON THE ROAD WITH THE ARCHANGEL
By Frederick Buechner

Racism's Faces of Faith

The use and abuse of Christianity in the civil-rights struggle.



GOD'S LONG SUMMER:
STORIES OF FAITH AND CIVIL RIGHTS, by Charles Marsh
(Princeton University Press,
276 pp.; \$24.95, hardcover).
Reviewed by Randy Frame.

Those who read Charles Marsh's *God's Long Summer* will no longer be able to hear unqualified statements about how grand life was in the fifties without considering such sentiments at best hopelessly naïve and, at worst, morally repugnant. With vivid description and chilling analysis, Marsh evokes the violence and oppression in the South of the civil-rights era.

The reference in the title is to the summer of 1964, a season that in many ways served as a cradle for the movement toward freedom. Though this pivotal summer functions as a regular reference point, the book is organized primarily around five detailed character studies. All five persons are motivated by their understanding of Christian faith, yet the presuppositions, values, and goals that inform their behavior during God's long summer and beyond could not be more disparate.

We meet Fannie Lou Hamer, a poor, uneducated black woman from rural Mississippi who found herself in the national spotlight at the 1964 Democratic National Convention in Atlantic City. Having led a nonviolent movement aimed at gaining fair political representation for all, she became vice-presidential-hopeful Hubert Humphrey's "project." Humphrey had been dispatched by President Lyndon Johnson, who referred to Hamer as "that illiterate." Humphrey's options were to extinguish the fires of discontent within



Clockwise from top left: Fannie Lou Hamer, Ed King, Cleveland Sellers, Douglas Hudgins, and (center) Sam Bowers.

the party or risk seeing his name dropped from the ticket. Hamer looked him in the eye and said, "Now if you lose this job of vice president because you are right, everything will be all right. God will take care of you. But if you take [the vice-presidential nomination] this way, why, you will never be able to do any good for civil rights, for poor people, for peace or any of those things you talk about. Senator Humphrey, I'm gonna pray to Jesus for you."

We meet Sam Bowers, who, as Imperial Wizard of the White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, believed that God had called him to eliminate "heretics," by which he meant primarily Negroes and Jews. In reference to accusations that his militant activities included planned killings, Bowers publicly boasted, "A jury would not dare convict a white man for killing a nigger in Mississippi."

We meet Douglas Hudgins, a highly

educated and esteemed pastor of First Baptist Church of Jackson (Miss.) who could never dream of committing an act of violence, but who preached that the Gospel had nothing to do with civil rights. Marsh writes that "the success of Bowers's violent mission depended largely on the kind of Gospel Hudgins eloquently preached to white Christians in the spacious sanctuary of First Baptist Church."

We meet Ed King, a white man who, like Bowers, grew up reaping the full benefits of his race and thinking nothing of it. But during his senior year of high school, a tornado hit his hometown of Vicksburg, Mississippi. He saw that the firetrucks and ambulance could not negotiate the mud-ridden streets of black communities, and his eyes were opened for the first time to racial injustice. His commitment to civil rights would cost him, among other things, his relationship with his parents.

Finally, we meet Cleveland Sellers, whose diagnosis of the problem paralleled Hamer's and King's, but who, after giving them a chance, advocated a form of black power that opened the doors to violence while closing the doors to whites.

In his treatment of each of the five, Marsh's theological and moral values come to the surface, but not in an excessively

judgmental way, and certainly not in ways that compromise his essential commitment to an accurate and fair telling of the facts. By taking this approach, the author allows readers to explore their own thoughts and arrive at their own conclusions.

Many will find the results haunting. Haunting because we realize that this painful era is not as far removed from our own day as we'd like it to be. Haunting because we can no longer dismiss racist ideologies as mere ignorance; they are in fact highly developed theologies. Haunting also because of an ironic yearning for the turbulent sixties, during which it seems the moral choices were clearer than today's. But this book is haunting most of all because of the bits and pieces of ourselves we see in each of the five characters. Thus, Marsh's work speaks directly to the development of our own moral lives.

Fortunately, despite his essentially objective approach, the author ultimately allows the now-deceased "Mrs. Hamer" to emerge as the heroine. "Undoubtedly," Marsh writes, "she would look upon the deracinated Hudgins and the villainous Bowers with indignation and outrage. Yet her table would not be closed to them." He adds, "In the end, Mrs. Hamer shows us that in loving we become the people we are supposed to be." **CT**

SHORT NOTICES

HISTORICAL DICTIONARY OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCH

By Michael Prokurat, Alexander Golitzin, and Michael D. Peterson
Scarecrow Press
528 pp.; \$89, hardcover
Reviewed by Gregory Mathewes-Green, a priest of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese and pastor of Holy Cross Mission, Baltimore.

The recent growth in awareness of the Orthodox Church has preceded the availability of reliable resource materials in English. Now, however, that unfortunate situation is being remedied. Among other new releases in the field, the *Historical Dictionary of the Orthodox Church* goes some distance toward filling a real need. Accessible to the layman as well as the academic, entries in the volume are drawn from the liturgical, theological, and ascetic life of Orthodoxy. Some helpful drawings are included, such as the simple illustration that accompanies and makes clearer the entry on "iconostasis." Perhaps most valuable is the concluding bibliography, almost a fifth of the book, broken into 12 categories.

I resist the four-star commendation for two reasons: the inordinately high price, though I grant that such is irrelevant to the book's scholarship; and the authors' penchant for some odd editorial choices. (For example, should the somewhat important modern lay theologian Lot-Borodine receive more print than the extremely important Mark of Ephesus?) Nevertheless, this volume will be a useful reference for both Orthodox and non-Orthodox readers. **CT**

"It Causes Me to Tremble"

The history of African-American literature reflects the decline of Christian influence in our culture.



THE NORTON ANTHOLOGY OF AFRICAN AMERICAN LITERATURE, ed. by Henry Louis Gates, Jr., and Nellie Y. McKay (Norton, 2,665 pp.; \$49.95, hardcover; \$44.95, paper). Reviewed by Philip G.

Wiken, associate minister at Tenth Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia.

African-American literature has always had to fight to win acceptance. The first black poetry published in the English language came from the pen of Phillis Wheatley. When Wheatley's poems first appeared in the 1770s, the intelligentsia in Boston doubted they had

been written by "a young Negro Girl, who was but a few Years since, brought an uncultivated Barbarian from Africa." Suspicions were aroused because the girl's poetic style was influenced by John Milton and Alexander Pope, as well as by her studies in Latin.

A committee of some 20 judges was assembled to determine if Wheatley actually could have written the poems herself. The committee included Gov. Thomas Hutchinson, the Reverend Charles Chauncy, and the renowned John Hancock. After a lengthy oral examination, these men reached a unanimous verdict: Phillis Wheatley was indeed the author of the poems published under her name.

Two hundred years later there is no longer any doubt about the legitimacy of

African-American literature. The recent publication of *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature* brings together in one volume more than two centuries of African-American letters. Spirituals, folktales, sermons, poems, slave narratives, entire novels—the anthology has them all. It also has an Audio Companion CD to help preserve the rhythms of black vernacular. The volume offers weighty proof of the excellence of the African-American contribution to American culture.

Readers of the *Norton Anthology* will be struck by the distinctively Christian origins of the first African-American literature. The anthology begins with more than a dozen spirituals; the first is the gospel itself (cf. 1 Cor. 15:3–4):

*Were you there when they crucified
my Lord?*

*Were you there when they crucified
my Lord?*

*Oh! Sometimes it causes me to tremble,
tremble, tremble.*

*Were you there when they crucified
my Lord?*

The Christian vision of early African-American literature was not limited to spirituals and gospel songs. Wheatley's poem "On Being Brought from Africa to America" (1773) views slavery in the light of sanctification.

*'Twas mercy brought me from my
Pagan land,
Taught my benighted soul to understand
That there's a God, that there's a
Saviour too:
Once I redemption neither sought nor
knew.
Some view our sable race with scorn-
ful eye,
"Their colour is a diabolic die."
Remember, Christians, Negros, black
as Cain,
May be refin'd, and join th' angelic
train.*

Both the poet and her readers were steeped in the Christian world-view. This made it possible to communicate the biblical truth about racial reconciliation through poetry.

The strong Christian element in African-American literature has gradually disappeared. The wealth of biblical allusions and theological reasoning in the old slave literature of David Walker and Frederick Douglass has been squandered. Although there are redemptive themes in the work of major contemporary writers such as Alice Walker and Toni Morrison, black literature has lost its distinctively Christian vision. Thus the history of African-American letters is one chapter in the story of the long, slow decline of Christian influ-

ence on American culture.

The same decline can be traced in American literature in general. This serves as a reminder of how much black Christians and white Christians share. In his speech at the March on Washington for Civil Rights in 1963, Martin Luther King, Jr., rightly observed that "many of our white brothers . . . have come to realize that their destiny is tied up with our destiny and they have come to realize that their freedom is inextricably bound to our freedom." King's assertion has particular force when it is applied to the church, where blacks and whites form one body in Christ.

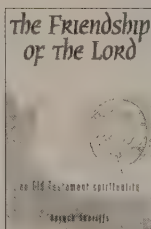
The Norton Anthology of African American Literature ends on a gloomy note. The last writer in the collection is Essex Hemphill, who died of AIDS in 1995. Hemphill's poetry does not embrace the good, the true, or the beautiful. Instead, it revels in lewd homosexual acts, even finding salvation in them ("Everytime we kiss we confirm the new world coming").

The difference between the poetry of Phillis Wheatley and the poetry of Essex Hemphill speaks volumes about what has happened in American culture during the last 200 years. Where we are is a long, long way from "Were You There?" Yet the gospel message of the first spirituals is as true today as it was when slaves first sang it on American plantations. Black and white, it is true for us all.

Knowing Jehovah

What the Old Testament teaches us about spirituality.

THE FRIENDSHIP OF THE LORD: AN OLD TESTAMENT SPIRITUALITY, by Deryck Sheriffs (London: Paternoster Press, 363 pp.; \$24.99, paper). Reviewed by Donald Bloesch, emeritus professor of theology, University of Dubuque Theological Seminary, Dubuque, Iowa. His book *Jesus Christ: Savior and Lord*, the fourth volume in his projected seven-volume systematic theology, has recently been published by InterVarsity Press.



Hebraic themes with New Testament faith and also explains why these themes are relevant to the church today.

The author makes a persuasive case that biblical spirituality is oriented about the theme of a life journey in which people of faith gain a deeper understanding of the will of God for their lives. He contrasts this approach with that of the mystical tradition of the church, which upholds the way of ascent to a state beyond temporality. In the biblical perspective, we do not climb up into the Godhead (as in radical mysticism); instead, we are raised by divine grace into fellowship with God and the whole company of

the saints. The pilgrimage of faith does not lead us out of the world but more deeply into the trials and afflictions of the world. We do not aspire to be divine but strive to be authentically human as we fulfill our daily tasks in society.

Another prominent thrust of biblical spirituality is the "fear of the Lord," which involves keeping ourselves humble before God in the service of his name. The fear of God does not entail being reduced to nothingness through servile subjection to a domineering Master, but instead being raised to life and vitality through serving the Master who is at the same time the Friend. The fear of the Lord is not an emotional moment but a learned behavior that spans a lifetime.

Sheriffs constantly warns against confusing biblical personal religion with an otherworldly mysticism that is enamored with the preternatural and occult. Biblical spirituality is not a mystical quest but social embodiment that involves lending a helping hand to people in need. Hebraic spirituality always entails a strong ethi-



**SEEDS OF HOPE:
A HENRI NOUWEN
READER**

Edited by Robert Durbach
Doubleday
2nd ed., 296 pp.; \$11,
paper

The first edition of this thematic reader was published in 1989. After Henri Nouwen's death in 1996, editor Robert Durbach prepared a revised and expanded edition with memorial tributes. The very helpful annotated bibliography that concludes the volume has also been updated.

Durbach has selected brief excerpts—snippets, in most cases, rather than extended passages. These are organized under a wide range of topical headings: "Solitude," "Intimacy and Sexuality," "The Search for God," "Career and Vocation," "The Face of Christ," to name only a few. The book is not intended for consecutive reading but rather for meditation.

"What strikes me, being back in the United States," one typical entry begins, "is the full force of the restlessness, the loneliness, and the tension that holds so many people. The conversations I had today were about spiritual survival. So many of my friends feel overwhelmed by the many demands made on them; few feel the inner peace and joy they so much desire."

At first we may be inclined to dismiss this as no more than a cliché, but it is one of the great strengths of Nouwen's work that he is not afraid of simplicity. He is a child-like truth teller, and he speaks to our hearts. CT

lical, prophetic spirituality also includes contemplation—gazing upon the splendor of God (as in Ps. 27:4), but this is not to be interpreted literally. "Seeing" is done with the mind, not the physical eye. Contemplation involves an experience of the beauty and glory of God as communicated to us through external signs, such as the temple and the ark.

Throughout the book Sheriffs tries to show the distance between Israelite spirituality and that of the surrounding culture. Time and again the biblical authors will take pagan mythical themes and relate them to the events of sacred history. The biblical poets freely use mythological imagery because they are not its prisoner. Their task often takes the form of demythologization. The elements of nature are not personified as deities, as in pagan religion, but are seen as being under the rule and guidance of the living God.

Unlike the mystical or Hellenic ethos, biblical spirituality does not offer techniques for knowing God or attaining holiness. Nor does the Bible present us with a developmental spirituality. We do not ascend to ever-higher stages of faith and holiness (as in the higher life movement), but we experience critical moments in our spiritual journey in which we are given a fuller grasp of God's will for our lives. Yet this fuller vision needs to be given to us anew as we fulfill the tasks of daily existence.

Echoing themes of narrative theology, Sheriffs contends that a theology that is truly biblical will be "engaged, embedded and embodied, and is not a display of universal, timeless and hygienically bottled truths." He not surprisingly describes the Bible as "an unfinished story."

Sheriffs rightly reminds us that the kind of holiness that Scripture endorses is a this-worldly holiness, one that is lived out in the tasks and tedium of daily life. The spiritual and the natural intersect and, indeed, are inseparable. He sees biblical relevance in the modern maxim, "What is natural should become thoroughly spiritual and what is spiritual should become perfectly natural." While this emphasis can garner some biblical support, it tends to lose sight of the biblical fact that the natural always points beyond itself to the spiritual. The natural can be a sacramental sign of the spiritual but must never be identified with the spiritual, for otherwise we are in the camp of pantheism, which denies the infinite qualitative difference between the divine and the human.

This book is a welcome addition to the growing number of books on spiritual-

al thrust in which faith is fulfilled in daily obedience to the divine commandment. Yet Sheriffs readily concedes that scripture does not exclude the paranormal or the charismatic. If we focus our attention solely upon temporal and material concerns we will risk "constructing a model that does not encompass and integrate all the available facts of human experience, or all of the evidence."

Sheriffs also warns against the danger of ritualism, which reduces the practice of faith to prescribed rituals and surrounds the life of faith with stifling taboos. He cautions that "prayer may rapidly degenerate into the repetitive muttering of magical incantations, whether in liturgical or charismatic settings." The heart of biblical prayer is earnest supplication, though silence is also necessary to prepare ourselves to hear God's word and know God's will. The Bible sharply contradicts what he calls "Mesopotamian spirituality," one that is "regulated by experts with sanctuary regulations, rituals, physical objects and fixed formulae deemed efficacious." We gain holiness and freedom through the practice of love and mercy, not through systematic avoidance of "foods, art forms, music, hair or dress styles."

The author also gives a salutary admonition against both unwholesome asceticism and prosperity teaching:

There is a spirituality that expects health, wealth and prosperity, that explains persistent symptoms of ill health as due to lack of faith, that disapproves of expressing grief in bereavement, that passes off responsibility for choices and their consequences by talking about them as divine guidance, that escapes the pain in others with clichés and so on.

He goes on to contend that counterfeit spirituality is often marked by "a triumphalism that ignores the real state of the church and the world, denies the fact of a common humanity in favour of a false separateness, or offers a formula for spiritual arrival that glosses over the reality of biding human sinfulness."

While averse to mystical interpretations that have their source in Hellenism rather than the Old Testament, Sheriffs makes an important place for meditation and contemplation. In biblical piety, meditation involves internalizing the Torah. We are called to fix our attention not on timeless truths but on the practical implications of the law of God in daily life. Another prominent focus in biblical meditation is on the goodness of God's creation. A bib-

ity. While Sheriffs's emphasis is on daily obedience to God's commands, he also sees the role of silence, adoration, and contemplation in the life of the Christian. In addition to a spirituality of social involvement, he speaks of the need for a spirituality of "stopping," whereby we disengage ourselves from the turmoils of life in order to be still before the Lord and

draw on the spiritual resources of our faith in a retreatlike setting. He points to the ecumenical religious community of Taizé (in southeastern France) as trenchantly speaking to the needs of younger people for a deeper anchorage in spiritual reality.

Christians of every persuasion can learn from *The Friendship of the Lord*, for its author is thoroughly immersed in the

study of Scripture as well as keenly sensitive to the desperate spiritual needs of people living in a secularized and vacuous culture. The book could have been strengthened had Sheriffs acknowledged that many of the themes of biblical spirituality that he upholds have been enacted in the lives of some of the great mystics of the church. CT

Touched by an Angel

Buechner does Tobit.

ON THE ROAD WITH THE ARCHANGEL, by Frederick Buechner (HarperSan Francisco, 149 pp.; \$16, hardcover). Reviewed by David Stewart, librarian at Regent College, Vancouver, B.C., Canada.

Even when Frederick Buechner is at the peak of his form (as he is in this new novel), it is difficult for a reviewer to describe exactly the quality of his work: so undemanding, so unmagisterial, so far removed from the sweeping, expansive style of novelists whose skills are less subtle. Buechner's distinctive gift lies in giving voice to the streak of ambiguity that runs through human existence. A character like Leo Bebb (*The Book of Bebb*) may be a saint, or a huckster, or a little of both: we never quite know. For Buechner, such questions rarely receive a definitive answer. What is certain is that, amid the ambiguity that is our lot, the Almighty is at work, quietly and profoundly.

On the Road with the Archangel is Buechner's version of the apocryphal Book of Tobit, told from the standpoint of the archangel Raphael. As in the past, Buechner's terrain is the tragicomic overlap that exists between "the ways of God as understood by men" and "the ways of men as understood by God."

The desolate prayers of two people set the story in motion. Tobit is a Jew of Nineveh who has lost both his sight and his sense of hope. He implores God to grant him deliverance through death. Sarah is a young woman from a city called Ecbatana. She has fallen under the protection of a demon, Asmodeus, who secretly loves her and who has gruesomely bumped off a succession of seven unwanted fiancés, with the result that Sarah has been cast as a murdering sor-

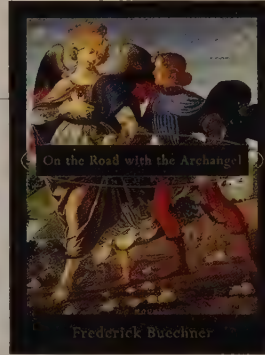
ceress. She too prays for death.

Certain that God will heed his prayer, Tobit wants to ensure that his wife, Anna, and son, Tobias, will be provided for after his death, and so he sends his son on a mission to bring back some of his fortune, left with a friend in a far city. Raphael (now in human form) signs on as a traveling companion and shepherds the son through everything, including his eventual meeting and marrying Sarah (here is where the answer to the two desperate prayers intersects).

What it adds up to is an unforgettably funny and lovely picture of unlikely

Providence, portraying with extraordinary empathy ordinary, flawed folk who at any given moment have only the vaguest idea of what they are doing, or of the import of their actions for themselves or others; how much their wills and hearts and desires matter to the Holy One; how their dramas are caught up in his.

Toward the end, when Raphael is about to disclose his true identity, he enjoins Tobias and his wife to live generously in response: "I mean that though you must never tell the secrets of a king . . . nothing is more pleasing to the Holy One than when you tell about the secret things he is always doing for people or trying to do if they give him half a chance. . . . Tell people about those things and never forget them yourself." Good advice for us, too. CT



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Mar. 6-7
- LOUISVILLE, KY
Mar. 13-14
- HERSHEY, PA
Mar. 27-28
- PRINGFIELD, MO
Apr. 3-4
- CHARLOTTE, NC
Apr. 17-18
- TACOMA, WA
Apr. 24-25
- NORFOLK, VA
May 1-2
- KNOXVILLE, TN
May 8-9
- CHICAGO, IL
May 15-16
- TAMPA, FL
May 29-30
- SACRAMENTO, CA
June 12-13
- KANSAS CITY, MO
June 26-27
- INDIANAPOLIS, IN
July 10-11
- MINNEAPOLIS, MN
July 17-18
- SALEM, VA
July 24-25
- BRADDO SPRINGS, CO
July 31-Aug. 1
- WORCESTER, MA
Sept. 11-12
- UBURN HILLS, MI
Sept. 18-19
- CLEVELAND, OH
Sept. 25-26
- PEORIA, IL
Oct. 2-3
- PHOENIX, AZ
Oct. 9-10
- HOUSTON, TX
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The Word Became Art

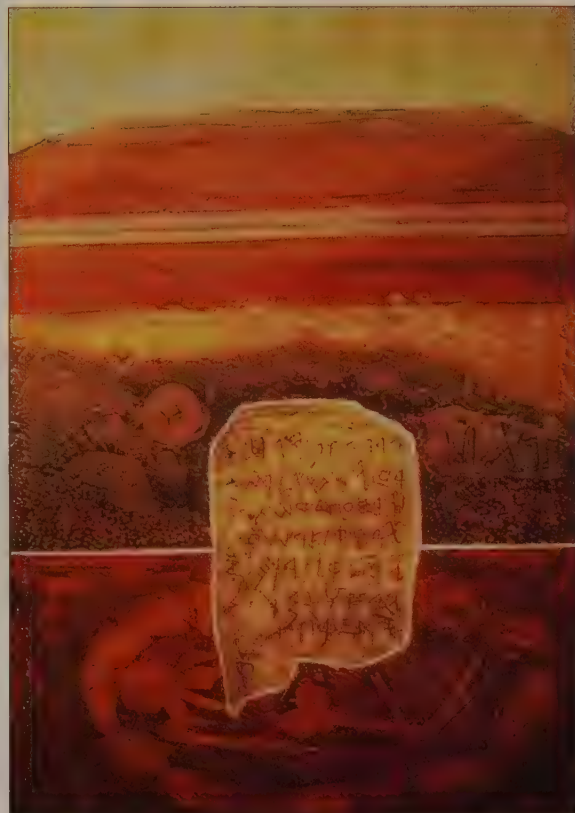
As a conservative Protestant raised in a Rockwellesque New England farming community, Sandra Bowden is acutely aware of the Protestant preference for words over images. As an artist, it has caused her no small concern that her signature motif has always been fragments of words layered into every work of art she signs.

"At one point I had to deal with some very distressing questions. Here I had spent my whole life in a church focused on words," Bowden explains. "I used to think, 'What have I done? Isn't this art just *compounding* the whole problem?'—until I began to 'ger' the theology properly. By the *Word* of the Lord the heavens were made; Jesus as the *Word*-made-flesh points far beyond the physical [emphasis hers]. So the *Word* must have a power beyond cognitive thought, beyond logic. That's the mystery I've spent a lifetime hunting for in my art—that veiled kind of expression which doesn't explain itself right away."

Choose any work from Bowden's prolific output and you uncover fragments of Hebrew calligraphy and segments of timeworn antique Bibles or commentaries, and in as many as 40 languages.

LAYER UPON LAYER

Fascinated by the form and historical weight of Hebrew, Bowden began studying it in 1972 with an orthodox rabbi. In 1980 she made the first of four visits to Israel and immersed herself in ancient Israelite culture, archaeology, geology, and ritual—admitting she is "always the student, but never a scholar." What



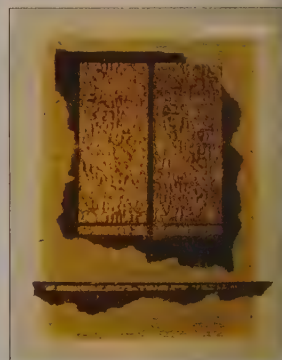
The power of the Word: Sandra Bowden's Tel Gezer (above) in her *Israelite Tel Suite*, and gilded sheaves of a Ten Commandments diptych (right), *These Are the Words*.

eventually emerged was her *Israelite Tel Suite*, cross-sectioned profiles of Canaanite cities conquered by Joshua in the thirteenth century B.C. Concealed archaeological features or important artifacts layered into the strata of Tels Megiddo, Hazor, Gezer, and Lachish relate directly to Old Testament references. Tel Megiddo, for example, is overlaid with a royal lion seal mentioning King Jeroboam. Excavations of Tel Gezer, part of Solomon's dowry, revealed Israelite burial sites and a potsherd inscribed with an agricultural calendar.

Bowden later researched colors mentioned in the Torah, attempting to identify historically accurate dyes that could have made Joseph's coat, or the hues of precious gems used in the ephods of the levitical priests.

Bowden's work crosses boundaries between synagogues, churches, and seminars particularly well; her primary clientele on the east coast is, in fact, Jewish. Her ambassadorial finesse has allowed her to forge close ties with Jewish art dealers and rabbinical mentors over the years at annual Judaica conferences and synagogue art

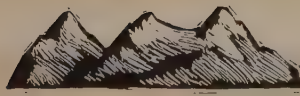
exhibits. "Probably the most significant meal I ever had in my life," says this attractive, well-traveled grandmother of four, "was Shabbat supper with a Jewish couple in Israel. This



was not 'put on' for me. This was every Friday night.

"The world stopped; we ate ceremoniously, and they sang songs they had sung in their families for generations. They were *absolutely in love* with God. At that point I understood that differences could only be resolved by Jesus."

Yet, Bowden confesses, "In any Christian setting I can show all the Jewish stuff, but in the Jewish setting I am more careful. I'll still use Greek text, gorgeous Bibles from the 1850s layered underneath Hebrew and English, even Vietnamese. But I won't show crucifixion imagery. If I'm in a Jewish show I'll have a binder that explains my Christian background. The work is strong enough—it has enough integrity that I don't have to hide my Christian faith. But I would never make Jewish people uneasy by evangelizing [overtly]. My life is a testimony in front of them." And, as Bowden insists, "We share a common text"—figu-



The Muse of the Mountains

What do the mountains sound like? Jerry Smith, musician and artisan, knows. They sang to him. Smith heard the Great Smoky Mountains when he visited western North Carolina for the first time. "I drove into these mountains and was moved as deeply as anything that has ever happened to me in my life," he says.

Leaving college, girlfriend, home, and dog, Smith moved from northeastern Ohio to Asheville, North Carolina, for the muse was calling him. He heard it again when he walked into the student union center at Warren Wilson College in Swannanoa, North Carolina (where he subsequently enrolled), and heard David Holt, head of the Appalachian Music Program, playing the banjo along with fiddler Lynn Shaw and John McCutchin on the hammered dulcimer.

"I was immediately drawn to the hammered dulcimer," Smith says. "I sat down behind this dulcimer player and watched him play. I was flabbergasted." Smith, who had never studied music and couldn't read it (and still can't), asked where he could purchase this trapezoidal instrument with its 40 to 100 strings, played with mallets. The reply was, "You couldn't buy one anywhere." Still, the suggestion was made that he could order information through the Smithsonian Institution. So he sent 50 cents and received a brochure that explained (more or less) how to make a dulcimer.

LIKE DANCING WITH YOUR HANDS

Smith built his first hammered dulcimer out of plywood and cement nails. (A hammered dulcimer should not be confused with a mountain dulcimer, which has three to six strings and is plucked.) His second dulcimer was better, and he decided to try playing it. "First of all, it worked. That surprised me," he says. "I was also surprised at how easy it was to play. Every time I pulled it out I was surrounded by people. I couldn't play beans on it, but everybody thought I was a genius. I would get a melody in my head and then find the notes on the dulcimer.

"Playing a dulcimer is like dancing with your hands. You're dancing the melody out. It's the most wonderful way to play a musical instrument," Smith says. Today, some 23 years later, he has built more than 670 dulcimers and has a waiting list.

Smith has made three recordings—a "trilogy"—that bring expression both to his spiritual longings and to his love for the mountains. The first, *The Strayaway Child* (1981), produced with Tom Fellenbaum, bespeaks, in classical Celtic hymns and jigs, the restlessness of his heart during his pre-Christian days. Though "The Dancing Dog/Blarney Pilgrim" ends discordantly in nonresolution, it segues into "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring," which suggests, says Jerry's wife, Lisa, that "he felt he was 'straying away' from something"—as if the mountains were crying.

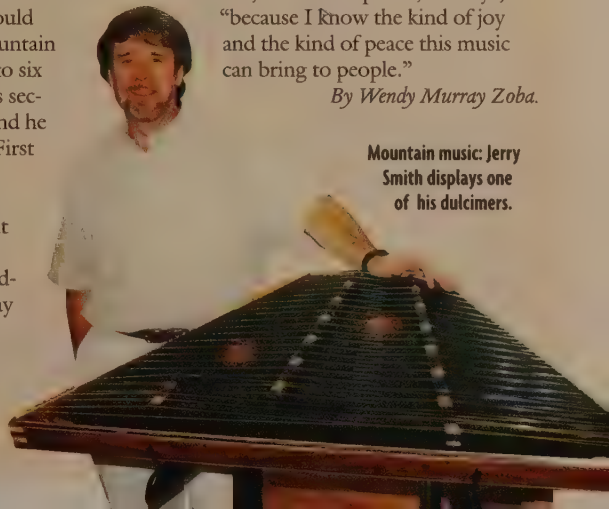
Heart Dance, the second in the trilogy (1986), was recorded after Smith's conversion and suggests a gentler but more resolved longing. Both his father and a close friend had recently died, giving the music a quiet, reflective feeling.

Lisa Smith accompanies her husband on the lute for the third recording, *Homecoming* (1992), which begins and ends with "What Child Is This?" The Brentwood Music label has recently taken over all three recordings.

Smith continues to be consumed with building dulcimers in the workshop behind his house, and he has turned down attractive offers for special projects in order to keep his heart close to God's. "I'm trying to experience his joy, hear him, and worship him," he says, "because I know the kind of joy and the kind of peace this music can bring to people."

By Wendy Murray Zoba.

Mountain music: Jerry Smith displays one of his dulcimers.



A PROCESS OF PERSONAL INQUIRY

Bowden is also front and center in the dialogue regarding contemporary Christian art. She is an active advocate for Christians in the Visual Arts and has been involved in CIVA since the group's founding. Her ambassadorial role as CIVA president since 1992 has taken her to the Vatican, Jerusalem, Berkeley, Montreal, and New York City. This year, after moving her home studio from New York to Cape Cod, Massachusetts, along with her entrepreneurial husband, she has begun preparations for CIVA's twentieth anniversary celebration in 1999.

Because the foundation underlying all her work is the eternal God, this artist feels free to ask unlimited questions. "Sometimes art is a process of personal inquiry," Bowden says. "My work is a record of questions I've had all my life, and the work continually raises new questions. I just follow it along." Apart from the fact that her natural curiosity and abbinically insistent questions never cease, Bowden seems to have an infinite number of ideas for future series. But then, since the source that unifies all her work is the infinite God, who should be surprised?

By Karen L. Mulder.

For more information, contact CIVA, P.O. Box 18117, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55418-0117.

REFLECTIONS

Classic and contemporary excerpts



GOD GAVE THE INCREASE

*Saints are never giants
Who hoped to do God favors.
They are only souls
Whose needs took root
In shallow dust,
Becoming redwoods grown
From dandelion spores.*

—Calvin Miller in
A Symphony in Sand

DOWNSIZING GOD

Our evangelical culture tends to take the awesome reality of a transcendent God who is worthy to be feared and downsize Him so He could fit into our “buddy system.” The way we talk about Him, the way we pray, and, more strikingly, the way we live shows that we have somehow lost our sense of being appropriately awestruck in the presence of a holy and all-powerful God. It’s been a long time since we’ve heard a good sermon on the “fear of God.”

If God were to show up visibly, many of us think we’d run up to Him and high-five Him for the good things He has done.

—Joseph M. Stowell in
Moody (Nov./Dec. 1997)

THE RIGHT KIND OF FEAR

The remarkable thing about fearing God is that when you fear God you fear nothing else, whereas if you do not fear God you fear everything else.

—Oswald Chambers in
The Highest Good

READING AHEAD

It is a good thing that we are not God; we do not have to

understand God’s ways, or the suffering and brokenness and pain that sooner or later come to us all.

But we do have to know in the very depths of our being that the ultimate end of the story, no matter how many aeons it takes, is going to be all right.

—Madeleine L’Engle in
Glimpses of Grace

THE BIG PICTURE

God’s mercy was not increased when Jesus came to earth, it was illustrated! Illustrated in a way we can understand. Jesus knows.

—Eugenia Price in *Share My Pleasant Stones*.

SIN’S GOOD NEWS

To deny sin is bad news, indeed. The only good news is sin itself. Sin is the best news there is, the best news there could be in our predicament.

Because with sin, there’s a way out. There’s the possibility of repentance. You can’t repent of confusion or psychological flaws inflicted by your parents—you’re stuck with them. But you can repent of sin. Sin and repentance are the only grounds for hope

and joy. The grounds for reconciled, joyful relationships. You can be born again.

—John Alexander in *The Other Side* (Jan.-Feb. 1993)

THE GREATEST DRAMA EVER STAGED

The Christian faith is the most exciting drama that ever staggered the imagination of man—and the dogma is the drama. That drama is summarized quite clearly in the creeds of the Church, and if we think it dull it is because we either have never really read those amazing documents or have recited them so often and so mechanically as to have lost all sense of their meaning. The plot pivots upon a single character, and the whole action is the answer to a single central problem: What think ye of Christ?

—Dorothy Sayers in
Dorothy L. Sayers:
A Careless Rage for Life

NO PLACE FOR FAITH

At its best, our age is an age of searchers and discoverers. At its worst, it is an age that has domesticated despair and learned to live with it. The fiction that celebrates this last state will be the least likely to transcend its limitations, since, when the religious need is banished successfully, it usual-

ly atrophies, even in the novelist. The sense of mystery vanishes. A kind of reverse evolution takes place. The whole range of feeling is dulled.

—Flannery O’Connor in
Mystery and Manners

FALSE GODS

The soul of the covetous is far removed from God, as far as his memory, understanding and will are concerned. He forgets God as though He were not his God, owing to the fact that he has fashioned for himself a god of Mammon and of temporal possessions.

—Saint John of the Cross in
The Dark Night of the Soul

LOVE IS THE CURE

Bitterness imprisons life; love releases it. Bitterness paralyzes life; love empowers it. Bitterness sickens life; love heals it. Bitterness blinds life; love anoints its eyes.

—Harry Emerson Fosdick in
Riverside Sermons

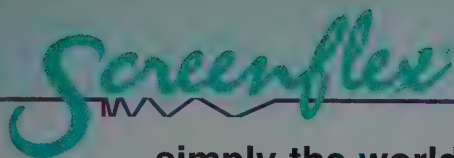
PERVERSE PURSUITS

The world has achieved brilliance without wisdom, power without conscience. Ours is a world of nuclear giants and ethical infants.

—Omar Bradley in a speech
(Nov. 10, 1948)



“I am troubled by doubts, Father.”



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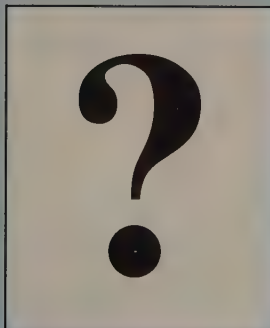
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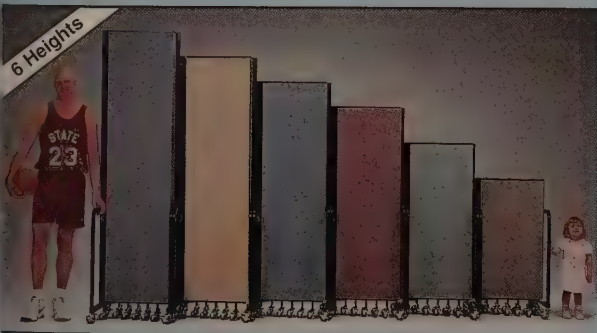
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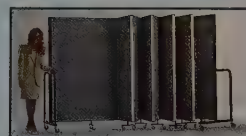
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UPDATE

Brownsville Revival Rolls Onward

But success brings intense scrutiny for Pensacola Pentecostal church.

Nearly 2 million visitors have thronged to evening services at Brownsville Assembly of God in Pensacola, Florida, since revival erupted on Father's Day in 1995.

"It's just as fresh to me today as it was two and a half years ago," says evangelist Steve Hill, who has been guest preaching at the church since then. During that span, 122,000 have signed "decision cards" indicating conversion or rededication.

A year ago, the Brownsville Revival School of Ministry opened with 120 full-time students, split evenly between revival converts and those who experienced renewal, according to Michael L. Brown, the school's dean. Brown says that by the fall 1997 semester, the school, which offers a two-year theology degree emphasizing missions and evangelism, had 511 students from 46 states.

Revival leaders also have taken their message on the road, leading two-night rallies in Dallas, Saint Louis, Toledo, Memphis, Birmingham, and Anaheim. "Our goal is to bring this revival to key cities in the U.S.," says Hill, "and these meetings are a divine opportunity for people who have been revived to bring their unsaved family members to church without going inside a church."

In the 2.4 million-member Assemblies of God (AG), revival has broken out in dozens of congregations around the country. "The impact has been powerful," says Thomas Trask, the denomination's general superintendent. "Many, many of our pastors have gone [to Brownsville] searching, looking, and believing, and they have witnessed the power of God. It has done something for their own hearts and lives."

The treks are not limited to AG churches. In fact, the Brownsville revival



Center of attention: Evangelist Steve Hill prays with attendees at a service last June.

Service seekers: Hundreds of people, many of whom have traveled from around the country, wait for hours to enter an evening service at the Brownsville Assembly of God.

since Azusa Street," says Pentecostal historian Vinson Synan.

VOICES OF OPPOSITION: Not everyone is singing hallelujahs. As it has proceeded, the revival has been the subject of intense media scrutiny, some of it negative. Meanwhile, there is a heated theological debate in many circles about what is happening in Pensacola and whether it is of divine, human, or even satanic origins.

"I don't really see it as a revival at all," says Christian Research Institute's Hank Hanegraaff, who has become the most visible of Brownsville's many critics, calling it a "counterfeit revival" (CT, Aug. 11, 1997, p. 54). Hanegraaff did not mention Brownsville in his book *Counterfeit Revival* (Word, 1997), but he has hammered the revival in his national

al's duration, the number of people it is attracting, and the ripple effect it is having in churches in the United States and around the world, are leading some to draw comparisons with historic Pentecostal revivals in the early years of the century. And in recent months, Pensacola has replaced Toronto (CT, Sept. 11, 1995, p. 23) as the hot spot for revival-seekers. "This is probably the most important revival to come out of a local church

Bible Answer Man radio broadcasts, as well as in the November-December 1997 issue of *Christian Research Journal*, in which he criticized the church for "serious distortions of biblical Christianity . . . an overemphasis on subjective experience . . . nonbiblical spiritual practices, Scripture twisting, and false and exaggerated claims."

In November, the Salem Radio Network invited Hanegraaff to debate school dean Brown, whose own book, *Let No One Deceive You: Confronting the Critics of Revival* (Destiny Image, 1997), calls *Counterfeit Revival* "an unscholarly, often inaccurate, highly judgmental, and at times, even slanderous work."

STEPS TOWARD RECONCILIATION:

Following the often heated debate, the two men met privately for nearly three hours. The meeting resulted in forgiveness and fellowship instead of fisticuffs, along with a commitment to continue the dialogue.

Although Hanegraaff says he had been to Brownsville four times, his December 3 visit was different. He met with Brown, Hill, and Brownsville pastor John Kilpatrick, and he even spoke to students at Brown's school, where he received a warm reception and a standing ovation. Kilpatrick has also invited Hanegraaff to preach at one of Brownsville's Sunday services, an offer Hanegraaff says he is considering.

The dialogue has not changed anyone's mind, but it has cooled some of the rhetoric. "One of the things we wanted to model was that we could discuss these things in a manner that would honor Christ instead of in a way that would drag his name through the mud," says Hanegraaff, who left Brownsville with warmer feelings toward revival leaders and at least a few reservations about his earlier denunciations. "I don't know," he told CT. "It's a difficult thing for me to try to assess on a lot of levels."

Brown says he and Hanegraaff emerged from their talks sharing common views on at least three points: "We are brothers who are going to spend eternity together; we are passionate for the fundamentals of the faith; and we want to see disciples, not just converts."

MONEY QUESTIONS: In November, the *Pensacola News Journal*, which had previously published dozens of mostly positive articles about the revival, ran a five-day series of 30-plus stories entitled "Brownsville Revival: The Money and the Myths." The *Journal* called revival-related businesses "a multimillion-dollar retail industry conducted within the walls of the church." The series raised important questions about nearly every aspect



CATHY WOOD

of the revival and questioned the integrity of Hill and Kilpatrick. It accused Kilpatrick of orchestrating the revival and firmly disciplining dissenters and alleged that Hill fabricated parts of his dramatic testimony.

Revival leaders say the series contained "misquotes, serious misrepresentation of facts, and misleading misquotes." They responded by issuing a six-page, 47-item rebuttal of some of the paper's charges and paying for two advertisements.

The most disturbing charges in the articles (available at the paper's Web site at: www.pensacolanewsjournal.com) involved leaders growing wealthy from millions of dollars spent by revivalgoers on books, manuals, audiotapes, videotapes, and other products. The paper reported that only Brown had appropriately paid state sales tax on his books and cassettes sold at tables inside the church, a situation revival leaders say was caused by their inability to get a definitive determination from state tax officials about what they owed. (In a December 21 article, the paper reported that the remaining three ministries had made lump-sum 1997 tax payments.)

Still, questions remain about hundreds of thousands of dollars spent on personal residences, offices, vehicles, and other expenses. The paper says that during its investigation, Hill submitted incomplete financial reports, and that Kilpatrick refused to divulge any financial data for either the church or his Feast of Fire Ministries.

AG superintendent Trask says decisions about financial disclosure are up to each

congregation but adds, "My philosophy has always been openness, and I've encouraged John [Kilpatrick] to be open." Trask says finances will be a topic of discussion with Kilpatrick and Hill at an imminent meeting of a "covering committee" established to offer guidance to revival leaders.

The 43-year-old Hill claims the revival's money problems are a result of honest mistakes. "I admit that I am naïve in some areas of ministry," he says. "I'm young. I've never been thrust into an arena like this."

None of four revival-related ministries is a member of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability. ECFA president Paul D. Nelson, who calls the Pensacola newspaper's charges "serious" confirms that Hill's Together in the Harvest Ministries has begun the application process. Kilpatrick says his Feast of Fire Ministries will apply for membership as soon as its first audit is completed. Nelson says he has not received applications from the ministries headed by Brown and music minister Lindell Cooley.

No state or federal investigations related to finances at the church have been implemented.

REVIVAL IN THE AIR: Nothing is slowing down revival leaders in Pensacola. "This has been the greatest year of my life," Hill says.

Brown says criticism of the revival naturally accompanies the works of God. "We tend to sanctify past revivals and demonize present revivals," he says. "When a baby is being born, things are a little bloody and messy, there's a whole lot of noise, and there are a lot of doctors running around. But that doesn't mean the child

isn't going to be healthy in a few days."

For Trask, the revival—with all its controversy and challenges—is a welcome alternative to the AG's plateaued membership of the late 1980s and early 1990s. "The Assemblies of God was raised up as a revival movement, but we had moved away from that," he says. "We had become content. We had become careless." In the past two years, the AG has reported significant increases in the number of conversions, water baptisms, and Spirit baptisms. Giving to foreign missions is also at an all-time annual high of \$117 million.

Still, Trask's main concern is that revival leaders "don't try to perpetuate something that God wants to put a stop to," a possibility that grows with each new revival-related venture.

By Steve Rabey

Moon-Related Funds Filter to Evangelicals

Affiliates of Sun Myung Moon, controversial leader of the Unification Church, have a history of supporting and courting conservative evangelicals. Now, according to published reports, financial support has been filtered to Liberty University from Moon-related enterprises. But Liberty founder Jerry Falwell told CHRISTIANITY TODAY that the source of the funds does not influence his ministry.

"If the American Atheists Society or Saddam Hussein himself ever sent an unrestricted gift to any of my ministries," Falwell says, "be assured I will operate on Billy Sunday's philosophy: *The Devil's had it long enough*, and quickly cash the check."

While Moon may not be the Devil, Christians contest Moon's claim that he is destined by God to complete an unfulfilled mission of Jesus. Moon claims Jesus failed as the Messiah because he did not wed and have children. The divorced 78-year-old Moon says he and his current wife, Hak Ja Han Moon, 53, are the "true parents of all humanity."

\$3.5 MILLION GIFT: In November, the *Los Angeles Times* reported that the Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP), which is headed by Moon's wife, contributed \$3.5 million to Christian Heritage Foundation (CHF) of Virginia for "educational purposes" in 1995.

WFWP chair Susan Fefferman says Falwell spoke monthly to a group of professional women forging Japanese-American friendships. Fefferman says that in return WFWP provided scholarships for "many, many students" through the CHF. She told CT that Falwell "made it clear" that he represented CHF and the \$3.5 million could be sent there on behalf of Liberty.

CHF cofounder Daniel Reber says CHF solicited funds from WFWP in 1995 to help finance missions projects, not to service the school's indebtedness. "Not one penny of the Women's Federation grant was ever used to assist Liberty in its reduction of debt," Reber told CT.

Reber and Jimmy Thomas purchased and forgave \$5 million worth of debt to help Falwell's financially troubled school in Lynchburg. CHF also gave \$500,000 to complete construction of the dining hall, which had been halted

because of nonpayment of contractors.

Reber had worked as a fundraiser for Falwell's *Old Time Gospel Hour* and started CHF in 1987 with Thomas, who had been chief financial officer of Falwell's Moral Majority. Both Thomas and Reber had been on Liberty's board of directors until last year. CHF is a private, independent charitable foundation that distributes Bibles and Christian literature to Communist and Third World nations.

Meanwhile, according to a *Washington Post* report, another Moon-related organization, News World Communications, provided an unsecured \$400,000 loan to Liberty in 1996 at 6 percent interest, significantly below market loan rates. Falwell spokesperson Mark DeMoss says Liberty did not know of the Moon connection because the loan came via a broker. DeMoss says the Moon connection is unimportant because the loan was a "business transaction."

In a related development, Liberty last month disclosed that A. L. Williams is

the unnamed benefactor who provided \$15 million to settle Liberty debts (CT, Dec. 8, 1997, p. 61). The announcement came in part to counter rumors that Moon had been the anonymous supporter. Williams earned millions selling term life insurance and earlier had provided most of the funds to build the school's football stadium, basketball arena, and athletic center.

NOTHING 'SINISTER': Due to ongoing financial problems (CT, Feb. 3, 1997, p. 74), Liberty had been placed on probation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools in December 1996. SACS lifted the probation in December 1997 following the school's reduction of debt.

Falwell says there is nothing "sinister or clandestine" about CHF's contribution to the school.

"Liberty does not have firsthand knowledge of how CHF is funded, or, for that matter, the source of any Liberty donor's funds," Falwell says. "The donor's source of income is generally irrelevant to Liberty."

But Paul D. Nelson, president of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability, says ministry and academic boards must exercise prudence when receiving large contributions.

"Donors come from all walks of life, and it can get very fuzzy as to how the money was earned," Nelson says. In the worst-case scenario, typified by the Foundation for New Era Philanthropy scandal that involved 180 evangelical groups and schools (CT, Oct. 27, 1997, p. 86), recipients must return illegally obtained funds even if the money has already been spent.

Falwell, 64, says that he addressed several groups where Moon has been in attendance, including a Uruguay meeting in 1995. Falwell says he does not compromise truth when speaking at such meetings.

"I preach for the Moonies, for the Mormons, for the Catholics, for the Jews, for the Buddhists," Falwell told CT. "I'll preach in hell if they promise to let me out."

CONSERVATIVES ATTRACTED: Moon's attempts to build influence with conservative Christians has been ongoing for years (CT, Feb. 5, 1988, p. 46). At a 1996 conference, for example, Ralph Reed, Beverly LaHate, Gary Bauer, and Robert H. Schuller all spoke at a Moon-sponsored Family Federation for World Peace event.

"Conservatives find Moon attractive because they share many of his moral and political values," says James Beverley, theology and ethics profes-



Mass marriage: Moon and his wife bless the arranged marriages of 2,500 couples at a November 29 ceremony at RFK Stadium. Singer Whitney Houston backed out of an estimated \$1 million commitment after public criticism.

sor at Ontario Theological Seminary. "Those similarities are significant enough that questions of theological differences are put on hold." Beverley, who has studied Moon for two decades, also notes that speakers at such events often have their trips to exotic locales fully financed in addition to receiving generous honorariums.

SOULS LED ASTRAY?

Frederick H. Miller, who operates True Light Educational Ministry in Shirley, New York, has documented Falwell's contacts with Moon, which he says began in 1984.

Miller, a 1989 graduate of Falwell's Liberty Home Bible Institute, says he tried to meet with Falwell for four years to urge him to dissociate himself from Moon's ventures.

"Anyone attending and speaking at a Moonie function should be considered an endorser of the movement," Miller says. "How many poor souls has Reverend Fal-



"Minister to the heathen": Falwell (right) appears with Larry Flynt last year on *Larry King Live*.

well led astray by endorsing and being constantly pictured and quoted in Unification Church publications?"

Beverley agrees that speakers need to clearly distance themselves from Moon's theology when attending events his organizations sponsor. "The involvement is used by Moon and other Unification Church leaders as an endorsement that Moon is the Messiah and the returned

that receive Moon funds, such as the Washington Times Foundation. Falwell says his speaking philosophy remains unchanged. "I'm a minister to the heathen," Falwell told CT, citing recent appearances with *Hustler* publisher Larry Flynt. "I go a lot of places other preachers won't go as long as I don't have to restrict my message."

By John W. Kennedy.

IGNITING THE DEBATE

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SINCE FREUD BROUGHT PSYCHIATRY OUT OF THE asylum and into everyday life, psychiatry has lost its soul and Christianity has lost its mind, argues psychiatrist and Christian Dan Blazer. With critical analysis of the long-standing interaction and debate, he sets forth a new vision and direction for the future of Christian counseling. Available March 1998.

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FLEISHMAN/HILLARD

Government aid: Vice President Al Gore unveils a brochure designed to help parents monitor Internet use.

Profamily Groups Demand More Cyberporn Prosecutions

Government officials and online service providers announced plans at a December summit to protect children from Internet obscenity, but some conservative Christian organizations believe the gathering amounted to little more than family-values window dressing.

The three-day "Internet/Online Summit: Focus on the Children" assembled government, school, library, computer-industry, and child-advocacy group leaders in Washington, D.C. While representatives did not agree on the best way to restrict youth from viewing pornography geared to adults, Vice President Al Gore announced a "zero tolerance" policy on Internet pornography depicting children and the creation of a "tip line," where parents can report child pornography.

Online providers are supporting the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children "CyberTipLine" initiative. Parents will be able to notify authorities of incidents of child pornography and child predators in cyberspace. The line will serve as a clearinghouse for tips on enticement of children for sexual exploitation, as well as information on the possession or distribution of child pornography. The new Web site is www.missingkids.com/cybertip and the center's hotline is 1-800-843-5678.

During the Clinton administration, as the use of graphics on the Web has increased and Internet technology has developed, the number of Justice Department agents patrolling cyberspace has risen

from a handful to more than 100, and FBI arrests have led to the convictions of more than 100 online child predators.

Gore also unveiled a public education campaign to teach parents how to protect children surfing the Internet. While online providers say parents have primary responsibility to monitor the computer behavior of their children, at the summit several announced pre-emptive plans in an effort to prevent government intrusion.

For example, America Online unveiled a package of initiatives to make online navigation safer for children. AOL, the largest online service in the world with 10 million subscribers, will soon feature a permanent parental controls button on the welcome screen that enables adults to lock children out of anything but approved areas, chat rooms, and Web sites. In addition, AOL will activate a button to allow members to report inappropriate chat room, e-mail, and instant-message activity immediately.

SCREENING NO PANACEA: The Vice President did not heed the requests of profamily organizations to increase government restrictions to protect children. Instead, Gore's public-education campaign will rely on parents to monitor the online behavior of their children.

However, according to a new survey by *FamilyPC*, few parents avail themselves of commercially available parental control software designed to combat access to pornography. The survey of 750 families whose children use the Web showed

only 26 percent use some form of parental-control software—mainly controls built into their Web browsers or offered by their Internet service provider. Only 4 percent had purchased parental-control software such as Cyber Patrol, SurfWatch, or Net Nanny on their own.

With only a few mouse clicks, anyone can access one of an estimated 72,000 pornographic sites on the World Wide Web. Many of them are illegal sites because they meet the definition of hard-core obscenity, depicting such behavior as incest, bestiality, and mutilation.

Screening technology alone is inadequate, critics contend, and further legal regulation of indecent content is necessary. "No screening technology blocks all sites containing harmful sexual content," says Morality in Media (MIM) president Robert W. Peters.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE? Cathy Cleaver, legal policy director of the Family Research Council, says 70 percent of Internet access by children occurs outside the home. She says public schools and libraries—which commonly offer uncensored, unsupervised access to the Internet—must be part of the solution.

Although computer users must typically provide a credit card number before gaining unrestricted access to a commercial Web site, porn cover pages frequently offer free samples to titillate before payment. And while cyberporn providers warn viewers that they must be at least 18 or 21, there is usually no age verification process.

And the problem goes beyond purchased images. For example, unregulated news groups and unsolicited e-mail are two ways pornographers can target potential customers.

Online services claim that regulating Internet content is impossible and would run afoul of First Amendment protections. But profamily groups disagree. Cleaver blames the industry for failure to remove hard-core, "clearly obscene" pornography.

"The onus should be on the Internet service providers that knowingly permit harmful material—not the parents," MIM's Peters says.

Even though many conservative Christian groups lambasted the summit, the antiporn group Enough Is Enough helped to organize it. "This is a good first step in the very long journey toward protecting children from exploitation online," says Donna Rice Hughes, the organization's communications director. Hughes says Enough Is Enough gave Gore the "zero tolerance" idea.

Nonetheless, Enough Is Enough, along with many other profamily groups, vowed to hold law enforcement and industry service providers accountable to

Storage: [Dreamlovers] Warning! Explicit Adult Content: XXX Sex, Porn, Live, Nude Girls, and Handcuffs

File View Go Backmarks Editors Directory Window Help

WARNING

Dreamlovers

WARNING:

YOU MUST BE OF LEGAL AGE TO ENTER THIS SITE!

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All models of legal age at time of photograph

sure that measures introduced at the summit come to fruition.

NO PROSECUTION POLICY? As for "adult" pornography, the Supreme Court nullified the indecency provisions of the Congressional Communications Decency Act (CDA) last June. But American Family Association government affairs director Patrick A. Trueman notes that the Court left provisions restricting obscenity intact. Obscenity is defined as hard-core graphic material that is obsessed with sex, obviously offensive, and lacking in serious value. Trueman criticizes the Clinton administration for refusing to prosecute any Internet-related hard-

core pornography cases since then.

"The Clinton administration has a 'no prosecution policy' for Internet obscenity crimes," Trueman says.

After CDA, Clinton reiterated that his administration is "committed to vigorous enforcement of federal prohibitions against transmission of

pornography over the Internet." He first pledged to enforce vigorously federal obscenity laws during his 1992 campaign against George Bush. But Peters says that overall, federal obscenity prosecutions have fallen from a high of 78 during President Bush's first year in office to a low of 17 during the past year under Clinton. He questions whether enforcement is really a priority.

"The summit goal will not be achieved unless there is a radical change in the policy in place at the Justice Department, the FBI, and the offices of U.S. attorneys," MIM's Peters says.

By John W. Kennedy.

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ISRAEL

Strict Antimissionary Bill Retooled

The writers of a strict antimissionary bill have backed down considerably in the face of international protest. Knesset members Nissim Zvili and Moshe Gafni have rewritten the bill, which would have outlawed the publication, distribution, or possession of "materials which could lead to a change of religion" (CT, May 19, 1997, p. 55).

The new version would make it illegal only to mail such material "without the permission of the recipient" and contains no reference to publication or possession. The bill was originally drafted in response to a nationwide mass mailing of more than a million Hebrew-language tracts by evangelist Morris Cerullo.

Zvili denies that the bill has been rewritten in response to pressure from Christian groups. "Our fight is against foreign organizations that spend millions of dollars to interfere with our way of life in Israel, not against individu-

als who possess such literature," says Zvili.

Yet in a December 18 interview with the Hebrew-language newspaper *Ha'Aretz*, Zvili admitted that he had received "thousands of letters and visitors," and that "Israeli embassies were flooded with calls and letters from around the world."

Israel's Messianic Action Committee (MAC) welcomes the bill's revision but says the new version is still discriminatory. "Any attempt to take away religious liberty or freedom of speech opens the door to further attempts later," MAC chair Baruch Maoz says. "The people behind this bill have made it very clear to us that this is just the beginning; they intend to make witnessing of any kind illegal."

David Brickner, president of Jews for Jesus, is optimistic. "It sounds like Nissim Zvili is on the run," Brickner says. He believes Prime

Minister Benjamin Netanyahu "will probably kill the bill if he can make a deal without raising a public outcry."

There are indications that a deal is in the works. The Inter-religious Coordinating Council in Israel has drawn

gauge in activities alienating them from their tradition and community." Such wording might be acceptable to both sides, because Messianic Jews do not consider that they are "alienated" or attempting to alienate others from Judaism.

Zvili says that "if we could reach an agreement on a signed commitment, I am ready to drop the bill entirely."

Greg Mauro, vice president of Morris Cerullo World Evangelism Ministries, says he is grateful that the Knesset members have revised the bill because they "recognized the threat of religious censorship inherent in the first draft."

But Mauro says the revised version is "an open door to the suppression of religious liberties."

"Who is to determine whether a piece of mail 'crosses the line' and encourages one to change his or her faith?" Mauro asks. "How are organizations to 'prove' that they had the consent of the people before mailing to a home an item discussing the gospel?"

By Sean Aaron Osborn
in Jerusalem



Protesting proposal: Messianic Jews and evangelical Christians demonstrate outside the Israeli embassy in Washington, D.C., last May to protest proposed missionary restrictions in the Knesset. The bill has since been revised.

up a document that states: "We deeply respect the Jewish people . . . and will not en-

PERSECUTION

Plans Under Way for Next Day of Prayer



The November 16 International Day of Prayer (IDOP) for persecuted

Christians exceeded expectations, with 60,000 U.S. churches participating. But coordinator Steve Haas is convinced three times as many congregations will be involved this year.

"This was not a one-shot deal," Haas told CT. "Our task is not done."

Churches involved in the November 16 event conducted various activities, including marches, prayer vigils, and sermons. The movement continues to grow. On May 30,

the global March for Jesus will focus on remembering the persecuted body of Christ.

Meanwhile, Haas has brought together 19 advocacy groups that previously had little contact with one another, including Open Doors with Brother Andrew, Voice of the Martyrs (VOM), Freedom House, and Christian Solidarity International.

"Our hope isn't to create a new organization but to enable these organizations to be more effective," Haas says. Although the groups have different programs, they have been reluctant to cooperate because they work with the same potential donor base.

Yet many of the organiza-

tions have benefited from the persecution issue being raised. For example, VOM experienced an 87 percent growth rate in 1997.

"Christians are a lot more sensitive about persecution now," says VOM U.S. director Tom White. "The idea of martyrs being strange has been demystified."

Haas also is trying to build bridges with secular groups, such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, and make them more cognizant of religious persecution. Currently, some secular human-rights groups are more concerned about abortion rights and homosexual rights than freedom of religious expression.

Some liberal religious groups have accused IDOP of having political motivations as a ploy of the Religious Right,

a charge Haas finds nonsensical because of the number of mainline Protestant and Catholic churches involved. Some fundamentalist churches have criticized the movement as being too liberal because Catholics participate.

"We need to stay focused on the issue of persecution, not who we're sitting next to at a planning session," Haas says. "If Catholics or Protestants want to pray for the persecuted, why should they be discouraged from doing so?"

IDOP has also been criticized by some liberals for not being concerned about persecution of Muslims and Buddhists. But Haas says the majority of Christian churches still are unaware of persecution of Christians, and that is a necessary first step in the movement. □

New Leaders Emerging After Civil War

ven though many pastors fled the civil war that ravaged Liberia for seven years, Christian leaders believe the church is emerging stronger than before.

"Despite these difficulties brought about by the civil war, we see the church of Liberia being resurrected all over again," says Emmet Veslar Hunter of the Association of Evangelicals in Liberia. "I can foresee a better leadership emerging in the Liberian church."

George Queniseari of the Monrovia Evangelical Church says many exiles have returned to seminaries and Bible colleges. "Many others are still planning to return to the country for God's work," he says. "The gospel is needed as

never before, according to Hunter. "The church is experiencing a tremendous infiltration of heresy," he says. "Most ministers of the gospel have either been killed or fled the country, so many false teachers are now taking over the churches. People are getting involved in all sorts of occult practices and immorality."

Despite these problems, Queniseari says the "fire of revival is burning" among faithful Christians who are "burning with zeal to work for God."

The civil war was the result of tribal rivalry and ethnic cleansing by major ethnic groups in the country who sought to control political power (CT, June 17, 1996, p. 60). The war resulted in the massacre of more than 150,000 people and 750,000 others losing their homes.

Some Christians were tortured and killed because of their faith. Missionaries and aid workers fled the final round of anarchy (CT, May 20, 1996, p. 78). With the recent inauguration of a new democratic government, the church in Liberia is now preoccupied with the task of helping in the reconciliation.

By Obed Minchakpu.



Long-term scars: A Liberian boy stands amid the ruins of fighting from the escalation of civil war.

RI LANKA

Assemblies of God Church Attacked

Over a hundred Buddhists felt threatened by the growing number of conversions to Christ in their community attacked worshippers at Assemblies of God church in Matara on the southern tip of Sri Lanka December 14. The mob assaulted church members who came to the 10 A.M. Sunday service and also hurled

stones that shattered church windows and damaged vehicles.

At a police inquiry afterward, a Buddhist monk demanded that the church be closed. Police, however, upheld the fundamental right of the church to exist in Matara.

Buddhism is the state religion in Sri Lanka, which has a population of 18.5 million

News Briefs

◆ Three Dutch Protestant denominations have agreed to merge into a new denomination, **the United Protestant Church in the Netherlands**, although the unification project is at least two years from fruition. The groups are the 2.1 million-member Netherlands Reformed Church, the 700,000-member Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, and the 20,000-member Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

◆ Pioneer medical missionary **Eleanor Soltau** died November 4 from injuries suffered when a fire broke out in her apartment in Mafrq, Jordan. Soltau, 80, cofounded the Annoor Sanatorium for Chest Diseases in Mafrq, a Christian outreach to nomadic Bedouins. She was the daughter of American missionary T. Stanley Soltau.

◆ Christian Sandsdalen, 79, on December 3 became the first Norwegian physician convicted of first-degree murder in connection with **assisted suicide**. In 1996, Sandsdalen had given a lethal dose of morphine to a 45-year-old woman who had multiple sclerosis. Oslo City Court ruled that the doctor should have found another way to relieve the patient's pain.

◆ Backed by Roman Catholic lawmakers, **Poland's** lower house of Parliament on December 17 reinstated a law that prohibits abortion unless the fetus is irreparably damaged, the mother's life is endangered, or the pregnancy is a result of rape or incest. The legislation replaces a 1996 law that allowed first-trimester abortions for women facing "financial or emotional" hardship.

◆ The Turkish Supreme Court on December 3 denied an appeal by **Soner Onder**, ordering that the Syrian Christian finish another six years of his 12-year prison term. Onder has been incarcerated since a Christmas 1991 firebombing by Kurdish terrorists in Istanbul. Police claimed Onder had been one of the attackers; his family says Onder, then 17, had just left a church service with them.

◆ The 43-year-old **Mexican Mission Ministries (MMM)** of Pharr, Texas, has become a part of Global Outreach Mission (GOM) of Buffalo. GOM president James Blackwood heads the merged organization, and MMM founder Walter Gomez is vice-president in charge of Mexico. MMM has 70 self-supporting churches and missions in 14 Mexican states. GOM has 330 ministries in 32 countries.

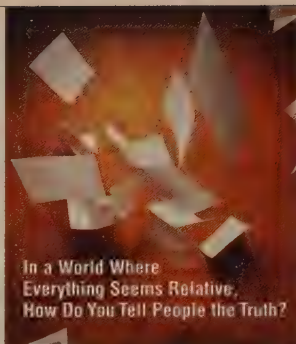
◆ The Geneva-based international **Red Cross** has decided to keep its emblem, even though the 135-year-old symbol may have contributed to the deaths of 21 relief workers in the past two years. The cross is intended to protect those in war zones, yet it has provoked radical Muslims to violence in some areas, including the massacre of six workers in Chechnya in December 1996. [CT]

people, 70 percent of them Buddhist. There has been a 230 percent increase in anti-Christian incidents on the island nation south of India in the past year, according to the Evangelical Alliance (EA) of Sri Lanka. "This is one more incident in a long chain of oppression faced by Christians in Sri Lanka,"



Arson target: Faith Prayer Church in Anuradhapura.

says EA president Godfrey Yogarajah. [CT]



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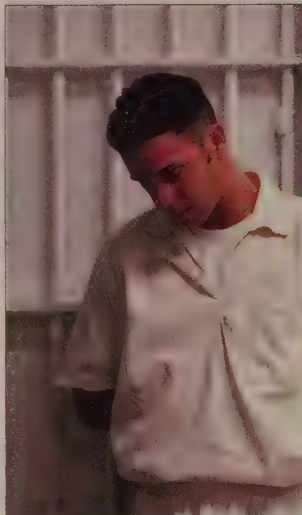
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TEXAS

Unique Prison Program Serves as Boot Camp for Heaven



Unlocking the good: Bryan Todd, 22, of Houston, prays during an InnerChange class at Jester II Prison Unit.

Eighty-five Bible-toting inmates at a Texas prison are taking part in the nation's first faith-based prison prerelease program run 24 hours a day by an independent Christian organization.

The unusual experiment in church-state cooperation is the first time a state prison system has allowed a private Christian organization—Prison Fellowship International of Reston, Virginia—to take over an entire prison wing.

The goal of the round-the-clock volunteer program is to transform inmates spiritually and keep them from returning to prison.

"We want to change the inner man through the love of Jesus Christ," says pastor Don Bentley, a Prison Fellowship employee. "Until you do that, all you have is a polished-up convict."

The InnerChange Freedom Initiative—an intense blend of studying the Bible, teaching Christian values, and mentoring by church volunteers—is the first program of its kind in the United States. Houston-area church volunteers will work with inmates before and after they leave the minimum security Jester II Prison Unit between Sugar Land and Richmond southwest of Houston.

RIGOROUS SCHEDULE: Rising before dawn, the men make up their bunks inside their gray seven-foot-square cubicles. Each has a reading light. Some inmates display pictures of Jesus, crosses, or other religious symbols.

Encouraging signs are posted in different locations. "If It Is to Be, It's Up to Me," one message proclaims. Another states: "The Only Antidote to Pride Is the Grace of God."

At 5:30 A.M., inmates attend a mandatory worship service. Praying, hymnsinging, studying the Bible, learning life skills, and working at prison jobs follow. The day ends at 9 P.M.

Prison Fellowship, founded by Charles Colson, has allocated \$1.2 million for the first two years to pay for programming of the pilot project and hiring of five full-time staff members. The Texas Department of Corrections is not out any extra expense, although the state provides the space, food, and guards.

Eventually, 200 inmates are to take part in the prerelease program. Groups are added in increments. Three sections have been received so far, and another group of 30 is due to join this month.

"Prison Fellowship wants to hike us up to 300 men, but the board will have to approve that," says Warden Fredrick Becker, a Methodist layman who has high hopes for the Christian effort.

The program makes efforts to teach basic virtues such as love, charity, self-sacrifice, honesty, and integrity. "Those things are just words to most of those inmates," Becker says. "They've never experienced them in their own families."

UNLOCKING THE GOOD: On a recent morning, men dressed in prison

whites and many carrying Bibles sang "Victory in Jesus," then listened intently as Pastor Bentley preached from a Bible spread before him.

"Many of you are here because of pride," Bentley said. "If you are a pompous and arrogant jackass, God is going to hold you accountable."

During a midmorning Lifeskills class, Jester II prison chaplain Jerry McCarty carried on the theme.

"This is a boot camp for getting into heaven," he said. "We want to unlock the good person potentially inside you."

Brandishing a Bible above his head, McCarty declared: "This is the owners' manual. Christianity is not just for old women and little children. It's for everyone, too."

Inmates who volunteer have committed a wide range of crimes, including murder, assault, drug-trafficking, embezzlement, and hot-check writing.

"If we had only altar boys and first-time offenders it wouldn't be a true test," Becker says. "I'm glad to say that the average man in the program is a third-time offender, and some are fourth- and fifth-time offenders."

Faith-based prison programs are gaining more acceptance across America, according to Reggie Wilkinson, president of the American Correctional Association.

"The Christian programs are more prominent in the Bible Belt," says Wilkinson, director of the Ohio prison system. "But prisons everywhere are letting faith groups in because of the need for the community to be involved in rehabilitating our prison population."

CHANGES EVIDENT:

Some skeptics see the program as another version of "jailhouse religion," a term used to describe prisoners who seek easier prison time by embracing faith while behind bars, then toss their Bibles in the trash after they leave.

"A lot of people who have been in the prison system a long time just play games with religion," says Bentley. "They know what people want to hear and give it to them, but aren't really serious."

But the rigorous schedule of Christian activities weeds out those who are not serious, Bentley believes.

Patterned after methods that have sharply reduced recidivism in Brazil and Ecuador, the program aims to reduce the 48 percent return rate of convicts to Texas

prisons. Statistical evidence on whether it is working will not be available for at least three years.

But the inmates, top prison officials, church volunteers of InnerChange, and veteran prison guards believe results are immediate.

"I've already seen changes in their habits and attitudes," says Sgt. Levi Peterson, 47, a prison guard for 13 years, who is not a part of the InnerChange effort. "When you get a group of inmates of different cultures and backgrounds to study together and read the Bible together, it's going to make a difference."

McCarty, the prison chaplain, concurs.

"We are stuck with anecdotal evidence now," he says. "But we see the look on their faces, the spring in their step, and the brotherhood that is forming. We see very definite changes."

ROUGH BEGINNING: Walter Kasper, an inmate convicted of drug possession who became a part of the original group of inmates in InnerChange, says things have not always been harmonious among InnerChange participants.

"We had some real bad actors in our first group," he says. "We were a hodgepodge of 37 that stepped off the bus.

in October with Colson and joined the inmate choir in singing "Amazing Grace."

Ultimately, inmates will be asked to put the brotherly love they are taught into action. At the midpoint of training they will go out into the community, build houses for the poor, and try to apologize and make restitution to those they have committed crimes against.

NO ACLU OBJECTIONS: A few groups, including Americans United for Separation of Church and State, have objected to the Christian program, saying it violates constitutional principles. But Texas leaders of the American Civil Liberties Union are not concerned.

"It follows all guidelines, and we have no problem with it," says regional ACLU director Diana Patrick of Dallas. "No one is coerced to be a part of it, and no special benefits are given."

Becker contends there is no violation because the program is entirely voluntary. Although Christian-based, it is open to all faiths. Two Muslims joined the first group, for example.

One Muslim, Joseph Williams, has converted to Christianity. But the other Muslim, Darryl Brown, continues to read the Qur'an and say Islamic prayers five times a day.

"They respect my faith," Brown says. "There are a lot of guys here who are truly sincere; and they are walking the walk and talking the talk."

About 200 volunteers are working in the program, but 350 will eventually be needed. Semiretired Houston attorney Jack Allen spends about 20 hours a week meeting with 14 inmates to evaluate their progress.

"After they get out we will continue to work with them for six months, minimum," he says. "They can come to us for help."

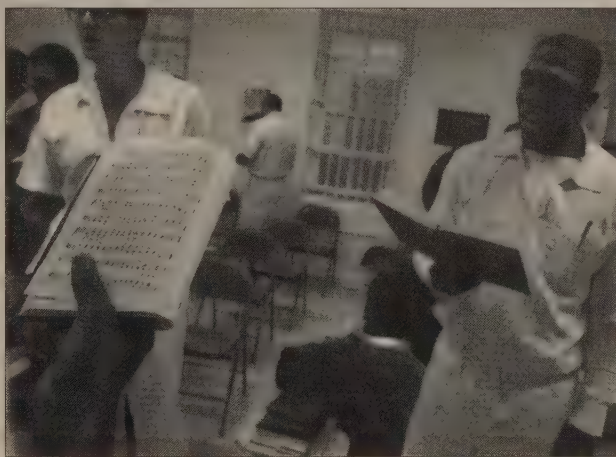
Allen says he cannot predict whether the program will succeed.

"We are just starting down the road," he says. "It will take more than my ability to change these folks. But if the inmates work with those trying to help them, it could be effective."

Judy Indermuehle, a real-estate agent and member of Sugar Creek Baptist Church who volunteers as a phonics teacher, had misgivings at first.

"Now I look forward to it every day," she says. "This is the church's first opportunity to affect prison life. And it's a wonderful opportunity."

By Jim Jones in Houston.



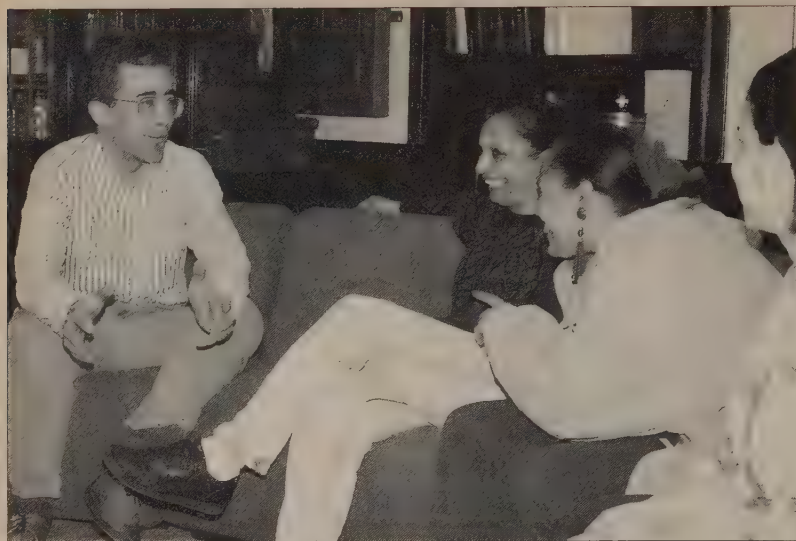
Group worship: Michael Potts, 43, of Houston, sings hymns during an InnerChange class.

Now our group is down to 20."

Many dropped out because they did not realize what a grueling schedule they would follow. Others were asked to leave because they could not adjust to the group environment and the rigid rules, Kasper says.

Texas Gov. George W. Bush strongly supports the program, one of several initiatives he has championed in which faith groups join with government agencies to help welfare reform, house the homeless, and help inmates after their release from prison.

Bush visited the Christian prison wing



Reaching youth: Operation Exodus founder Luis Iza meets with mothers in upper Manhattan.

King's College Resurrection Signals Big Apple's Renewal

The King's College, which closed more than three years ago (CT, Nov. 14, 1994, p. 66), has emerged from bankruptcy under Campus Crusade for Christ ownership and hopes to take advantage of a remarkable spiritual, social, and economic comeback in New York City by opening a campus in the Empire State Building.

The college, then in nearby Briarcliff Manor, peaked in the 1970s, but started to decline and finally collapsed into bankruptcy with more than \$25 million of debt, mostly from the mortgage of a new suburban campus (CT, Dec. 12, 1993, p. 60).

But King's President Friedhelm Radandt used a marketing study to convince Stan Oakes of Campus Crusade for Christ that New York City needed a Christian college because of ongoing renewal. At the time, Oakes himself was hatching a plan for a network of colleges under Crusade's International Christian University. He needed a model college with accreditation and a headquarters.

"New York City has a growing church, a lot of optimism, and a growing unity," Oakes says. In exchange for ownership of King's and campuses in the Empire State Building and in suburban New York, Campus Crusade for Christ settled the debts. King's will retain

Radandt as president but will operate as part of Crusade's International Christian University under the leadership of Oakes.

CITYWIDE RENEWAL: King's College's decline mirrored the disastrous 1960s and 1970s in New York City. Stricken by crime, economic catastrophe, and weak leadership, the city became a byword for trouble.

Radandt reflects that the larger church had also abandoned the Big Apple. "We didn't equip people in the city church at The King's College," he says. "That was a failure. God had to bring us to a point of humbleness before we could recognize it."

But the city—and its church, too—revived. Bankruptcy, job losses, and demographic flights have been replaced by budget surpluses, employment growth, and massive in-migration.



Prayer roof: Youth pray on top of a nine-story church in Chinatown.

The renewal of King's rides on an increased demand for education by a renewed New York church. Suburban Nyack College also has branched into the city. And New York has 70 Bible institutes training more than 3,000 students.

New York remains more Catholic (42 percent) than Protestant (30 percent), but the numbers do not capture the strong movement into evangelical Protestantism. A recent City University of New York (CUNY) survey indicates at least 18 percent of New Yorkers (1.3 million) belong to evangelical churches.

EVANGELICAL DIVERSITY: The New York church is also probably the most ethnically mixed in the world, reflecting the fact that 34 percent of New Yorkers are recent immigrants. Tamil, Pakistani, Indonesian, Korean, Chinese, Filipino, and Hispanic congregations have started recently in the city.

More than one-third of Hispanic church leaders in training joined their churches within the past three years, according to a Columbia University study. In one poor, south Bronx district, a new Hispanic church is founded every month.

The hopes at King's lie in students such as Caroline Miranda, who came from a drug-infested block and now directs the daily business of Operation Exodus, an educational ministry for Hispanics. She is typical of the new Hispanic Christian in the New York mix. Her parents are from El Salvador and Colombia, her church is mainly Puerto Rican, and her mentor, Operation Exodus founder Luis Iza, is Cuban. A board of directors includes immigrants from Cuba, Egypt, China, Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic—and one *Mayflower* descendant.

Half of the Asian immigrants in the city identify themselves as Christian, according to Andrew Beveridge of CUNY. Evangelical Koreans have started more than 350 churches and 15 colleges and seminaries in the city.

King's steering committee cochair Roderick Caesar, Jr., typifies the new African-American leadership—more evangelical, upwardly mobile, and education-minded. Caesar leads an 800-member congregation, a 400-student Bible institute, and 18 affiliated churches. He is also cochair of the local Promise Keepers. "You need to feel the power of God today," Caesar says. "Something is happening."

UNEXPECTED CONVERTS:

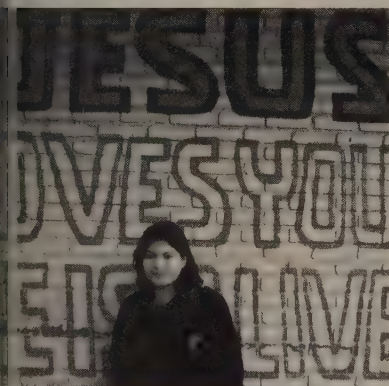
King's also hopes to gain support from New York's highly educated professional and creative residents who have increasingly turned to God. Two groups stand out:

Russians and young Manhattanites.

Mitch Glaser, president of Chosen People, began meeting Russian Jewish immigrants during street evangelism. "To my surprise, the first night we held a Russian Bible study, 30 people showed up," he says.

In Brooklyn, Greg Zhelezny, a young immigrant from Ukraine, led several hundred Russians, mostly Jewish, to establish a new church. "In the Soviet Union, we had been cut off from religion and our Jewish identity," Zhelezny says. "We have so much to learn."

In Manhattan, Redeemer Presbyterian Church, which specifically targets young business and creative professionals, has blossomed into an 2,100-strong church



Success story: Miranda went through the Operation Exodus program and now works for the group.

from a Bible study. More than one-third are Asian.

Church founder Tim Keller speaks the language of his audience by mixing references to hip city culture, corporate anxieties, and the Bible. But Keller had been wary of coming to New York.

Samuel Ling, a Chinese-American church leader, took Keller on a tour of a Hindu temple, a high school with students from 136 nations, and upscale Fifth Avenue. Keller recalls, "I found myself becoming awed and stirred by the arrogance, fierce secularity, diversity, power, and spiritual barrenness of New York City."

Christian New Yorkers face such challenges with a new optimistic attitude. In 1957, evangelist Billy Graham faced Gotham warily "with fear and trembling" in preparing for a crusade. His return in 1991 marked a turning point in the church's visibility as 250,000 people packed Central Park in the largest religious assembly in New York City history. Today, God's good news is echoing down the alleys and the valleys of New York into God's classrooms.

By Tony Carnes in New York.

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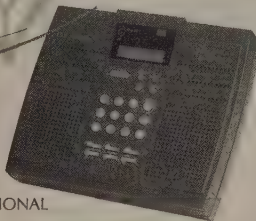


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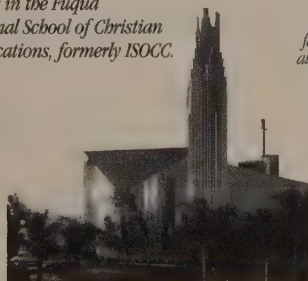
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EVANGELICALS



JOHN W. KENNEDY

Back to school: Don Argue will become a college president again.

NAE President Argue Takes New Post

National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) president Don Argue has announced his resignation and will become president of Northwest College in Kirkland, Washington.

During his three years at the NAE helm, the Carol Stream, Illinois-based organization made strides in a number of areas, including racial reconciliation and raising the awareness of persecuted Christians.

"He has brought energy and commitment to a ministry that spoke in behalf of Christians to public issues, touched people of all ethnic backgrounds, and championed the interests of church-

es that are faithful to the Word of God," says NAE chair Leonard Hofman. "In advancing a network among evangelical leaders who are committed to unity in essentials and charity in all things, Dr. Argue helped NAE build a bridge toward effective ministry in the coming millennium."

The resignation is effective April 15. NAE secretary L. Edward Davis calls the decision unexpected and says the organization's 15-member executive committee is reviewing options of how to find a replacement. He says the committee will have a plan ready by the time of the March 2-4 an-

nual convention in Orlando.

Davis says the NAE is grappling with how to redefine the role of its Washington governmental affairs office. The office has a 10-year lease that expires this summer. Another major issue facing the NAE is a joint consultation next January with the National Black Evangelical Association.

Argue, 58, has tried to revitalize NAE membership, calling it "too old, too white, and too male." In 1996, the organization issued an "Evangelical Manifesto" in an effort to stem evangelicalism's growing fragmentation.

During his tenure, Argue brought the concerns of religious freedom to a national policy level. He is cochair of the State Department's Subcommittee on Religious Freedom and Religious Persecution Abroad.

Argue will be in China February 8 to March 1 with New Jersey Roman Catholic Archbishop Theodore McCarrick and New York rabbi Arthur Schneier to meet with government officials and church leaders.

Before becoming NAE president, Argue had been president of North Central Bible College for 15 years. He succeeded the retiring Billy Melvin as NAE leader. [CT]

Gender Revisions Completed on NIV

The Colorado Springs-based International Bible Society has completed revisions to an adaptation of the New International Version (NIV) Bible. The revisions address recent concerns about gender-inclusive language.

The Bright Beginnings New International Reader's Version (NIRV) is an adaptation of the NIV for children and people for whom English is a second language.

The new NIRV text treats gender exactly as the NIV. For example, the new version says in Genesis 1:27 that God created *man* in his own likeness. The earlier version said God created *human beings* in his likeness. The IBS agreed last year to revisions following pressure from concerned groups (CT, June 16, 1997, p. 52).

A 40-member team that included professors from the Assemblies of God and the Southern Baptist Convention, two of the denominations that expressed concern about the original NIRV, tackled the gender-related revisions.

The updated version is scheduled for release in August. [CT]



SOUTHERN BAPTISTS

Split Nearing for Texas Convention

One of the country's largest Baptist bodies may split this year. A group called Southern Baptists of Texas (SBT) has announced plans to form a new state convention that would parallel the 2.7 million-member Baptist General Convention of Texas (BGCT). The purpose of a new convention, according to spokesperson Dee Slocum, would be "to ensure and maintain a

strong SBC presence in Texas."

Slocum, pastor of Highland Baptist Church in Amarillo, says the BGCT has been distancing itself from the 15 million-member SBC for four years.

"We have seen an erosion of the historic walk with the SBC on the part of the elected leadership of the BGCT," he says. "That concerns Southern Baptists across Texas."

SBT members opposed

recent passage of a plan by the BGCT that authorizes new ministries they say compete with those provided by the SBC's seminaries, publishing house, and mission boards. BGCT leaders say the new initiatives are necessary to reach unbelievers in their state.

The SBT's concerns, however, "are not well-founded and not justification" for creating a new state convention, says William Pinson, Jr., BGCT executive director.

A similar split occurred in 1996 among Southern Bap-

tists in Virginia, where more than 150 SBC churches have affiliated with a new state convention. Although there are rival factions in many of the SBC's state organizations, most observers do not believe any others are near supporting additional conventions.

Creation of the new Texas convention, which could happen before summer, will force SBC churches to decide to stay with the BGCT, affiliate with the new convention, or, perhaps, become dually aligned.

By Martin King

Tin Drum Oklahoma Clash Marches On

A federal judge ruled December 24 that Oklahoma City police unconstitutionally seized copies of *The Tin Drum* last summer, but the fracas over the 1979 film promises to continue for several months. The German movie, which won the 1979 Academy Award as Best Foreign Language Film, implies, but does not show, a boy engaging in oral sex with a 16-year-old girl. Conservatives say that under state law, a film does not have to be explicit to be child pornography. Even suggesting sex with a minor is illegal. Last May, a Minnesota judge dismissed a suit brought against Bethel College by a former student who claimed that use of *The Tin Drum* in classroom study violated the

school's promise not to use pornography (CT, June 16, 1997, p. 71). Bob Anderson, executive director of Oklahomaans for Children and Families, heard a radio discussion about the Bethel suit and investigated the film's availability in his city. He showed the sexual scenes of the movie to police, who turned to U.S. District Judge Richard C. Freeman. Freeman ruled a scene legally obscene. Police seized copies of the film from libraries and video outlets, then asked video-store owners for the names of residents who had rented the film. One patron, Michael Camfield, development director for the Oklahoma American Civil Liberties Union, then sued police and Oklahoma City District Attorney Bob Macy for illegal seizure.

"The police probably were overaggressive," Anderson says, "but as a community group, it is our duty to show the police illegal materials like this." A ruling on whether the movie is child pornography will be decided in later civil suits.

By Ted Olsen.



Controversial film: A scene from *The Tin Drum*.



Landmark ruling: Homosexual couple Michael Galluccio (left) and Jon Holden hold newly adopted son Adam after a New Jersey court cleared the legal path.

Man Objecting to Foster Parents Fired

Larry Phillips contends that he was verbally assaulted, mocked, harassed, and eventually fired by his Missouri Division of Family Services supervisors because of his objections to the placement of children in homes of homosexual foster parents. In April 1995, Phillips, who was a social worker at the Division of Family Services from March 1994 to November 1996, questioned the placement of a child with a lesbian parent. He says his supervisor told him he "was being intolerant" and his religious beliefs "were affecting his ability to perform his job effectively." But Phillips, of Kansas City, is fighting back with a lawsuit. He is seeking damages from

the state of Missouri for wrongful termination. Missouri Department of Social Services spokesperson Debbie Hendricks says the agency "does not license openly homosexual couples to be foster parents." But she says prospective single parents are not asked about their sexual orientation. Currently about 25 states allow adoption by one homosexual parent. In December, New Jersey became the first state to allow an adoption by a homosexual couple. [CT]



Phillips

News Briefs

- ◆ After two years of wrangling, a civil lawsuit, a heresy trial, and defrocking of Richard Rhem on sexual misconduct charges, the Muskegon Classis of the **Reformed Church in America** and Christ Community Church in Spring Lake, Michigan, reached an agreement December 18 settling all issues in the dispute between them. The settlement stipulates that the church pay the lassis \$400,000 during the next decade and that the classis release the congregation and property from the denomination.
- ◆ The national headquarters of the **United Church of Canada** has been inundated with demands for the resignation of the denomination's moderator after he declared he does not believe that Jesus was God or that he was bodily resurrected. The general council of the 3 million-member denomination, the largest in Canada, unanimously supported 55-year-old Bill Phipps, saying its beliefs are "well within the spectrum of the United Church."
- ◆ The **Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court** ruled 6 to 0 December 9 that a divorced father must stop imposing his religious beliefs on his three children, who live with their mother of a

- different faith. Barbara Kendall, an Orthodox Jew, has been raising the children, ages 4, 6, and 9, since her 1994 divorce from Jeffrey Kendall, caused in part by his joining the Boston Church of Christ. The court ruled that Kendall had "substantially harmed" the children by putting his religious beliefs above their well-being.
- ◆ Mennonite theologian **John Howard Yoder** died December 30 after suffering an aortic aneurysm at his office at Notre Dame University, where he was a theology professor. He had turned 70 a day earlier. His 1972 book, *The Politics of Jesus*, focused on the political implications of Jesus' proclamation of the kingdom of God. Yoder taught theology at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Indiana, from 1965 to 1984, and served as president from 1970 to 1973.
- ◆ Terry Madison, 59, is the new president and chief executive officer of the U.S. office of **Open Doors with Brother Andrew** in Santa Ana, California. Madison, who had been director of publications for World Vision in Seattle, replaces Peter Torry, who is now a freelance development consultant.
- ◆ **Correction:** An obituary in the January issue incorrectly listed the first name of former Open Bible general superintendent Frank W. Smith. [CT]

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PERU

Imprisoned Evangelicals Dispute Accusations of Terrorism

About 80 Peruvian evangelicals claim they have been falsely convicted in the government's haste to break the back of terrorism.

Wuille Ruiz Figueroa's day in court before a ski-masked judge did not come until six months after antiterrorist police arrested him. The state produced no evidence against the Methodist lawyer, who worked as a counselor for incarcerated women. He pleaded innocent to charges of possessing subversive propaganda, but Peru's law against terrorism restricted his defense. In 1993, the judge found Ruiz, now 38, guilty. Peru's Supreme Court reaffirmed the 20-year sentence.

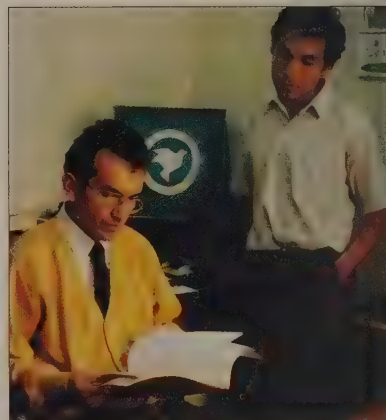
Ruiz's case is typical of the plight of evangelicals in Peru, who consider themselves victimized by antiterrorism laws. The case reminds lawyer Alfonso Wieland of the church's continuing need for a legal team to defend human rights. Wieland, 34-year-old executive director of the Peace and Hope Association, estimates that as many as a quarter of the approximately 4,000 people convicted of terrorism are innocent, among them some 80 evangelicals.

Since 1980, in its quest to impose communism, the Maoist Shining Path insurrectionist movement has been responsible for the deaths of more than 30,000 people in Peru. The terrorists often razed entire villages in poor rural areas populated by evangelicals. Nearly 90 percent of the country claims affiliation with the Roman Catholic Church.

TERRORIST EVANGELICALS? In 1984, leaders of Peru's evangelical alliance, CONEP, responded to the widespread suffering by founding the Peace and Hope Association as the alliance's social relief arm, providing emergency food, clothing, and legal help to hundreds of displaced Peruvians.

Concurrent with guerrilla violence, the army massacred hundreds of civilians suspected as terrorists. Those who treat the wounded, feed the hungry, and give shelter to individuals needing a bed—actions that evangelicals consider their Christian duty—violate laws against "terrorist collaboration." A repentance law, which offers plea bargains to accused terrorists if they identify other terrorists, invites enemies of evangelicals to implicate them—with no questions asked.

President Alberto Fujimori's strong-arm tactics to end the siege included the



Case study: Attorneys Alfonso Wieland (left) and German Vargas review a file of one of the imprisoned Christians they are defending.

1992 establishment of special antiterrorism tribunals. Wieland says that Ruiz's case typifies the justice these courts deliver. Some say the conviction rate is as high as 97 percent. Sentences range from 20 years to life.

MINISTERING TO EVANGELICALS:

In 1995, with no other evangelical organization fighting for human rights, Peace and Hope narrowed its focus to legal counsel and prison ministry. Today its staff of five lawyers and a social worker, plus a network of pastors and lay volunteers from ten denominations, provide legal and spiritual support for evangelicals, both in the courtroom and in the prisons. Last year, Peace and Hope secured pardons or acquittals for 15 prisoners. High-profile defendants that Peace and Hope lawyers have represented include Juan Mallea, a taxi driver accused of 10 murders and freed in 1994 (CT, April 25, 1994, p. 46).

The government's measures, however ruthless, ultimately worked. With Shining Path and the smaller but equally violent Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement largely crushed, terrorism no longer poses a daily threat to Peruvians. Peru is thriving as foreign investors are rebuilding what had been destroyed. While some observers maintain that Shining Path's threat justified sweeping government action to stop the guerrillas' wave of murder and sabotage, Peace and Hope lawyer German Vargas criticizes indiscriminate killings of civilians who happened to live in an area with a reported

Shining Path presence. "To think that to defeat terrorism it's not important how many innocent people might fall is the same logic Shining Path uses to justify its terrorist actions," Vargas says.

Wieland agrees that the government used unnecessary measures, including the "faceless" terrorism tribunals that served no practical purpose after the 1992 capture of Shining Path leader Abimael Guzman. Ski masks and one-way mirrors concealed judges' identities in an effort to avert reprisals.

STILL BEHIND BARS: A morning in Castro Castro maximum security prison in Lima's fringe is a stark reminder that Christians still are paying a long-term price for the government's overzealous pursuit of suspected revolutionaries. Thirty Peace and Hope workers frequent the prisons. The group sponsors craft and writing contests to encourage creativity amid the monotony of incarceration.

While Peace and Hope ministers to the spiritual and social needs of all prisoners, it offers legal assistance only to evangelicals whose cases its lawyers research and conclude to have been wrongfully convicted. Many whom Peace and Hope defends are evangelicals who converted through the thriving prison fellowship, supported by the organization but led by inmates themselves.

The past year has brought reforms that encourage Wieland, including the end of "faceless" judges. In August 1996, Peru's congress unanimously created the "Ad Hoc Commission" to review questionable convictions. It recommends pardons to those convicted with insufficient evidence. Of the 2,375 cases submitted for review, the commission has heard approximately one-third and recommended 310 for final presidential approval. This commission considered Ruiz's case in November. But a ruling could take months.

Peace and Hope lawyers contend these reforms do not go far enough. "The legislation that permitted these severe punishments in the first place is still in place," Vargas says. "Torture is an ordinary matter of course." Despite constitutional guarantees that the accused is innocent until proven guilty, terrorism trials reflect the facts of reality, he says. And since the Ad Hoc Commission does not overturn sentences but rather commutes them, terrorism still mars the records of those it frees.

While Ruiz awaits the commission's decision on his case, he writes devotionals and leads the Christian community in cellblock 1B of Castro Castro. He dreams of his wife, Silvia, and 5-year-old daughter, Esteli, neither of whom he may see much. And he prays.

By Deann Alford in Lima, Peru.

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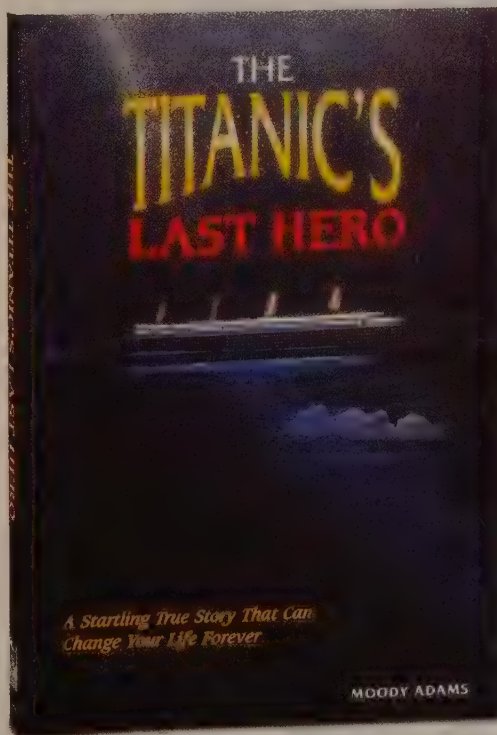
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Growing Criticism

Groups back away from Preparation for Parenting.

The Chatsworth, California-based organization Growing Families International (GFI) claims that more than 3,500 churches worldwide use GFI-published resources for guidance on child rearing. But despite such apparent popularity, the list of critics of GFI—and

of its executive director, Gary Ezzo—continues to expand.

More than four years ago, CHRISTIANITY TODAY reported on questions being raised about the parenting advice offered in *Preparation for Parenting*, coauthored by Ezzo and his wife, Anne Marie, and On

Becoming *BABYWISE*, a secularized version containing the same concepts but without religious references (CT, Aug. 16, 1993, p. 34.)

At that time, Ezzo served on the staff at Grace Community Church in Sun Valley, California. Recently, however, the church's board of elders issued a public statement disavowing any affiliation with GFI and outlining "serious concerns" about the organization and its teachings, as well as concerns about accountability.

UNCONVENTIONAL MEDICAL WISDOM: Critics maintain generally that the Ezzos advocate a style of parenting that overemphasizes control and discipline at the expense of parental intuition and compassion. They say the medical advice offered or implied by GFI materials runs counter to current medical wisdom.

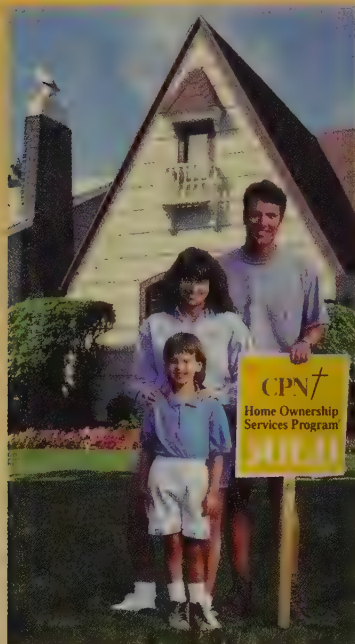
In a Web site, the Ezzos have claimed GFI is supported by "a network of health care professionals" that includes "hundreds of pediatricians." GFI has not documented the claim.

Says Kathy Nesper, president of the Artesia, California-based Apple Tree Family Ministries, "I don't know who their doctors are, but I'm not aware of a single International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC) who has publicly supported their program."

Calls from pediatricians and emergency-room physicians prompted the Child Abuse Prevention Council of Orange County to conduct an extensive study of GFI materials. Physicians had been reporting a high incidence of dehydrated and failure-to-thrive children whose parents were adhering strictly to the Ezzos' program.

Colleen Weeks cochaired the committee, which conducted a detailed investigation of GFI materials spanning a year and a half before releasing results in 1996. Weeks says, "We established six criteria for healthy parenting education, and our committee concluded that [the GFI materials] met none of those standards."

GOD'S ONLY PARENTING PLAN? What complicates matters, according to critics, is that GFI represents its principles as being the only biblically prescribed approach to parenting. GFI materials acknowledge that the Bible is silent on such issues as infant feeding. But Nesper, whose ministry specializes in childbirth:



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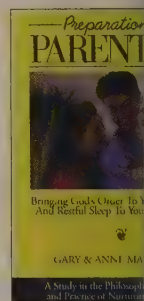
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education and family life education or young Christian couples, says, "The underlying message is that their way is God's way."

The Grace Community Church statement supports Nesper's assessment. "Portraying scheduled feeding is the true biblical practice, GFI strongly implies that demand feeding should be regarded as an unbiblical, humanistic—even sinful—approach to caring for infants. As elders, we see no biblical basis for dogmatism on this issue."

Phil R. Johnson, an elder at Grace Church and the statement's main author, says the Ezzos "built their program on credibility they borrowed from Grace Church." Johnson says that a "case could also be made to suggest that those of us with serious concerns about Gary's character should have pursued the discipline process more aggressively."

A CHORUS OF CRITICS: Focus on the Family cites the Ezzos' "misuse of biblical texts" as a "cause for serious concern." Focus points out that the Ezzos repeatedly cite Matthew 27:46 (where Jesus cries out from the cross "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?") in support of their teaching that mothers should refuse to attend to crying infants who have already been fed, changed, and had their basic needs met. Focus says, "We see no way to make such an application of this verse without completely disregarding its original context and purpose."

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) may join the GFI critics. A resolution proposing that the AAP comment publicly on GFI materials is before the organization's southeast region. If approved, similar action is likely to follow at the AAP's annual meeting this fall.

INHIBITING EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT? While many have focused their critique of GFI on the potential health dangers to infants, others have raised concerns about possible negative psychological and spiritual effects on children's development. In November, marriage and family counselor Barbara Francis focused on the GFI parenting program in a seminar at the annual meeting of the American Association of Christian Counselors.

"The GFI model does not acknowledge God-designed levels of human development," says Francis, adding that she is uncomfortable with the Ezzos' advice to allow a baby to cry unattended.

Francis stressed the importance of two- and three-year-old children being given the space to develop a "sense of self." Noting that, according to the Ezzos, *no* is not permitted, Francis says, "If a child can never say *no*, that child will not develop a



Growing resources: The Ezzos have written three parenting programs.

sense of autonomy." While "Ezzo children" may be more obedient, Francis says, that obedience will likely be rooted in "fear of abandonment or punishment rather than in love."

DEFENDING THE PROGRAM: Those in a position to receive inquiries about GFI agree that its materials are extremely popular and that its parenting philosophy has developed a following that reaches far beyond the influence of Grace Community Church. Critics acknowledge that amid the ideas they consider misleading or dangerous can be found much sound advice and many helpful ideas.

GFI's Web site includes testimonies and newspaper articles featuring people whose family lives have improved as a result of GFI's parenting curriculum *Growing Kids God's Way*. Articles point out that the curriculum provides practical advice to help children learn to respect their parents and to put others' needs before their own. For example, it suggests that children not be allowed to begin eating dinner until whoever prepared the meal sits down.

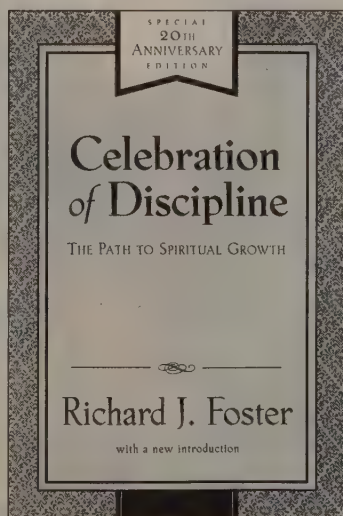
GFI's lengthy response to the Grace Community Church statement can also be found at its Web site (www.gfi.org). According to that response, the Ezzos are "deeply disappointed" by Grace's decision to issue the statement. Among other things, GFI claims that for the 30 months previous to the statement, no member of Grace Church "pursued the Ezzos on any church-related issue." Johnson refutes this claim and several others made by GFI.

Beyond referring to its Web site, GFI declined to respond to written questions.

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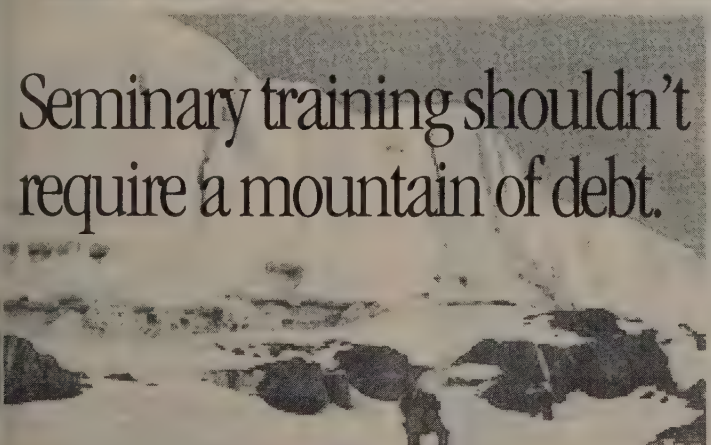
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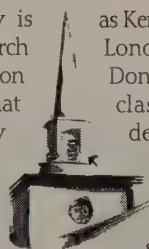
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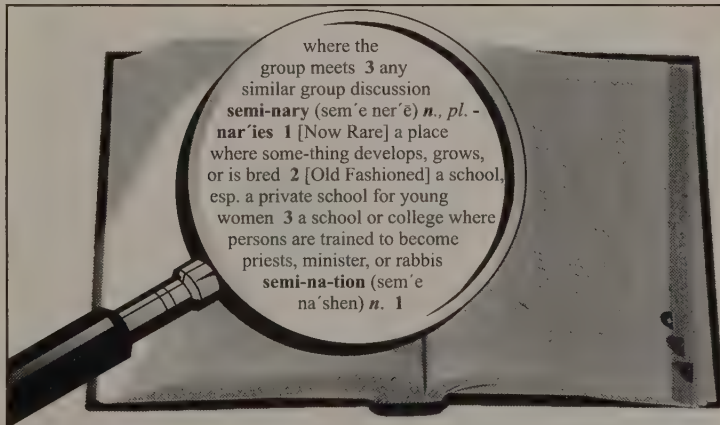
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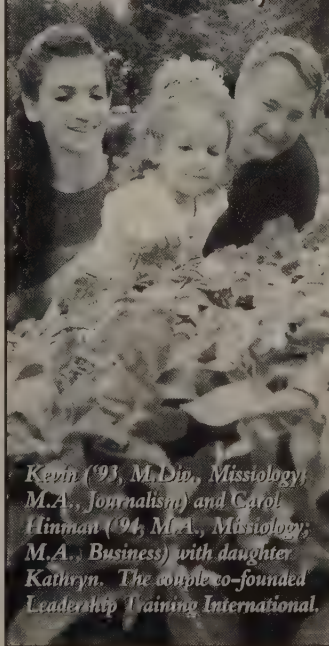
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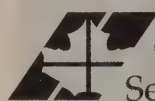
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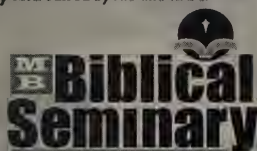
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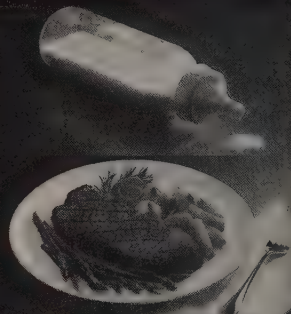
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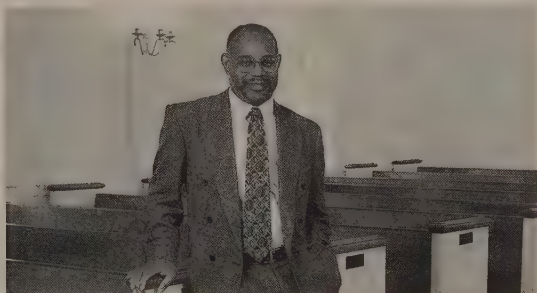


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Vocation ^{or} Occupation?



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Alumni, teachers, pastors, and others offer wise counsel on how you can get the most from your seminary or graduate school experience.

"SHOULD I pursue a seminary or graduate school degree?" And if I do, "Which program and which school are best for me?" "What must I do to get the most out of my seminary education?" and "How shall I prepare myself prior to enrollment?"

If you are seriously considering advanced study and looking toward future ministry, these are questions that you must grapple with. Last year alone over 13,000 students began seminary studies, and thousands more entered graduate schools to pursue degrees in biblical studies, theology, and ministry-related subjects. For

most, their matriculation was preceded by an extended period of reflection, decision-making, and preparation.

We asked new seminary and graduate-school students, alumni, teachers, administrators, pastors, and other seminary advocates the questions above. And while their answers reflected the diversity of both students and their seminaries, many common themes and a tenor of excitement emerged in the responses. There is an upbeat sense that God has led these students and is sustaining them in their decision to prepare for ministry.

1. What factors should a person consider in determining whether to pursue a degree at a seminary or graduate school?

Many students acknowledge that they began their seminary or graduate studies without clear definition in their own call to a particular form of ministry. Still, most have felt a general sense of vocational call and were faithful in taking the first step to pursue further education and training. They saw their decision to enroll as an act of obedience to God's purpose for their individual lives.

"We are God's workmanship,

created in Christ Jesus for good works that God prepared beforehand for us to do" (Eph. 2:10), wrote the apostle Paul, reminding the Ephesians that, while God had saved them by grace through faith — that their salvation was not a result of any achievement on their part (vv. 8–9)— individual Christians are called to particular ministries that God has specifically designed for them.

One ramification of being "God's workmanship" is the honest recognition that we are works in progress. Scripture calls us to see ourselves realistically in terms of our gifts, passions, and callings (Rom. 12:3). We are fallen, flawed, and deficient persons, yet God has chosen to invest in us. Though flawed, we still must learn through experience and develop skills.

The school you attend will significantly affect, and even shape, the growing clarity and definition of your call (vocation) and career (occupation).

To make a wise decision about your selection of a seminary or graduate school you need to understand the broad outlines of your interests, strengths, and yearnings. This calls for discernment and realistic self-awareness. Before even requesting catalogs and application forms, do some self-assessment to help you determine the direction of your educational agenda. This will enable you to evaluate quality and "fit" of the different educational programs you investigate.

Five decision-making steps

First, seek to discover the characteristics of your "servant profile." Jesus, our model for ministry, came as a servant to seek and save the lost (Matt. 20:28; Luke 19:10). The apostle Paul, though himself admirably prepared for ministry, saw God as more interested in the development of servants willing to suffer for the gospel (2 Tim. 1:8) than in

their pursuit of educational pedigrees (1 Cor. 1:20). You are a work in progress. God wants to mold and shape your unique combination of life experi-

Ask godly, insightful people who know you well to help envision ministry situations in which you would be both effective and fulfilled.

ences, spiritual gifts, natural talents, personality, temperament, learning styles, values, and passions so that you may "attain the whole measure of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13).

Consider what kinds of vocational ministry niches may best correlate with your inventory of personal characteristics. What ministry experiences have you had? Which were most satisfying? Ask godly, insightful people who know you well to help

(Continued on page 116)

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Over four decades as a bank officer, Kronholm provided loans to hundreds of seminary students and counseled many more regarding church business management, their personal finances, and biblical principles of stewardship. In the 15 years since his "retirement," Kronholm has been a special assistant to Bethel's president, generating contributions to replenish scholarship funds. He

continues to give wise guidance to students about their finances and their budgetary and spending practices.

"I have been friends with seminary students for 50 years or more," says Kronholm, "and they have always had financial needs and struggles." Today's students, however, "are more diverse and lead more complex lives, making it more important that they begin their financial preparation for seminary or graduate study much earlier — well before they enroll for study." Here is some of the wisdom and insight Kronholm offers to seminary and graduate students and alumni.

Some important principles

Adopt a standard of living no higher than you will be afforded once you have

entered ministry or mission service. Because many current seminary students have worked at jobs or professions for a decade or more between college and seminary, often they have become accustomed to a consumer lifestyle that is difficult to sustain while going to seminary. Spouses and the families of students may need to share an adjustment to less-spacious living quarters, fewer consumer luxuries, tighter personal budgets, and, at times, even the "psychic" loss of economic freedom and prestige. "It is wise for the prospective seminarian to learn early the disciplines of deferred gratification," counsels Kronholm.

Establish a budget and follow it. Viewed positively as a plan of action rather than as a negative limitation, a

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budget should enable the prospective seminary student to enjoy and protect what he or she values most. Moreover, a budget is liberating," says Kronholm, and an expression of one's commitments and priorities." Recognizing that many seminary students are married and parents, he recommends shared decision-making and regular, open communication between spouses on financial matters. Ticking off a list of items to be included in the student's budget, including adequate health insurance and, if married, low-cost term life insurance, Kronholm adds, with a twinkle in his eye, that a small amount of "foolish money" should be included to allow the seminary student and spouse to get out of the house for a few hours of special time together every week—"just the two of them."

As a banker, Kronholm was in the business of making loans, but he tells future students emphatically, "Eliminate your debt and guard a good credit histo-

ry." College debt can often be deferred, but he recommends that it be eliminated before seminary study is begun. Consumer loans, even those for new autos, and especially credit-card debts, should not be brought to seminary. Home mortgage debt, if carefully set within time-tested ratios, may be acceptable, but limits should be discussed with a sympathetic financial professional. "Always be on a first-name basis with your banker, and ask for help before you are in serious financial trouble."

Kronholm is proud that none of the hundreds of seminary students to whom he made loans ever defaulted on their obligations. "Establish a good credit rating, and guard it always," he directs. Mission agencies are unable to appoint candidates with significant indebtedness, and churches often check the credit ratings of pastoral candidates and eliminate those with troubled financial histories.

Asked to summarize, Kronholm says,

"It boils down to one thing: Understand and practice biblical stewardship." He doesn't want anyone even to consider seminary study or ministry until they see themselves as "trustees," responsible to manage wisely assets and earnings belonging to the Lord and entrusted to them to use for his purposes. Time and abilities, too, are "loaned" to us to do his work. Possessions must be held lightly and cared for well. Lifestyle standards and expenditures must be consistent with biblical stewardship. Tithing should be practiced even during student years.

The earliest generation of seminary students who turned to banker Kronholm for loans and counsel are themselves entering retirement. Most, having followed his principles, do so with adequate resources and gratitude. Kronholm, on the other hand, recently renewed his appointment and looks forward to working with the next class of incoming seminarians. □



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envision ministry situations in which you would be both effective and fulfilled (1Tim. 4:14). Also consider talking to a professional vocational counselor, and take a career assessment package such as IDAK Career Match or the Campbell Interests & Skills Survey.

Second, recognize that ministry is relationally intensive and requires both physical and emotional stamina. The stress of ministry often accentuates any dysfunctional dimensions of a person's personality. Careful and candid reflection on your own emotional health and relational skills is important. And though many students report personal growth, inner healing, and profound renewal of soul during seminary years, this is by no means always the case.

Furthermore, faltering marriages are not likely to be saved by enrolling in seminary: Failed marriages, like failed careers, may be transcended by the grace of God—but don't expect semi-

nary to be a "quick fix" or a panacea for lingering defeats and hurts. It is not wise to enter any graduate program in search of recovery, therapy, healing, or acceptance. Graduate and professional

You can constructively use a time of "waiting" before enrollment to gain experience in church life, to expand your knowledge of Scripture, and to cultivate spiritual disciplines.

schools, including seminaries, rarely see therapy as a priority (though some have resources that can assist in this form of growth and healing).

Third, consider whether postcollege preparation is necessary for the form of ministry toward which you feel drawn. Not all types of vocational ministry

require graduate-level preparation. Bivocational ministry options, which often don't require a seminary degree, present exciting alternatives for some people. Bear in mind that seminaries and graduate schools require a baccalaureate degree, preferably with strong liberal arts components, from an accredited college. If there are possible deficiencies in your academic preparation, ask the admissions department of one or more seminaries about how you may address these. Also, learn to use the tools of educational technology, including personal computers and word processing.

Fourth, if you have a family, include your spouse and children in these deliberations. They will be significantly affected by the decision you make to enter seminary or graduate school. It is important that your entire family be in agreement and committed to the demands of

(Continued on page 119)

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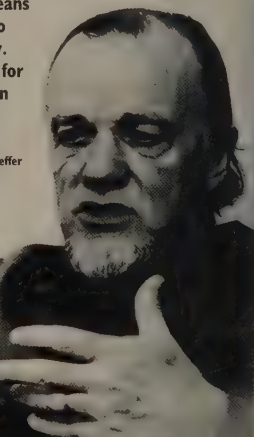
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MISSIONS AND EVANGELISM. Evangelicals are "Great Commission" Christians who are determined to share the good news of Jesus Christ. At Beeson we believe this missionary mandate should inform every aspect of a theological education. We also know that we cannot share what we have not received, and so we commit ourselves to a pattern of theological training which emphasizes the disciplines of the Christian

faith, a life of prayer and worship, witness and discipleship, and social compassion with justice and peace.

CHRISTIAN UNITY. Although our school is related in a special way to the Baptist tradition, we belong to a wider community of Bible-believing Christians, a fellowship in Christ which transcends the boundaries of denominational divergence. It is imperative for Christians who believe the gospel to stand and work together in the name of the one Lord whom we worship and serve.

May God help us to be faithful to these marks of evangelical identity as we seek to build the kind of school which will honor the Lord Jesus Christ and serve the upbuilding of His church.

Soli Deo Gloria!

Timothy George

Dean



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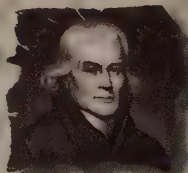
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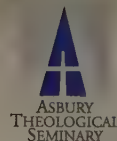
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Vocation or Occupation?

(from page 116)

student life for the duration of your study years.

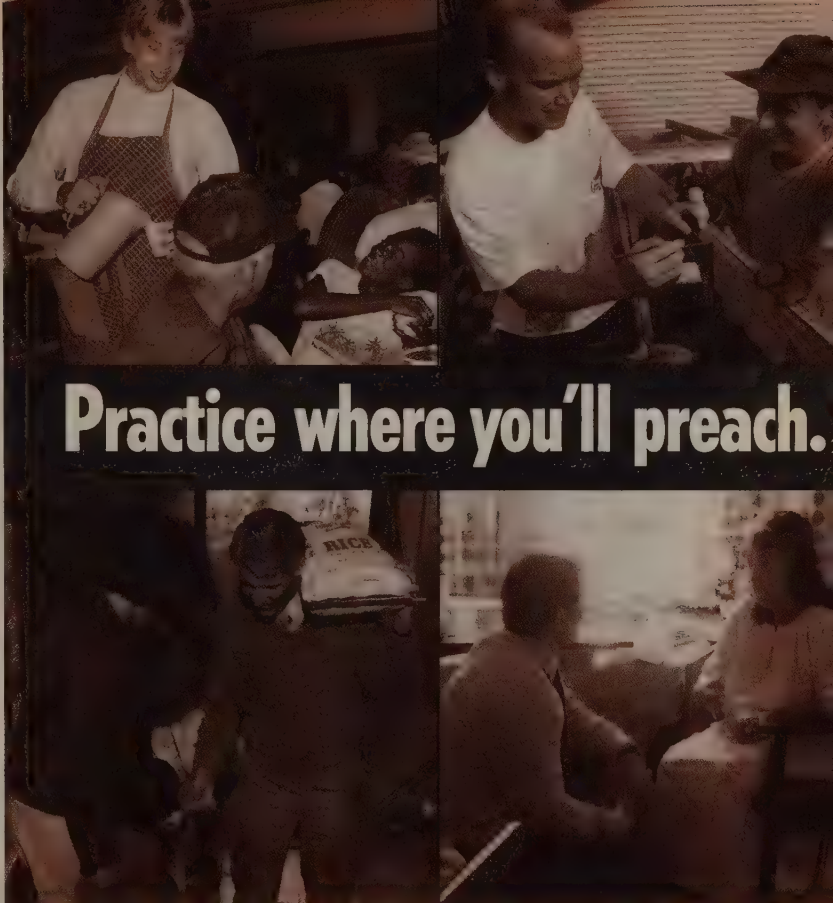
Fifth, don't neglect the related issue of timing. Moses knew at age 40 that God wanted him to rescue the Israelites from slavery in Egypt, and he impulsively took matters into his own hands. It wasn't until Moses was 80 that God was ready to empower his vocational vision. Perhaps you sense a call to ministry but, with further reflection, recognize that the time is not yet right for enrollment in theological education. Family considerations and financial obligations are among the most important timing factors. (See "Put Your Financial House in Order," p. 114.) Some seminaries will grant you early admission and then take you "under care" until a deferred matriculation date. You can constructively use a time of "waiting" before enrollment to gain experience in church life, to expand your knowledge of Scripture, and to cultivate spiritual disciplines.

Sometimes, however, you may be aware of a call to ministry but may delay acting on it because you are not yet willing to make the sacrifices and commitments necessary for formal study. It's important that you don't enroll until you've worked through your ambivalence.

This process, when deciding to seek admission to a seminary or graduate school of religion, should result in a sense of confidence and reassurance regarding God's gracious ways. It should help you to realize that he will make provisions for you to live out his intentions joyfully. Discerning his call and deciding to prepare for his service should be an act of worship.

How do I determine the best seminary or graduate school program for me to attend?

Considering this question, a wise seminary administrator offered this advice: "Choose a school that will take you as you are but won't let you remain that way." (Continued on page 121)



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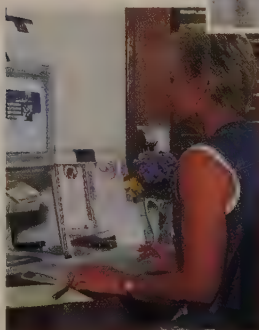


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Personal growth exceeds skill

It is dangerous to think narrowly in terms of knowledge to be gained and skills to be mastered in seminary. You must also seek personal growth and transformation. Christian ministry, in a multitude of varied forms and venues, requires leaders who are grounded in a thorough understanding of Scripture and theology, who demonstrate competence in the necessary functions of ministry, and who exemplify growing spiritual maturity. This spiritual formation must include personal holiness, integrity and fidelity, wisdom, love, and emotional and psychological wholeness, and the fruit of the Spirit. Seek a seminary that actively and intentionally pursues its entire academic and developmental agenda. Ministry preparation must be both informational and transformational. Select a place of study that will seek to change and transform you in the midst of its academic demands.

To share the gospel of Christ in culturally relevant ways in a world of rapid change, you must learn how to adapt purposefully—or risk obsolescence. An education that is, for the most part, positioned defensively will not be adequate. The authority of Scripture and the truth of the gospel are so powerful that ministry preparation should enable you to confront and engage secular society and conflicting religious ideologies with confidence. Seminary classes ought to equip you to respond helpfully to exponential societal changes, to challenge the widespread capitulation to relative notions of truth, to address personal and spiritual brokenness, and to live up to the multiple demands for excellence in character and leadership. Consider carefully how the schools you are considering describe their mission, and seek to determine how consistently they seek to realize it.

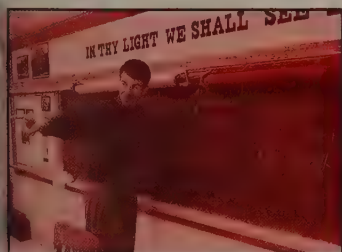
Search for a school that will both

enhance your strengths and teach you how to compensate for your weaknesses. For instance, if you have leadership skills and high academic aspirations, these are strengths to be nurtured and

The authority of Scripture and the truth of the gospel are so powerful that ministry preparation should enable you to confront and engage secular society and conflicting religious ideologies with confidence.

affirmed by the seminary community. But these strengths may be accompanied by vulnerabilities such as pride, impatience, or a need to "control." Your natural tendencies may need to be tempered through developing personal and spiritual disciplines (Continued on page 124)

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'CASE THE JOINT'

JUST as a robber cases a bank before he proceeds to do a stick-up, so a prospective seminary student is well advised to size up a school carefully before deciding to enroll there.

Read the catalog and brochures, of course, and view the audiovisual recruitment presentations. Most schools now also maintain an Internet Web page, which should be consulted. If at all possible, visit the campus of your school of choice. Schedule appointments with the admissions and financial-aid officers, and meet with several faculty members. Get permission to attend several classes. Join in a chapel service.

But in addition, you need to "case

the joint" too. Make a "stealth" visit to the school unannounced and unscheduled. There is another whole set of questions, the answers to which will reveal a great deal. For example, are you greeted courteously and assisted warmly? Is it easy, as a stranger, to engage people who regularly inhabit the campus?

Where's the action?

Watch where students congregate when they're not in class. Is it the coffee shop? Library? Parking lot? Do they linger after class? What is the quality of interaction among students and between students and faculty members? Eavesdrop—or if possible, try to join in their conversations. What is being discussed? Is there

laughter? What can you infer about relationships among the people on campus? How might you "fit in"?

How diverse is the seminary community? What age groups are represented? Gender distribution? Ethnic and racial makeup of the community? How are the differences acknowledged? Are there signs of tension or harmony? Do you detect cliques?

How does the seminary community worship? What is chapel like? Who attends? Are there active small groups and prayer cells? How do students describe their participation in local churches? Visit one or more of these churches if you can.

Scan the formal and informal bulletin boards and postings. What kinds of cultural opportunities are available? What social and recreational activities are announced? (At one school a football pool operates under the title "Prophecy League.") If there is a student publication, scour several back issues to see the topics that students are discussing. Ask about the role of student government. Look for a "Beef Board." Even check for graffiti!

Drop by the alumni office to see how well connected the school seeks to be with its graduates. Can they identify for you recent graduates in your home territory? Try to contact these graduates to gather their perceptions of the school.

Hang around the library. How much activity is there? Does it appear to be a "user-friendly" place? Is there evidence of substantial usage and circulation? Are students borrowing and returning a significant number of books? Are there daily newspapers and newsmagazines, and are they widely read? Does the library staff appear to exercise a teaching function as well as a custodial role for the collection?

While you are in the library, look for a copy of the school's most recent self-study report to its accrediting bodies,

(Continued on page 123)

So... you've received a call to ministry.

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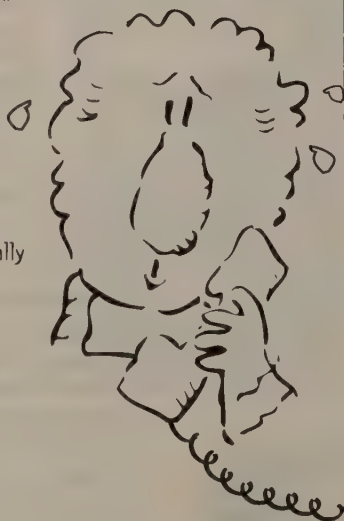
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If the school is part of a larger institution or is a member of a consortium of theological schools, can students cross register? Is there a library exchange that makes additional volumes from other schools readily available to students? Visit one or more of these consortium partner schools and inquire about how the institution you are visiting is perceived on other campuses.

Families, singles, and others

Does the seminary or graduate school appear to be "family-friendly?" Is there an indication that spouses are included and supported by the institution? Are there work opportunities or placement services available to spouses? Are there provisions made for students' children? Day care? Play areas? Is there a variety of housing available, and is it affordable? What educational arrangements are made for school-age children?

Are the needs and interests of single students given attention, too? What about international students as well as nontraditional students? Is there a well-planned roster of services for all these groups? Is it easy to determine where one can turn for help and support on the campus?

What about the campus itself? Are the facilities clean and well maintained? Are there signs of vandalism or poor upkeep? Is there substantial deferred maintenance? Are signs clear and helpful? Are there security and safety concerns?

What others say

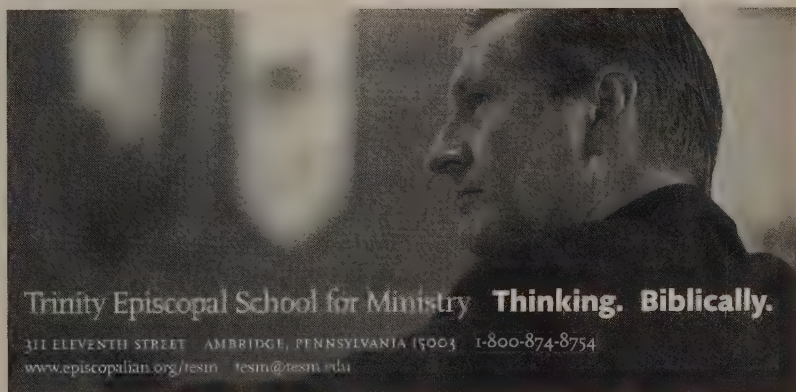
You have not finished "casing" the school until you talk with some people who observe the campus and students from nearby vantage points. Drop by the local fast food outlet, gas station, bank, and market. What is their opinion of the school and how do they reflect on the students and faculty whom they know? Do they employ seminary students and spouses? What have they heard about student satisfaction with the school?

"Schmooze" informally with secretaries, janitors, and maintenance people, too. They are usually very knowledgeable and candid. Besides, they make valued contributions to the quality of seminary life and programs, and they often exercise the gift of encouragement to students.

The point of all this is to get a good grasp on the ethos of your preferred institution and to sense the quality and rhythm of life on the campus. It is impor-

tant to gain this level of familiarity with the school, if possible, in order to envision how you would function within that learning community. This intimate knowledge of the campus will help you prepare for enrollment and enhance your growth and learning.

The selection of a seminary or graduate school is a major life decision. You cannot be overinformed in making your choice. So "case the joint!" □



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In choosing a seminary or graduate school, consider the qualifications, credentials, and credibility of an institution's faculty members. Look for gifted, godly scholars who are publishing and up-to-date in their disciplines. A cross section of those who have been prepared in a variety of good doctoral institutions is desirable. Find out if faculty are also immersed in ministry. How do they view themselves in the gap between the "academy" and the church and its agencies? What is the prevailing theology of ministry among the faculty?

Discover whether the professors like each other and operate in a collegial atmosphere. Is there a faculty "culture" that values and practices effective and flexible teaching, at the same time recognizing different student learning styles? Do they see themselves as mentors to students and companions on the

developmental journey of emerging ministry persons? Nearly all professors will provide students with information, but the seminary experience ought also to enable you to apply that knowledge in transformational ways—in your own life first. Then the goal becomes learning how to minister in ways that take that knowledge and help others to be transformed in their lives. Do faculty members actively seek to prepare students for this work?

Ask what are the visions that faculty members have for their graduates? How would they describe the ideal graduate of their institution? In what ways do they seek to prepare such persons? Is there evidence that they are succeeding in this mission? All of this suggests the need for a deliberate and consistent effort to integrate and synthesize the curriculum with the tasks of skill development, spiritual formation, and personal wholeness and holiness.

3. What must I do to get the most out of my seminary or graduate education?

"Excellence begins by doing something you have a natural talent for and enjoy. You become totally absorbed in the work. Attention and involvement in all the details lead to success." These words of Edward C. Johnson III, chairman of the Board of Fidelity Investments, contain wisdom for those who are interested in kingdom investing as well. Your choice to attend seminary or graduate school means you will be investing a significant amount of money, time, and energy to prepare for a lifetime of excellence in service to the Lord.

Determine your growth path

Three resolutions will help you realize maximum personal growth from your investment and to pursue excellence in ministry.

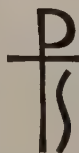
(Continued on page 128)

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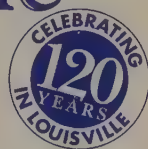
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Four professors met the entering class of 26 students. The young seminary struggled to survive the tumultuous Civil War years. Classes suspended from 1862 to 1865, and the school's endowment, largely invested in Confederate bonds, was "gone with the wind."

In 1872 the city fathers of Louisville and other Kentuckians pledged \$300,000 to lure the seminary. With that pledge toward the school's endowment, Southern Seminary relocated to Louisville in 1877. Eighty-nine men enrolled that fall, and four professors taught them how to preach God's Word.

From early on, Southern has had a reputation for cutting edge ministerial training. One historian has called Southern Seminary one of the most innovative seminaries in the world.

Southern was the first seminary in the world to offer the study of the Bible in English. In 1944 the seminary opened one of the first schools of church music and now boasts the top music library in the country. The school of Christian Education and Leadership opened in 1954. Southern was the first seminary to offer African American studies.

In May 1957, a young evangelist named Billy Graham made one of his many visits to

the seminary. His picture, with the Seminary choir in the background, made the cover of Newsweek magazine. In 1994 the Billy Graham School of Missions,

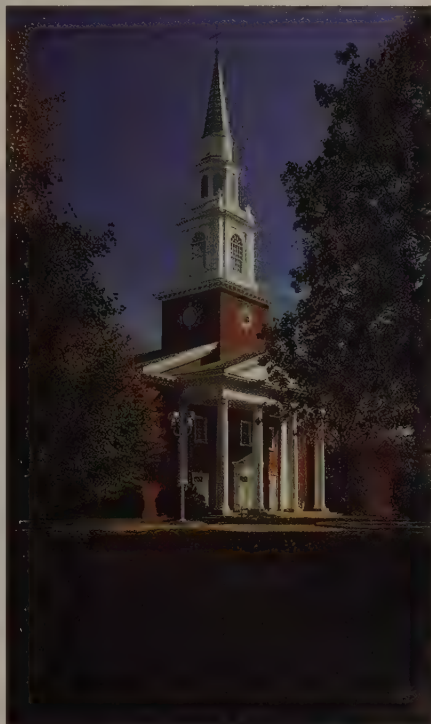
tory preaching. The Graham School's D.Min. in Evangelism and Church Growth is the fastest growing D.Min. in the world.

These non-resident degree programs allow ministers to stay in their current ministry position while coming to campus for four one week courses over two-and-a-half years. Continuing the school's innovative tradition, students can also earn their master of divinity degree taking weekend courses.

Southern Seminary serves the churches of the SBC, but it attracts students from many Christian denominations because of its reputation for academic excellence and offering one of the least expensive theological programs in the country.

Southern Seminary has come a long way in 139 years. With more than 2,200 students and more than 60 faculty, it is one of the largest seminaries in the world. The seminary's endowment has grown from \$300,000 to more than \$70 million. Southern's graduates serve in churches and ministries throughout Kentucky, in all 50 states, and in 76 foreign countries.

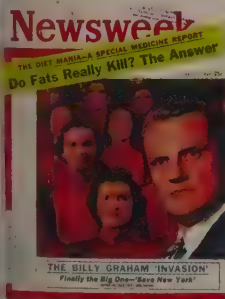
"Our goal is to be the finest evangelical seminary in the world," President R. Albert Mohler, Jr., says. With the help of faculty, staff, students, alumni and friends, Southern Seminary is accomplishing that goal. ■



Evangelism and Church Growth opened to carry-on the legacy of Southern Baptists' greatest evangelist.

Last fall, Southern made a quantum leap toward becoming the finest theological seminary in the world with the addition of nine new professors to its faculty. In October, the ribbon was cut on a new \$3.56 million conference and dining facility and a \$1.7 million renovation of classroom space completed in August. Funds are currently being raised to construct a new building to house the Billy Graham School.

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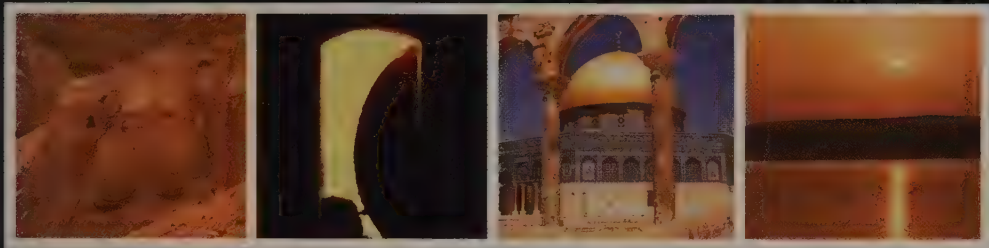
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Vocation or Occupation?

(from page 124)

Choose to enjoy. The attitude with which you approach the rigorous demands of advanced education will make a significant difference in the quality of your experience. Wise students know how to "keep their eyes on the prize" of graduation. Even wiser students know that today is also a gift to be seized and savored—that learning the concept counts more than earning the grade.

You will need to develop good habits—skillful time management and disciplined study practices—that will increase your enjoyment by reducing your stress. Intense study will necessarily challenge you. Put the intensity to good use by developing the personal disciplines of success that will help you in school and beyond.

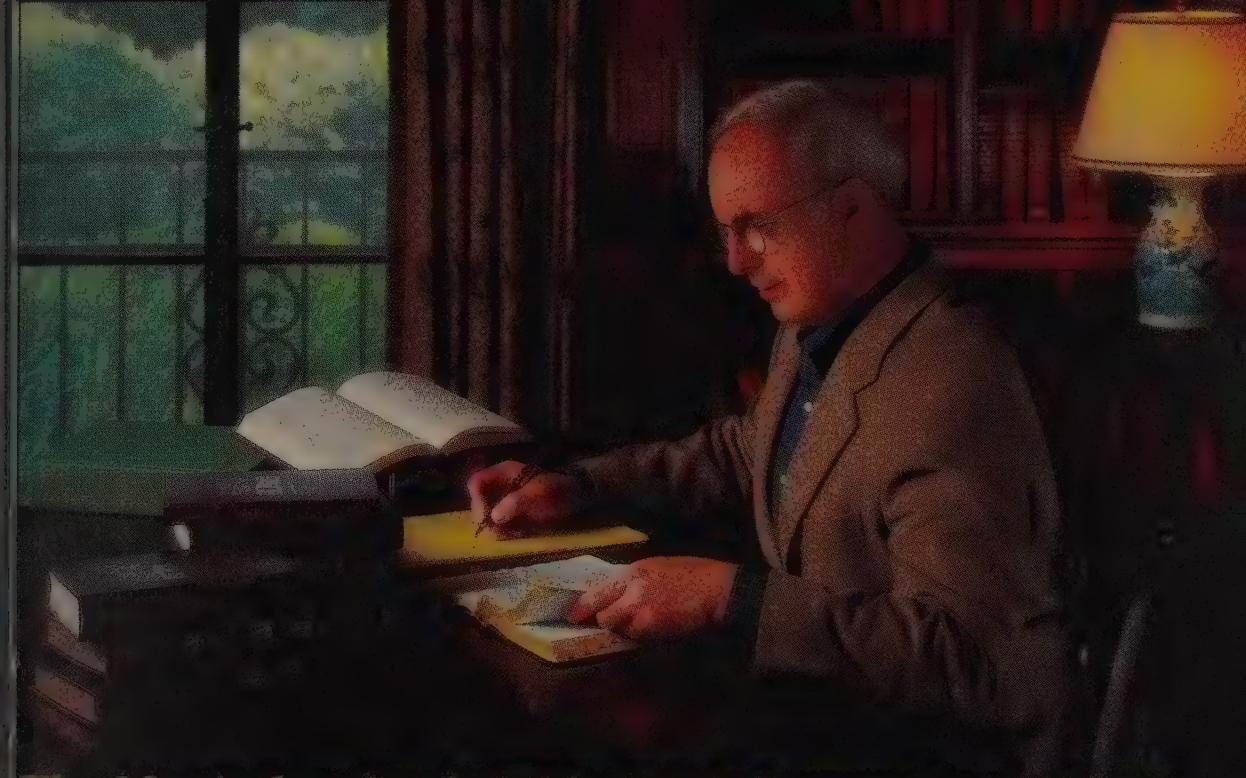
You can choose the attitudes that will keep your education from becoming

To receive maximum benefit from your education, be intentional about your growth.

ing drudgery. Curiosity will lead you to say, "I'm going to ask questions until I know what I think about the issue." Courage will help you say, "Instead of avoiding biblical languages, I'm going to master them." Confidence will enable you to say, "God has called me. He will strengthen me." These are attitudes that will allow you to enjoy the trip as well as the destination.

Plan to grow. Readings. Papers. Discussions. Lectures. Journals. All these will provide the rich soil that facilitates growth—but you must bring the oxygen and light. That means being teachable and open to changing your viewpoint when there is good evidence to do so. It means being candid and vulnerable without being defensive. It can also mean disagreeing agreeably when it looks as though the evidence points your way.

(Continued on page 134)



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A young seminary student once asked me what the secret is to a great sermon. My answer wasn't what he expected.

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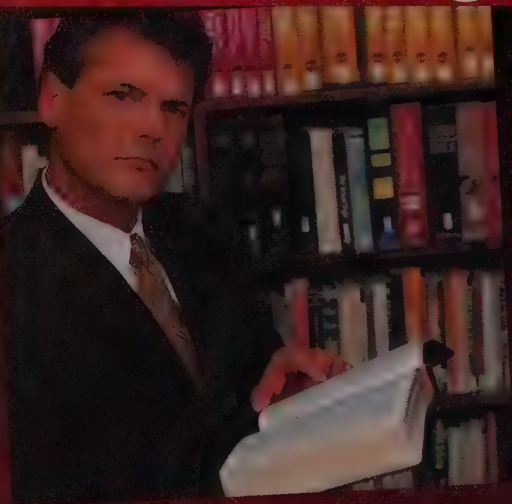
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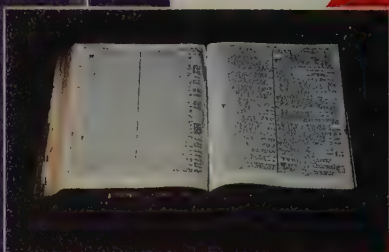
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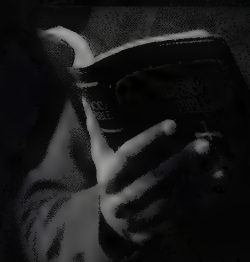
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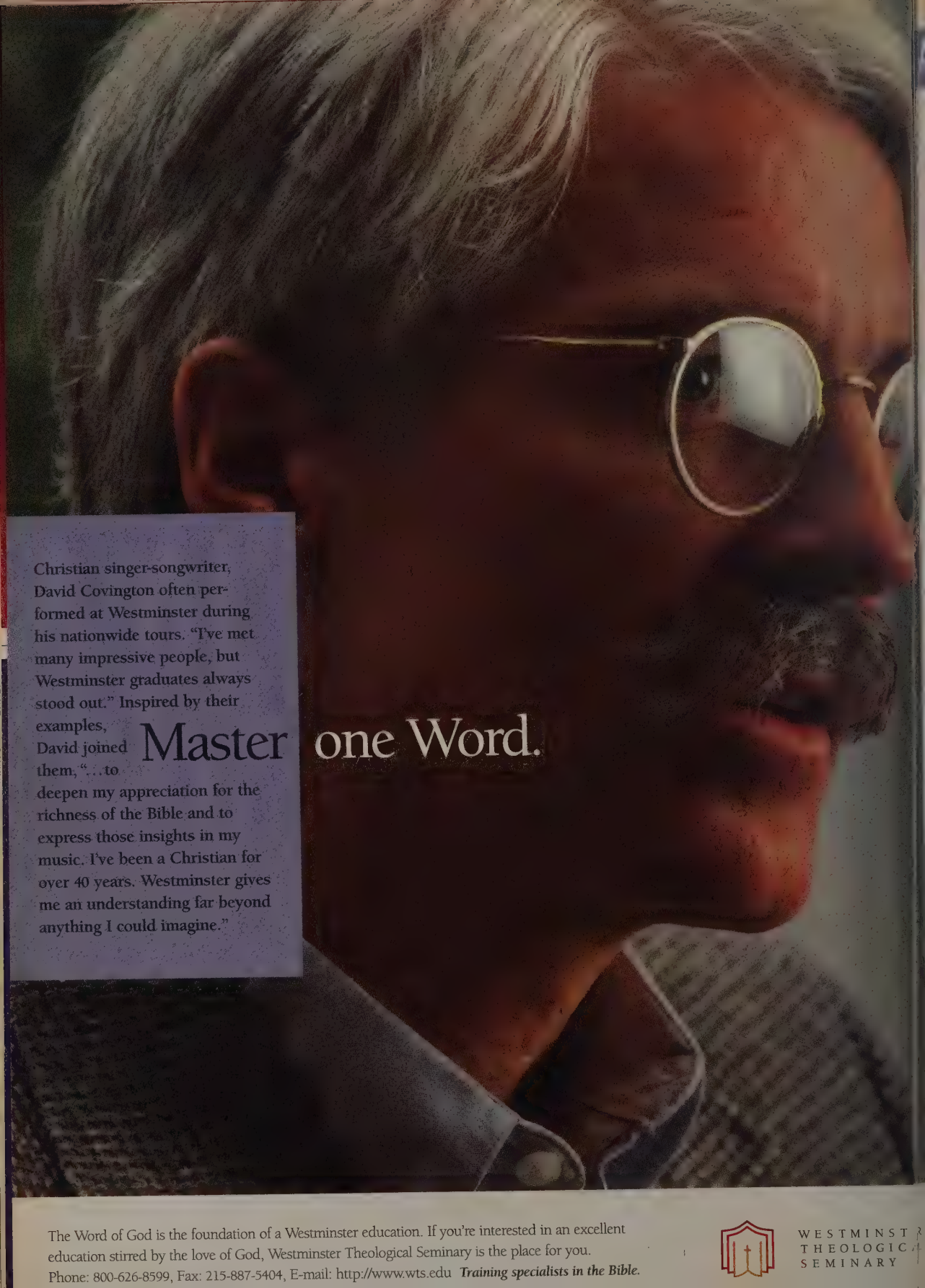
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Vocation or Occupation? (from page 128)

To receive maximum benefit from your education, be intentional about your growth. Students, alums, and profs, reflecting on their experience, offered these tips:

- "Carefully build a personal library, and develop good reading habits, broad and purposeful."
- "Strive to integrate and synthesize what you are learning and what you are experiencing in ministry, at school, and at home."
- "Develop a good filing system, and stash your best finds for later use."
- "Keep a diary or journal regularly. Be reflective."
- "Know your preferred learning style, but work to gain comfort with other options."
- "Learn how to learn collaboratively, and become adept at group processes."

Commit to connect. "Wherever I am, I want to be all there." The expressed

desire of Jim Elliot, murdered missionary to the "Auca" Indians in Ecuador, has much to say to those seeking the most of their educational experience.

"Being all there" in seminary or graduate school means realizing that you can gain as much from relationships as from books. Community is a vital part of the full experience. Don't be a "hit and run" student, rushing onto the campus for just an hour or two of classes. Become an active member. Attend convocations and lectures. Drink coffee with a friend. Reach out to a stranger.

One important antidote to "hit and run" education is linking up with a mentor. Teachers or staff persons will often invest themselves in honest relationships with you. Steven Garber, in *Fabric of Faithfulness*, says that a lasting friendship with a mentor who embodies and lives out his or her relationship with Christ is critical to your life as a person of faith. As much can happen outside the classroom as within it.

(Continued on page 136)

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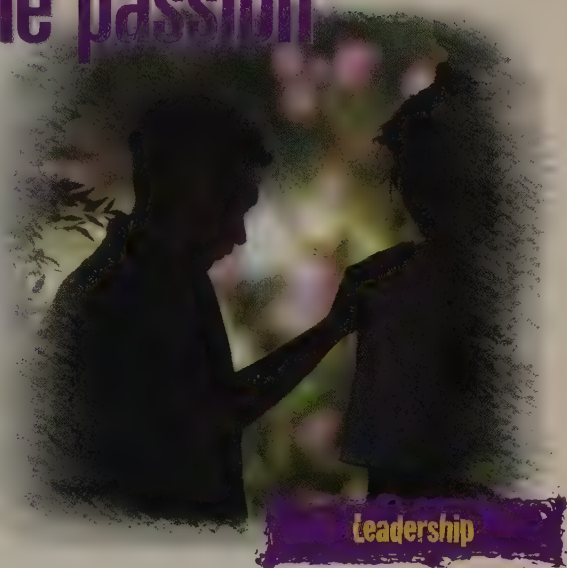
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Pursuing a graduate or seminary degree is a major commitment. This is not a decision to make haphazardly. Finding a program that fits you and preparing yourself to learn as best you can will enhance your success. If you approach your advanced studies with a positive plan and an attitude of commit-

ment, you will find both your mind and your faith enlarged. Graduate or seminary study is an investment in excellence that will pay dividends for a lifetime of service and worship.

4. What should I be doing to prepare myself for seminary or graduate school? How ought one prepare spiritually? Educationally?

Having determined that seminary or graduate school is one of the ways God wants to equip you for the "good works that God has prepared beforehand for us to do," and having selected and been accepted by a school, what can be done before you enroll to help make the most of your future training experience?

Don't wait until you get there

First, keep your walk with God strong by spending some extra time in prayer and in the study of his Word. As a graduate

student preparing for vocational ministry, you will have many balls to juggle simultaneously. Before classes begin, see if you can take time out for some focused spiritual self-care. Go on a private weekend retreat or, over a period of weeks, carve out times to do some extra journaling or spend some additional time in reflective prayer. During these moments, commit yourself to following God wherever he leads during the next phase of your life.

Second, determine to take advantage of every learning experience that you possibly can while you are in school. Pore over every page of the curriculum catalog, highlighting every course you want to take and dreaming about all the special programs that you would enjoy (like doing internships in urban settings or studying abroad). Plan how you might participate in as many of them as possible. Who knows which one will open up doors of opportunity (Continued on page 14)



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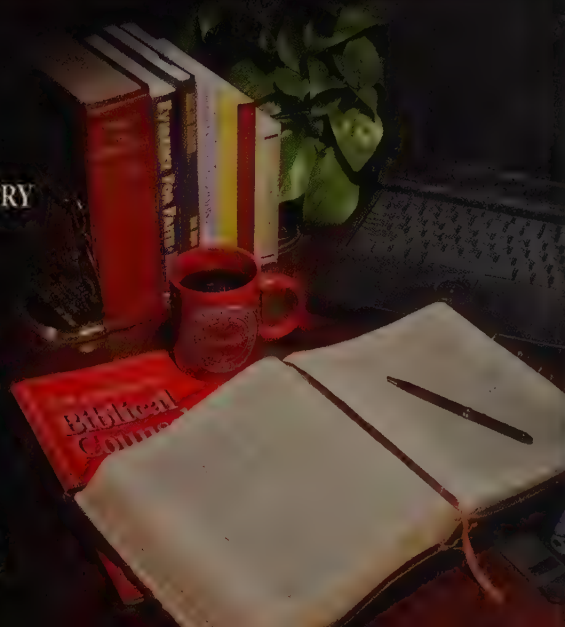
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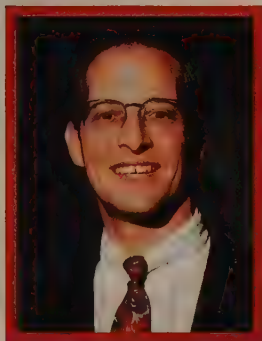


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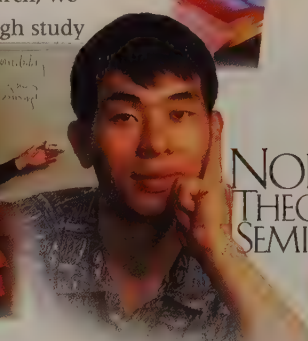
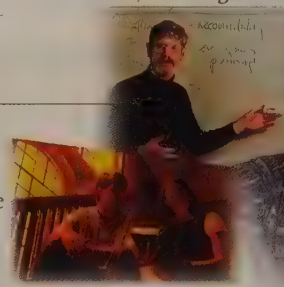
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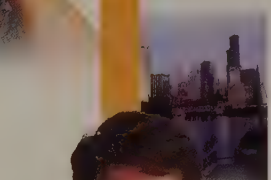
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e. Begin implementing your commit-
ent before you start school. Your edu-
ational pursuits have the potential
mer to enhance or sabotage your
alth, relationships, and ministry. God
eated us with certain maintenance
uirements: food, sleep, exercise,
y, work, a deepening relationship
h God, and flourishing relationships
h other people. Since these are built-
needs that must be met, now is the
ie to seriously evaluate your lifestyle.
etermine what personal or spiritual
ciplines you will need to emphasize
order to maintain your quality of life
ing graduate school.

For example, let's say that in con-
ering how to prepare both your mind
d body for the rigors of graduate edu-
cation you determine that you would

benefit from a more systematic exercise
program and that you would also like to
become more disciplined in doing Bible
memorization. You could merge the two
goals by choosing forms of physical
training that are repetitive (jogging,
bicycling, rowing) and would allow you
to focus on memorizing Scripture while
you work out. Consider inviting your
spouse or other friends to join you for
the social interaction and accountability
that would enhance the experience.

Fourth, determine your proficiency
in the survival skills of graduate school.
If you don't own a personal computer,
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has a good word-processing program.
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ty and speed with which you can write
papers. If you don't already own a com-
puter, or if you want to upgrade to a
more powerful one, check to see
whether you can get an educational
discount if you purchase a computer

through the school you will be attend-
ing. Consider taking a class to enhance
your word-processing expertise.
Perhaps you should consider buying an
inexpensive "typing tutor" software pro-
gram so you can practice daily until
your typing speed is up to at least 70
words per minute. This could double
the quality of the papers you write
because you will be able to spend less
time typing and more time composing
and refining your thoughts.

Another graduate school survival
skill is public speaking. Both in school
and in ministry you will constantly be
called upon to articulate your thoughts.
For this reason, learn everything you
can about how to become an effective
verbal communicator. Whether or not
your program of study requires courses
in public speaking or preaching, consid-
er giving your education a jump-start by
obtaining some training (such as
Toastmasters) and

(Continued on page 145)

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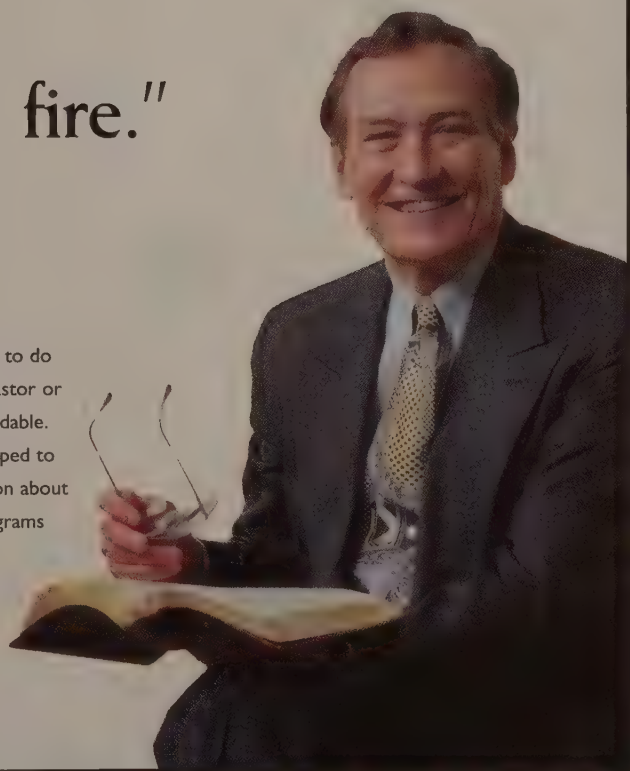
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Education or Occupation?

on page 143

experience (such as teaching a Sunday-school class) in this area before you start school.

Think about taking a class or doing a self-study course in English grammar and vocabulary; building your word power will significantly improve the quality of both your writing and speaking. Knowing and using your primary language effectively will also help you to become proficient—quickly—in biblical languages.

Preparation for ministry need not be delayed until enrollment in seminary. Many students are already engaged in active ministry before they enroll. Ideally, seminary is preparation *in* ministry, not merely preparation *for* ministry.

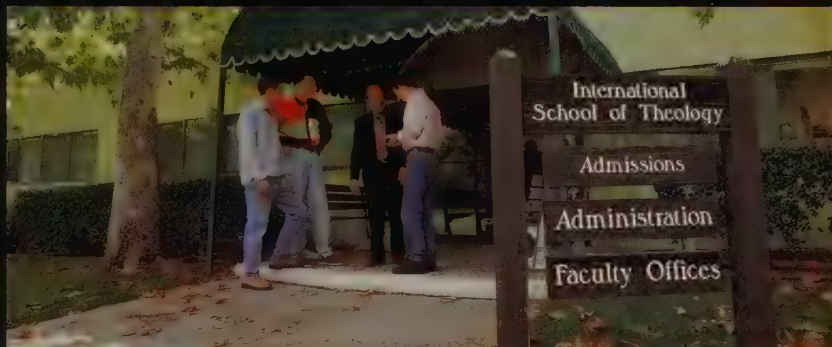
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Philosopher-novelist Frank Herbert said, "Cultivate naïveté. Thinking you know something is a sure way to blind yourself. It is not growing up that slowly kills the brakes to learning but an accumulation of 'things I know.'"

Commit yourself to lifelong learning. Ministry requires it! Then search until you find a graduate school or seminary that offers you the three essential resources to follow through on your commitment: critical thinking skills, social and spiritual formation skills, and leadership skills. Search for a Spirit-powered, biblically grounded community of learning that is committed to biblical and theological foundations of the Christian faith. Seek a school dedicated to developing and equipping people to become progressively more whole and holy. Find a school whose faculty, staff, and students are committed to serving and leading churches and ministry agencies in ways that transform the way they serve.

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Send résumé and salary requirements to: Personnel Director, Acton Institute, 161 Ottawa NW, Ste. 301, Grand Rapids, MI 49503; www.acton.org

EARLHAM SCHOOL OF RELIGION FULL-TIME FACULTY POSITION, beginning July 1998.

• Pastoral Studies & Director of Field Education

Candidates must have an M.Div., recent pastoral experience, and be a member of the Religious Society of Friends. Ph.D. in some branch of applied theology preferred, but may be waived. For a position description or to apply: Bill Ratliff, Clerk of the Search Committee, Earlham School of Religion, 228 College Ave., Richmond, IN 47374, or ratlijo@earlham.edu. Earlham School of Religion is an affirmative action, equal opportunity employer.

USE MINISTRY AND LIFE SKILLS to reach the hurting, broken, and lost as a tentmaker in the 10/40 Window. HOW? contact: Mission to Unreached Peoples, toll free at (1-888) 847-6950, or E-mail: mupinfo@mup.org or [HTTP://www.mup.org/mupinfo/](http://www.mup.org/mupinfo/)

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

WORSHIP AND SINGLES PASTORS

Dynamic New England church of more than 1,200 attendees has two immediate ministry positions.

- **Pastor of Worship:** Candidate must have proven experience in leading contemporary worship, ensemble directing and overseeing of drama team. Inquiries to Pastor Jim Marshall.
- **Singles Pastor:** Looking for qualified person with two years experience in singles ministry to further develop a full menu of ministries. Inquiries to Pastor Larry Fullerton.

Black Rock Congregational Church, 3685 Black Rock Turnpike, Fairfield, CT 06432; E-mail: brchurch@aol.com.

CONGREGATIONAL CARE DIRECTOR

9-yr.-old Evangelical Presbyterian church trusting God to provide person to organize and oversee caring ministries: greeting, visitation, assimilation, pastoral care. Avg. attendance 750, 1/4 univ. students. Must be Reformed; ordination a plus but not required. Send résumé to: Grace EPC, 3312 Calvin Dr., Lawrence, KS 66049.

PASTOR. Christ-centered (PCUSA) church in central NJ seeking biblically based pastor to lead, care for, and direct a diverse congregation of 150+ in their faith. Must possess a deep personal faith and be able to communicate that faith through solid expository preaching, teaching, and leadership skills. Submit dossier to PNC, P.O. Box 102, Lambertville, NJ 08530.

LIBRARIAN

George Fox University seeks qualified candidates for the position of head of library technical services. This position is responsible for the supervision of centralized library acquisitions, cataloging, processing, and preservation for both the university's main campus library in Newberg and its Portland Center library. The position is also responsible for online catalog maintenance and serves as the library's primary contact with Innovative Interfaces. An ALA-accredited MLS, two years of technical services experience, and experience with a major bibliographic utility and automated catalog are required. George Fox is a Christian liberal arts university affiliated with the Evangelical Friends (Quaker) Church. Candidates should submit a letter of application and résumé to Mr. Merrill Johnson University Librarian, George Fox University, 416 N. Meridian St., Newberg, OR 97132. Review of applications begins immediately and will continue until filled. The position begins August 1998.

PASTOR OF WORSHIP & MUSIC

A multi-generational, central coastal California Ev. Free Church congregation of 1,100 is seeking a full-time experienced minister of music and worship. Relational, theological, and multiple musical skills are desired. For more information contact Joe Bubar at (805) 489-4200.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

FREMONT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

5770 Carlson Dr., Sacramento, CA 95819 Full-time minister of music and worship ar for a 1,200-member, growing congregation with a long history of excellence in music a worship. Must have a strong commitment Christ. Will be responsible for directing ad choir; must have demonstrated ability to me tor lay leaders to direct current multipl choirs (youth, children's, bell, and senior drama, and celebratory arts. Candidate mu be effective in traditional and contempora styles of worship.

Compensation will be commensurate w experience and demonstrated gifts. Plea send résumé and three references to chu address, attention: Arlene Lockett.

EVANGELICAL BIBLE CHURCH of Oma NE, seeks sr. pastor. Attendance 400-500. fer community SS, adult Bible fellowsh prayer, Awana, youth programs, missio emphasis. In growing NW part of Oma (pop. 600,000); 27 yrs. of growth has nece tated 3 building & expansion phases; 500-s worship center, completed debt-free 4 y ago. Tenure of our 2 previous sr. pastors (yrs.) reflects stability & unity. Known for s tematic expository preaching & a wors style that appeals to all ages. Seminary & perience required. Contact Jim Classen: (4 346-7296; E-mail: jclassen@juno.com or s résumé to 7820 Fort St., Omaha, NE 68134

GBC SEEKS SENIOR PASTOR for congre tion (largely 2nd gen. Asian-American in th 20s & 30s) in NW Chicago suburb. Res pibilities: provide direction, preach, lead st work w/lay leadership, & build relationsh Rqmts.: multi-ethnic vision, 3+ yrs. ex cross-cultural ministry exp., grad. deg., g preaching, & relational skills. For info s your fax # or E-mail to: mfasick@aol.com fax M. Fasick at (847) 824-2499.

SEARCHING FOR MINISTRY?

Pastors & associates looking for church Churches looking for pastors & staff. Church looking for interim pastors. Call Believ Dynamics: (503) 357-7830 or write POB Forest Grove, OR 97116. Since 1977.

DIRECTOR OF YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT MINISTRIES & DIRECTOR OF CHRISTIAN ED AND SMALL GROUPS. We are an active 600+ member evangelical church seeking Christ-centered, creative, enthusiastic candidates for two new full-time ministry positions.

Responsibilities include expanding existing programs and developing new ones to meet our growing needs. Applicants should have relevant work experience, proven organizational and leadership skills, ability to develop volunteer leaders, and work well on an integrated team. B.A. preferred. Send résumé to Nurture Search Committee, First Presbyterian Church, Mt. Holly, NJ 08060 E-mail: jkraft@net-gate.com.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

PASTOR TO CHILDREN

dar Mill Bible Church of Portland, Oregon, independent Evangelical Bible church of er 1,300 adults, 1,000 of whom regularly end our worship and teaching service and or 400 youth and children, is seeking a full-time pastor to children (nursery through 6th grade). The successful candidate will have the necessary education and considerable experience in ministry to children and extensive experience in recruiting, training, and supporting teams of workers. Salary and benefits negotiable, commensurate with training and experience. Assistance will be given if location is required. Contact Pastor John Afe, Cedar Mill Bible Church, 12208 NW 96th Rd., Portland, OR 97229; (503) 644-56 or fax: (503) 520-9272 or E-mail to afe@cmbc.org. All applicants will be sent a full position description, which can be also accessed on <http://www.cmbc.org/~cmbc>.

CHURCH MINISTRIES

Western Evangelical Seminary, an evangelical ministry in the Wesleyan tradition and a graduate school of George Fox University, seeks a full-time member in the field of church ministries who also will supervise the seminary's internship/mentoring field education program. The successful candidate will hold a Ph.D. or D. in a related field, have a significant span of church ministry leadership, and be prepared to teach: age-level ministries, women's and men's ministries, spiritual formation and discipleship, small group and recovery ministry development. The contract year begins August 1998. George Fox is a Christian liberal arts university affiliated with the Evangelical Friends (Quaker) Church and committed to an evangelical Christian philosophy of higher education. Mail a letter of interest, professional references, and three references to Dirk Barram, Vice President for Academic Affairs, George Fox University, 414 N. Meridian St., Newberg, OR 97132; fax: (503) 537-3834.

FIVE-SPEAKING ENGLISH TEACHER
Hong Kong Christian schools: 2-year English-teaching experience required. \$5,000/mo. Call: (630) 942-0000.

BUSINESS INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Messiah College Department of Management and Business invites applications for a full-time position in Business Information Systems beginning Fall 1998. BIS is one of the top seven in the department. Ph.D. preferred, with previous college teaching highly desirable. Teaching interest should include information systems management, micro-computer applications, databases, and vision support systems with particular attention to the role of information in business operations.

Messiah College is a selective Christian college of the liberal and applied arts and sciences and is committed to an embracing evangelical spirit rooted in the Anabaptist, Methodist, and Wesleyan traditions. Applications from women and minorities strongly encouraged. Submit letter of inquiry and vita to Dr. Donald Webb, Chair, Department of Management and Business, Messiah College, 1000 N. 17th St., PA 17027.

MAKE A CHANGE! Teach English, business, computers in China, Russia, Muslim Asia, etc. Europe. Call ESI at: (1-800) 895-7955. college majors/degrees welcome.

CHURCH PLACEMENT SERVICE

working of churches & ministers seeking placement. CMPN, P.O. Box 1132, Barre, VT 05641; (802) 476-8902.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

SENIOR PASTOR

Independent evangelical church near campus of Big Ten university seeks experienced pastor to serve as senior pastor to minister with a diverse congregation that is committed to college ministry and worldwide missions. The ideal candidate must have the passion and ability to preach the entire Word of God with a view toward the evangelism of nonbelievers and the developing of Christlike character in the lives of believers. He must be a servant/leader who manifests godly behavior and values to the congregation and the surrounding community. Applicants must also have exemplary character, college and seminary degrees, strong pulpit skills, a commitment to expository biblical preaching, and relational skills sufficient to work with pastoral team and lay leadership in shepherding a mid-sized congregation. Inquiries to: Evangelical Community Church, 503 S. High St., Bloomington, IN 47401; Attn.: Senior Pastor Search Committee.

SR. MINISTER/OUTSTANDING PREACHER
Asylum Hill Congregational Church, a historic and progressive Hartford, Connecticut, church of 1,500 members from greater Hartford, with average worship attendance over 700, embraces tradition and innovation. Annual budget of \$1.6 million and \$9 million endowment (with more than 800 pledging units contributing over \$1.1 million per annum) supports experienced staff of 17, including four ordained ministers, renowned music program, and demonstrated commitment to our city neighborhood. We are a warm, welcoming, growing congregation that seeks an open, outgoing, visionary leader, who can preach with contemporary relevance from personal experience. Competitive salary and benefits. Check our Web site: www.ahcc.org. Submit résumé to AHCC Search Committee, c/o Mr. & Mrs. Ben Terry, 46 Banbury Lane, West Hartford, CT 06107. We are an equal opportunity employer.

DEAN

EARLHAM SCHOOL OF RELIGION

Beginning July 1998. Reporting to the president of Earlham, the dean will be the chief academic and administrative officer of ESR. Candidates should be a member of the Religious Society of Friends; s/he should have an academic record appropriate to an appointment to the faculty, and a record of successful leadership and administration. For position description, or to apply or nominate: Douglas Bennett, President, Earlham, 801 National Road W, Richmond, IN 47374, or doug.b@earlham.edu. Earlham is an AA/EEO employer.

ASSOCIATE PASTOR with primary emphasis on youth and Sunday school programs. Independent, evangelical Christian church of 350 members. Send inquiries to Pulpit Committee, 7433 Bodega Ave., Sebastopol, CA 95472, or call (707) 823-8242; fax: (707) 823-2491.

WILDWOOD PCA, in Tallahassee, Florida, is looking for a full-time music director/worship coordinator with a heart for God and a hunger to lead others into his presence. Join a great multi-staff team in a growing 500+ church. Responsibilities include worship planning, praise teams, adult choir, and development of a celebratory orchestra. We seek someone who can build a ministry, not a program. Blended worship style. Wildwood Presbyterian Church, 100 Ox Bottom Rd., Tallahassee, FL 32312; phone: (850) 894-1400; fax: (850) 894-1406.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

BIOLA UNIVERSITY SEEKS CANDIDATES for FT tenure-track history position at the assistant prof. level. Must have Ph.D. in Latin Am. hist. plus one area: Mod. Europe, Africa, U.S. Ethnic and gender diversity desired. Send letter and CV by 2/15/98 to Dr. G. Miller, Vice Provost, Biola University, 13800 Biola Ave., La Mirada, CA 90639.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Responsible for administration of Crisis Pregnancy Center in DuPage County, IL. Includes fundraising, P.R., speaking, and oversight of staff and counseling services. Min. 5 years exp. Contact: K. Todd, 122 S. Michigan Ave., Ste. 1220, Chicago, IL 60603.

DUE TO GROWTH AND EXPANSION, Belhaven College seeks those faculty who are excited to serve in the following areas at a college which prepares students to serve Christ Jesus in their occupation, relationships, and in the world of ideas.

- Theater Department Chair (MFA required)
 - English Department Chair (Ph.D. required)
 - Business Administration Faculty in Memphis (DBA or Ph.D. required)
- Send vita to Daniel C. Fredericks, Provost, 1500 Peachtree St., Jackson, MS 39202. Minorities are encouraged to apply.

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ACMC PRESIDENT

ACMC (Advancing Churches in Missions Commitment) is an organization with a vision to increase the passion of the American church for world evangelization. We are looking for a godly servant/leader with ten years of progressive management experience and a desire to stimulate local churches to reach across cultures with the gospel. Previous experience in working with and/or through local churches regarding missions is essential. Demonstrated skills in these areas are desired: supervision, strategic/tactical/financial planning, resource development. Fax résumés to Dale Folsom: (316) 265-2052; E-mail to DaleFolsom@aol.com; or mail to 501 Springlake Lane, Wichita, KS 67230.

CHURCH PLANTING: Opportunities in Spokane, WA, and Boise, ID. Must have M.Div.; comfortable in a broadly evangelical denomination. Assessment, training, scaled salary, and benefits provided. Prefer pastoral experience, community knowledge. Send résumé and statement of interest to CT Classified Ads Box 213, 465 Gundersen Dr., Carol Stream, IL 60188.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

MINISTER OF YOUTH, OUTREACH & CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP for growing central MO church. Contact Broadway Christian Church Search Committee, 2601 W. Broadway, Columbia, MO 65203; Web site: <http://bdwy.christian.church.missouri.org>; (573) 445-5312.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES: Advent Group Ministries, a Christian social service agency located in San Jose, CA, seeks resident counselors, night counselors, summer interns for adolescent residential treatment programs. Competitive salary, benefits. Residential positions provide room & board. Contact Deborah Norris: (408) 281-0708; (1-800) 96ADVENT; fax: (408) 281-2658.

SOUTHEASTERN BIBLE COLLEGE anticipates an opening for the Chair of Elementary Education for the fall of 1998. Ph.D. in elementary education required. Send résumé to Dr. Ed Glasscock, Academic Dean, Southeastern Bible College, 3001 Hwy. 280 E, Birmingham, AL 35243.

MOODY BOOKSTORE, a "top 100" operation, is currently seeking a **BUSINESS MANAGER** to join its downtown Chicago location. Duties include overseeing the accounting and advertising of products/services on the Internet in addition to managing all data entry into the inventory control system. Degree req'd. or equivalent work exp. Prior IBID and retail mgmt. experience is preferred. If interested, mail résumé to: Moody Bible Institute, 820 N. LaSalle Blvd., Chicago, IL 60610, or fax: (312) 329-2155.

VICE PRESIDENT FOR ADVANCEMENT Jerusalem University College seeks candidates for this newly created position at its North American office in Rockford, Illinois, starting August 1, 1998, or possibly earlier.

The vice president for advancement is responsible for shaping and conducting a fundraising program that emphasizes fund development goal setting, planned giving, and short-term fundraising activities. This person shall report to the president, serve on the president's cabinet, and represent the college at the direction of the president. This person shall become and remain familiar with the college and community life in Jerusalem by spending at least one month annually living in Jerusalem.

Qualifications: The candidate shall be a mature Christian whose life is consistent with the goals of Jerusalem University College. This person shall be trained and experienced with a proven track record in development work and shall demonstrate outstanding interpersonal and communication skills. This person shall be asked to represent the university college, the only school of its kind in Protestant Christianity, to diverse groups and individuals within the evangelical community. This person shall possess appropriate academic credentials, be a team player, and yet be comfortable with a leadership style that includes personal initiative. Salary is competitive, based on qualifications.

To obtain information about the school and a position description, call Mr. Michael W. McDonald at (1-800) 891-9408. Send application letter, résumé, and a list of four references (including telephone and fax numbers) to Dr. Sidney DeWaal, President, Jerusalem University College, P.O. Box 1276, 91012 Jerusalem, Israel. Fax: 011/972-2-673-2717 (hard copy by mail). Review of applications begins immediately and will continue until the position is filled.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

GRADUATING COLLEGE SENIORS are invited to apply for the 25th annual Pulliam Journalism Fellowships. We will be granting 10-week summer internships to 20 journalism or liberal arts graduates in the August 1997-June 1998 graduating classes. Previous internship or part-time experience at a newspaper is desired, or other demonstration of writing and reporting ability. Winners will receive a \$5,000 stipend & will work at either *The Indianapolis Star* and *The Indianapolis News* or *The Arizona Republic*. Application postmark deadline is March 1, 1998. To request an application and related materials, write: Russell B. Pulliam, Pulliam Fellowship Director, The Indianapolis News, P.O. Box 145, Indianapolis, IN 46206-0145.

ASHLAND THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY Ashland Theological Seminary, a conservative evangelical seminary with 700 students, invites résumés from individuals for the following faculty positions. Requirements include: Ph.D. or equivalent, commitment to evangelical faith and life, pastoral experience, commitment to servant leadership and team ministry. All positions are tenure-track. Applications will be received until the positions are filled. The positions require teaching on both the master's and D.Min. levels.

- **Church Planting** (Fall of '98): Candidate should possess experience as a church planter with both teaching and practical skills. The position requires experience and training in administration, assessment, supervision, mentoring, and evaluation. The position requires classroom and field work.

- **Missions** (Fall of '98): Candidate should have a global Christian perspective with cross-cultural and/or urban ministry experience for a program that is global in scope and practical in application. Curriculum includes introductory and advance courses in cross-cultural studies and evangelism.

- **Pacific Rim** (Fall of '99): Candidate should be bilingual (English and Chinese required), with work experience in Asia. Doctorate may be in either biblical studies or theology. The position will require teaching in an academic discipline, student advising, and the ability to bridge curriculum and culture with Pacific Rim students.

Applications should be sent to: Dr. Frederick J. Finks, President, Ashland Theological Seminary, 910 Center St., Ashland, OH 44805.

ASBURY COLLEGE, evangelical, independent, Christian, liberal arts college seeks to fill the following faculty positions:

- **Spanish:** Full-time, tenure-track position. Native/near native fluency in Spanish and English. Latin-Americanist preferred. Teaching ability in Spanish linguistics a plus. Ph.D. preferred.

- **Business:** Two full-time, tenure-track positions. (1) Management: Strong teaching skills; experience, academic training, and research knowledge in management, marketing, and/or human resources. Ph.D. preferred; (2) Accounting: MBA or M.S., CPA license, public accounting experience. Ability to teach broad range of accounting courses. Ph.D. preferred.

Candidates must be committed to the spiritual mission of the college and be in agreement with college statement of faith. Women and minorities encouraged to apply. Send résumé to: Provost, Asbury College, Wilmore, KY 40390.

FACULTY POSITION. Missions professor for 1998-99 or long-term. Theology professor for 1999-2000. Write: Academic Dean, Alliance Biblical Seminary, P.O. Box 1095, Manila 1099, Philippines.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

ASSOCIATE PASTOR FOR HOLISTIC MINISTRY

Located in the western suburbs of Philadelphia, PA, Media Presbyterian Church (USA) is a growing, dynamic, and evangelical congregation of 850+ with a strong commitment to social ministries and mission. This associate pastor will equip volunteers and give administrative support for the varied and active ministries of our board of deacons and mission committee. The position will entail some general pastoral work including teaching and preaching. The successful candidate will demonstrate ministry/life experience in the areas of mission work, social ministries, and program development and administration. Send résumé PIF to: Search Committee, APNC, Med Presbyterian Church, 30 E. Baltimore Pike Media, PA 19063; (610) 566-3944; fax: (610) 566-0544.

TEACH IN JAPAN

Evangelical church reaching out to the Japanese through teaching English as a second language. Mission-minded single persons needed; 2-year contracts. Support all accommodations. Write Shukugawa Bible Church, 7-12 Aoi-cho Nishinomiya-city Hyogo, 662 Japan; phone: 011-81-798-74128.

CHURCH PLANTING. Numerous church planting opportunities in a growing denomination with solid track record. Must have M.Div.; comfortable in a broad evangelical context. Assessment, training, scaled salary and benefits provided. Prefer pastoral experience, community knowledge. WA, OR, OK, TX, SD, IA, MN, KS, MI, IL. Send résumé and statement of interest to: CT Classified, Box 214, 465 Gundersen Dr., Carol Stream, IL 60188.

HOUGHTON COLLEGE seeks a new director for its adult degree completion program. Candidates should have a graduate degree (doctorate preferred), administrative ability and expertise in adult education. Experience in public relations and college-level teaching are desirable. Send letter of application & vita to: Dr. Carlton Fisher, Houghton College, Houghton, NY 14744, or fax to: (716) 567-9572. Applications received until position is filled.

THE FOLLOWING faculty positions are open at Roberts Wesleyan College for Fall 1998:

- **Computer Science:** master's required, doctorate preferred
- **Marketing:** doctorate and previous teaching required
- **Maternal-Child Nursing:** master's required, doctorate preferred and more than 5 years teaching experience
- **Graphic Designer/Art Department Chair:** MFA required, 2-5 years teaching experience

Roberts Wesleyan is a coeducational Christian liberal arts college with over 1,000 students and offers more than 40 academic, professional, and pre-professional programs as well as 3 graduate programs. Roberts Wesleyan is a member of the Coalition of Christian Colleges and Universities and is accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools.

For information about these positions, fill out an application form, write to: Office of the Provost, Roberts Wesleyan College, 27 Westside Dr., Rochester, NY 14624. Women and minorities are encouraged to apply. FIC is an equal opportunity, affirmative action employer.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

ASSOCIATE PASTOR OF WORSHIP AND MUSIC MINISTRIES you have a passion for leading other in "shipping our great God? Do you have a on for using music, drama, and creative in the diverse expression of worship? age Church of Gurnee (an evangelical ch in a north suburb of Chicago) is seek- an experienced Christian leader to bring 00+ worshipers before our Lord in wor- . Responsibilities include: active partic- to plan and present Sunday morning ship, administer and enable a diverse ic ministry, provide leadership and vision active and growing drama and fine arts grams. Send résumé to: Village Church of nee, Att., Box 102, 1319 N. Hunt Club Rd., nee, IL 60031, or fax: (847) 244-6647.

CHRISTIANITY TODAY, INC. seeks to fill the owing positions:
Advertising Sales Manager: Degreed individ- with 5-10 yrs. sales-management experi- in the Christian market to provide day- lay management of advertising account tive staff and departmental sales efforts.
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Market Research Analyst: Degreed analyst t 2-3 years exp. in market research analy- Should be skilled in PC & Mac software, ey development for both qualitative and nitative research, data analysis.
Director of Marketing: Degreed individual t 8 years experience (preferably in maga- /book publishing) to provide strategic ction for ancillary product direct-mail keting, supervise marketing managerial f, and give input to new product R&D. st have proven experience managing ct-mail marketing efforts.
 o combine career with ministry, mail/fax me with cover letter detailing salary histo- or: Christianity Today, Inc., HR Dept.-CT, Gundersen Dr., Carol Stream, IL 60188; (630) 260-0114; E-mail: CTIHRDept l.com.

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 ary College, evangelical, Christian liberal college is seeking a full-time, nontenure k position. Teach physical science for non- ors, chemistry for nursing students, and nistry labs. MS or Ph.D. in Chemistry. st be committed to the spiritual mission of college and be in agreement with college ement of faith. Women & minorities oused to apply. Send résumé: Provost, ary College, Wilmore, KY 40390.

CH IN JAPAN: Reach Asians for Christ. h in English. Several K-12 & ESL teacher nings. Mission school of 450; 2-year con- s. Must raise partial support. Write Dr. Bob inger, Okinawa Christian School, P.O. Box 50, Gainesville, FL 32604; (1-800) 446-6423.

CE CHRISTIAN Reformed Church is ing to fill a newly created staff position of ctor of congregational life. Focus will be development of small groups, individual tual gifts & oversight of educational pro- s. M.Div. or M.Ch.R.Ed. or equivalent is ied & a visible & professed commitment e Reformed faith. Please send résumés to: ch Committee, Peace CRC, 833 E. 168th S. Holland, IL 60473; fax: (708) 331-5367.

POSITIONS WANTED

MINISTER OF WORSHIP AND MUSIC seeks position in evangelical church. Ordained, 21 years experience. BS and B.Mus. from Phila- delphia College of Bible, working on MA; pub- lished writer, composer, arranger. George Yurick, 1040 Orchard Ave., Aurora, OH 44202 (330) 562-4801 or gyurick@compuserve.com.

BOOKS, FILMS, AND TAPES

EVANGELISTIC MATERIAL IN ARABIC: books, tracts, cassettes. In English: *The Bible and Islam* (\$4.95 U.S./\$5.95 Canada). Write: Arabic Dept., Back to God Hour, 6555 W. College Dr., Palos Heights, IL 60463.

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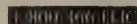
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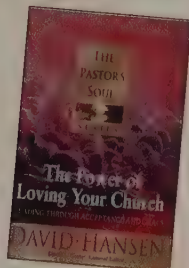
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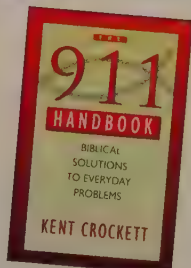
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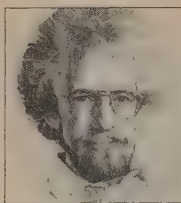
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PHILIP YANCEY

Jesus' Unanswered Prayers

**When Jesus
prayed
to the one
who could
save him
from death,
he did not
get that
salvation;
he got
instead the
salvation of
the world.**

When prayer seems more like struggle than relationship, when I find myself repeating the same requests over and over and even wonder, "Is anyone really listening?" I take no small comfort in remembering that Jesus, too, had unanswered prayers. Three come to mind.

As Luke records, Jesus spent an entire night in prayer before choosing the inner core of twelve disciples. Yet if you read the Gospels, you marvel that this dodgy dozen could be the answer to any prayer. They included, Luke pointedly notes, "Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor," not to mention the petty ambitious Sons of Thunder and the hothead Simon, whom Jesus would once address as "Satan."

"O unbelieving generation," Jesus would sigh about these twelve, "how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you?" I wonder if, in that moment of exasperation, Jesus questioned the Father's guidance.

Technically, I admit, the particular makeup of the twelve does not qualify as an unanswered prayer, for we have no reason to believe that any other choices might have served Jesus better. Yet I find it comforting that while on earth Jesus faced the same limitations as does anyone in leadership. The Son of God himself could only work with the talent pool available.

Eventually, except for Judas, the twelve underwent a slow but steady transformation, providing a kind of long-term answer. John, a Son of Thunder, softened into "the apostle of Love." Peter, who earned Jesus' rebuke by recoiling from the idea of Messiah's suffering, later urged his followers to "follow in his steps" by suffering as Christ did.

The second "unanswered prayer" occurred in the Garden of Gethsemane when, as Luther put it, "God struggled with God." While Jesus lay prostrate on the ground, sweat falling from him like drops of blood, his prayers took on an uncharacteristic tone of pleading. He "offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death," the Letter to the Hebrews says, but of course Jesus knew he would not be saved from death. As that awareness grew, Jesus felt distress. He had no community of support—they had all fallen asleep. "Could you not keep watch for one hour?" he chided.

A dramatic change takes place, however, between that scene in the garden and what follows. The Gospel accounts of Gethsemane show a person in anguish. Afterward they show one who, more than Pilate, more than Herod, acts in utter control. At his trials Jesus is no victim; he is serene, the master of his destiny.

What happened in the garden? What made the difference? We have few details about the content of Jesus' prayers, since potential witnesses were all doing. He may have reviewed his entire ministry on earth. The weight of all that went undone may have borne down upon him: his disciples were unstable; the movement seemed in peril; God-chosen people had rejected him; the world still harbored evil and much suffering.

Jesus himself seemed at the very edge of human endurance. He no more relished the idea of pain and death than you or I do. "Everything is possible for you," Jesus pleaded to the Father. "Take this cup from me."

Somehow, though, in Gethsemane Jesus worked through that crisis by transferring the burden to the Father. It was God's will he had come to do, after all, and his plea resolved into these words: "Yet not what I will, but what you will." Not many hours later he could cry out, in profound summation, "It is finished."

Hebrews mysteriously concludes that, though Jesus was not saved from death, nevertheless he was heard because of his reverent submission. Though he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered."

How many times have I prayed for one thing only to receive another? I long for the sense of detachment, of trust, that I see in Gethsemane. God alone is qualified to answer my prayers, even if it means transmuting them from my own self-protective will into God's perfect will. When Jesus prayed to the one who could save him from death, he did not get that salvation; he got instead the salvation of the world.

The third unanswered prayer appears in another intimate scene recorded by John, Jesus' last supper with his disciples. Jesus expands the scope of his prayer beyond the walls of the Upper Room, to encompass even those of us who live today:

My prayer is not for them [the disciples] alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have sent them.

Disunity virtually defines the history of the church. Pick at random any year of history—today—and you will see how far short we fall of Jesus' final request. The church, and the watchful world, still await an answer.

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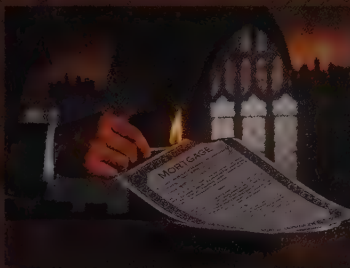
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Michael G. Maudlin,
Managing Editor

The Burden of Spencer Perkins

INSIDE CT

In 1968 our nation suddenly and unexpectedly lost its leading light on racial issues. I felt history repeating itself for me when I heard the news that Spencer Perkins had been taken from us. On January 27, the president of Reconcilers Fellowship in Jackson, Mississippi, and the son of evangelist/activist John Perkins died suddenly and unexpectedly of a heart attack at age 43 (see the obituary on p. 73).

In 1993 Spencer and his white ministry partner, Chris Rice, authored *More Than Equals: Racial Healing for the Sake of the Gospel* (InterVarsity). CT ran an excerpt about Spencer's early struggle to assimilate two facts: one, that he was redeemed by Christ and, two, that many whites, allegedly redeemed by the same Christ, hated him ("How I Learned to Love White People," Sept. 13, 1993, p. 34). He told of his despair when, at age 13, a white principal assented to a classmate's judgment that Spencer was "just a nigger"; his pain at 16 when he saw the humiliation in his father's eyes after John was ambushed and beaten almost to death for his civil-rights work; the confusion and hurt of being befriended and then rejected by a white college student. While his story of growing up black in America was powerful, it was not unique. The freshness came in his gospel-centered message.

For Spencer, the burden for racial reconciliation was heavy: "If white and black Christians could not be reconciled, then either the gospel was a lie or we really weren't indwelt by the Christ we said had taken up residence in our lives."

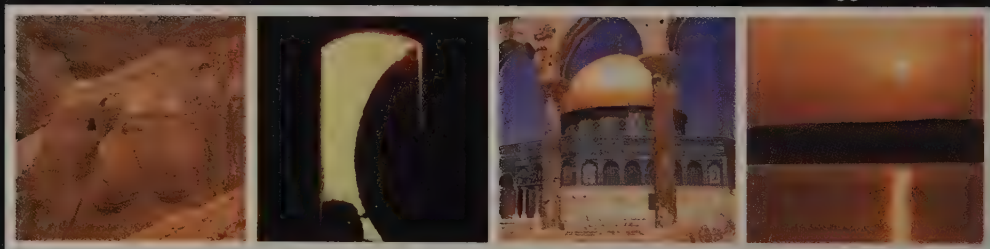
Yet this burden never provided an excuse to play down hard truths: "Most black people are angry—angry about our violent history, angry for the hassle it is to grow up black in America, angry that we can never assume that we won't be prejudged by our color, angry that we will carry this stigma everywhere we go. . . . And most of all angry that white America doesn't understand the reasons for our anger." This anger can be "a very destructive force" or "channeled positively," but it "must be reckoned with."

In journalist Edward Gilbreath's cover story on evangelicals and race 30 years after Martin Luther King, Jr. (see "Catching Up with a Dream," p. 20), we hear more of Spencer's hard truths: how segregation in the church is what both blacks and whites war "but that puts comfort and culture over Christ."

Lately Spencer talked about "radical grace" as the key to moving to the next step in racial reconciliation. But once again God has left it to us to finish the conversation without our group leader.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Trucker's testimony

■ The message in large, bold letters on the mudflap of a tractor-trailer truck passed on I-80 somewhere between Iowa and Connecticut last November riveted my wife and me with its terse **ONLY JESUS SAVES**. A lively discussion ensued about the importance of the word *only*. Little did we realize it was the Lord's preparation for the insights in Daniel B. Clendenin's powerful presentation ["The Only Way" Jan. 12]. With hindsight, it can be concluded that the long-haul trucker was correct in his exclusiveness and diligent in his obedience to the Great Commission.

Peter Kushkowski
Haddam, Conn.

■ I agree with the points Clendenin made. I just wish he had not overlooked the words of the apostle Paul. Romans 1:20 tells us God is so clearly seen in his creation that man is without excuse, and Romans 2:14-15 tells that us when the Gentiles instinctively do the things contained in the Law they reveal the law written in their hearts, an experience analogous to the new covenant.

Because God does not want anyone to be lost, because God always does that which is right, in my opinion Paul suggests that God could save those who never heard the gospel because they saw Jesus the Creator revealed in his creation and on that basis lived instinctively for him experiencing what we would call the new covenant.

On the basis of biblical evidence, I would have to answer Clendenin's question, "Yes, God can certainly save those who have never heard the gospel." I believe he would prefer that all hear the gospel. But not all have heard or will hear the gospel because of our failure to proclaim it. Should they then be lost because of our failure? It seems to me that Paul describes for us a just, fair, and loving God's alternative.

Vialo Weis
Yukon, Okla.

■ Clendenin's article is to be commended for its pointedness and sensitivity. Perhaps it is too simplistic an observation, but for any Christian to believe that Jesus Christ is truly the Son of God and also to believe theological pluralism is an ultimate absurdity. In fact, it is just plain slander-

ous of God. If Jesus is indeed God's Son and theological pluralism be true, then God is both foolish and evil; not only foolish to have needlessly sacrificed his only Son when there were other ways for man to be saved, but also evil to have done so, the other ways making it quite unnecessary.

Pastor Clifford A. Hurst
Hurst Union Road Pentecostal Church
Dayton, Ohio

I believe the error of pluralism is a failure to understand who Christ really is. What comes out from this world-view is that Christ is a "peer" of Muhammad, Buddha, Confucius, and the like. The Christian knows this is not accurate and that Christ is very God, one with the Father. To say

that no one comes to God except through Christ is not narrow; it just acknowledges the truth that no one comes to God except through God. Any attempt to reach God through other religions must go through Christ eventually if it has any hope of being successful. A high view of who Christ is solves the

problems of exclusiveness, narrowness, and so on.

Robert C. Vanstrum
Dellwood, Minn.

A place for discomfort

Frederica Mathewes-Green's article "Wanted: A New Pro-Life Strategy" [Jan. 12] encourages the pro-life community to trade political activism, which she says does not work, for a model of sympathetic persuasion. I believe Mathewes-Green draws up a false dichotomy. Active listening and sympathetic discussions are effective in crisis-pregnancy centers and in intimate settings, but they are not sufficient to end abortion. There is no need to take an either/or stance on pro-life strategy. The sin of abortion is invasive both at the personal and the institutional level. Different tactics are called for depending on the intended audience and on specific goals.

As Mathewes-Green acknowledges, most people know it's a baby. However, the American conscience needs to be stung repeatedly by the truth that killing a baby is wrong. Old Testament history reminds us how easy it is for a generation to slide into complacently accepting evil. Many pro-lifers are weary, and some may wonder if the battle is worth it. Just as we are called to persevere in our personal

walk with God, so we need to persevere in the down and dirty business of telling the world that abortion is wrong, and in the sometimes even dirtier business of political involvement.

Mary A. Waalke
Boulder, Colo.

■ While applauding Mathewes-Green's suggestion that we move beyond "avoidance and fury" in the abortion debate, would add one further consideration to her suggestion that "we should explore whether marriage is a possibility." While she cites statistics of the success of "shotgun" marriages (and they are impressive statistics), shouldn't the spiritual state of both parties be included in our exploration? If the principle of being "unequally yoked" mentioned in 2 Corinthians applies to the marriage bond, then we could find ourselves complicating sin with sin by encouraging a believer to marry an unbeliever [just because] one of them is pregnant.

James Menzies
Wakefield, R.I.

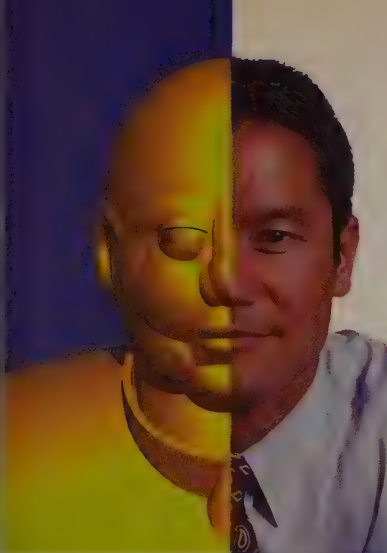
Mathewes-Green lists three points for new strategy: (1) It's a baby, (2) Abortion hurts women, (3) We can live without abortion. Under these she further details how to advance this strategy by speaking to the woman about preventing pregnancy, supporting those who experience an unexpected pregnancy, becoming a friend exploring marriage to the baby's father, encouraging adoption, and so on.

This made me wonder: "What have been doing for the last 13 years?" We have been, on a daily basis, setting this strategy before the clients of the pregnancy-help centers for many years.

There was a fourth point with which we must take great exception—the recommendation not to speak to people who are not religious about God or Scripture because Mathewes-Green has found such an approach to be "nearly always ineffective and because you may be seen as 'one of those.'" However, I have found the opposite to be true.

When first in the pregnancy-help center movement, we were taught to counsel women without bringing up the concept of God. However, if it appeared the woman was receptive, we could broach the subject but be ready to retreat if there was any sign she was not ready to hear the mention of his name. Years of frustration followed as I and those I taught struggled





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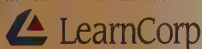
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to present that strategy. We knew deep in our hearts there was something missing.

Eventually we realized that gagging our speech about God was wrong. Without speaking about God, sharing his message of salvation, peace, mercy, forgiveness, and love, there cannot be a change of life and heart. As much as I agree that we must (continue to) "listen carefully to pro-choicers in order to understand their reasoning," my experience with women in the counseling room, as well as my understanding of Scripture, indicates that the abortion issue is not a faulty-reasoning

issue but rather a matter of the client's heart and spiritual condition.

When done in a respectful, loving, and sensitive way, speaking about the God of love through biblical counseling is the most effective and longest-lasting approach.

Pat Dundas
Hope Counseling Center
Dover, Del.

✉ At first, the article urged cooperation between pro-life and pro-choice groups in a way that could dramatically impact the annual carnage wrought by abortion.

However, it turned out merely to be a smoother approach to the standard bottom line: We must pass laws that will *force* all pregnant women to carry every pregnancy to full term regardless. Such an absolute stand means the carnage will continue.

Don Hawley
Portland, Oreg.

About a year ago I came across a statistic saying that 85 percent of women contemplating abortion, who then have an opportunity to view their own sonogram, choose not to abort the child. This explains why abortion clinics position the screen so that only the physician can view it. It occurred to me that the most effective deterrent to abortion may be a law that required clinics to offer a woman the option of viewing her sonogram.

I began calling pro-life leaders throughout our state. I expected to have someone politely explain to me why such an idea was naïve and impractical. To my surprise I was met with praise and excitement.

I talked with a couple of individuals about devising a strategy for such a bill. We spoke of presenting it from a pro-choice perspective, the difference being that our bill allowed for informed choice rather than blind choice. The initial reaction was one of enthusiasm. I was asked to come to Annapolis to meet with pro-life leaders. [But dates for] meetings to be held in August or September passed. I then spoke with a representative who came to my office and asked me to abandon this approach, at least temporarily, and get involved in an attempt to ban partial-birth abortion in Maryland. I agreed.

Still another contact with Maryland Right-to-Life suggested I abandon all hope for "an informed consent bill." Her logic: "We don't want to be perceived as being too pushy." I was then told that if I persisted in pushing for informed consent, the local news media "will rip you to shreds."

If a bill requiring clinics to give women the option of seeing their sonogram is not feasible, then fine. But if we are backing out under the threat of a hostile press, something is wrong.

Pastor Howard Gardner
Bel Air Assembly of God
Bel Air, Md.

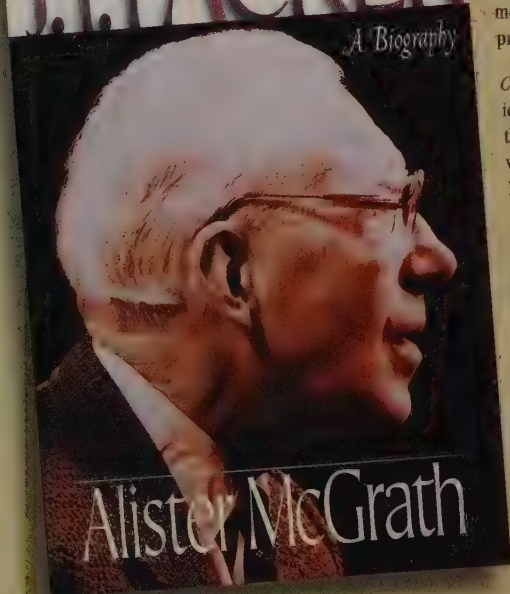
Life is precious

Your editorial "What Really Died in Oregon" [Jan. 12] prompted me, for the first time, to consider the seriousness of the assisted-suicide issue. Life is very precious, and for a person to lose that divine spark, it must be the result of the unavoidable collapse of one's health, not

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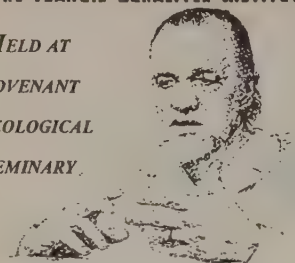
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LETTERS

product of a bad day. Whether or not I'm a burden to myself and society, the breath that is within me was given to me by the grace of God, and to snuff it out by my own hand would be a denial of the providence of the Almighty.

Perhaps if the naysayers, who adamantly proclaim the end of the Age of Miracles, would quiet their rumbling, the afflicted might be able to hear the voice of God, for God is able to do exceedingly, abundantly, above all we can ask or think. That would include healings as well. *David A. Brayshaw
Tampa, Fla.*

The largely HMO-controlled medical industry in this country does, indeed, create a market for the services of Dr. Death. HMOs are set up to serve persons with illnesses and injuries that have a specific etiology and a limited duration and, therefore, are readily treatable with one or two of the conventional therapies.

Those persons whose bodies suffer from more mysterious, intractable ailments and so refuse to recover quickly and efficiently soon get the message that the maintenance of *their* health is not

worth the required trouble and expense. Negative conclusions about the relative worth of their own (increasingly miserable) existence follow predictably.

When the bottom line is, well, the bottom line, much that is so much more valuable than the saving and making of money is irrevocably lost. The Oregon vote is the voice of the future in HMO-land.

*Rebecca Merrill Groothuis
Littleton, Col*

**Contentment through
credit cards**

✶ Kudos to Charles Colson for his column on the spirituality spin that advertisers are more commonly employing as they try to charm the consumer ["Madison Avenue's Spiritual Chic," Jan. 12]. Apparently these days not only sex but spirituality sells, and our corporate community continues to cash in on whatever works. Indeed, their philosophical motives are rarely neutral. Unfortunately, Colson failed to comment on the most prevalent and perhaps most pernicious message that advertisers preach, hardly "neutral," and certainly "spiritual": *consumerism*. Or

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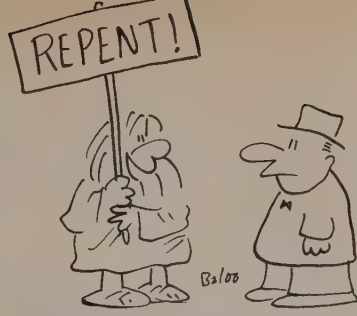
Andrew Beunk
Grand Rapids, Mich.

I wish evangelicalism's foremost cultural critic would write what really needs to be said: Turn off the idiot box and get a life.

Greg Mortimer
El Jebel, Colo.

Colson's anecdote about how his criticism of one auto company's ad campaign led to change is encouraging. But he seems to extrapolate from that event a belief that similar complaints by the rest of us will have similar effects. He overlooks the reality of his own position and influence.

More disconcerting was the juxtaposition of the questions "When our kids hum the catchy jingle of the latest commercial, their spiritual impulse being diverted into consumerism? Are they absorbing Madison Avenue's false values?" with the



"Actually, I'm soliciting guests for talk shows."

statement "Ads with spiritual themes trivialize religion by reducing it to a marketing ploy." I think Colson is confused about who is absorbing and trivializing what.

The trivialization of religion by commercialism can as easily be a charge laid against the "Christian" publishing houses that have often sacrificed content in their publications and replaced it with marketing glitz. And "Madison Avenue's false values" were adopted long ago by churches in North America, which assumed a model of the corporate world as a standard of success. We have replaced the concept of a pastor with the idea of a CEO. Many of my colleagues in pastoral ministry are nearly

being crushed by the expectations of Christians that we perform as corporate executives. I was wonderfully trained at seminary to perform theologically and pastorally, only to realize that the churches' expectations require an M.B.A. rather than an M.Div. Christianity, at least in this country, bought "Madison Avenue" a long time ago.

By the way, my children know that humming "the catchy jingle of the latest commercial" will result in the swift imposition of a television viewing moratorium in our home.

Pastor Charles M. Lyons
Bethel Assembly of God
Jacksonville, N.C.

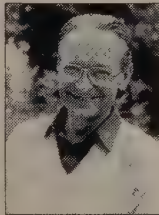
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Henri Blocher

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Blocher is a prolific author, dedicated scholar and teacher, and an inspirational preacher and lecturer. His lecture topic is "From Text to Truth: Biblical Exegesis and Systematic Theology." Please join us.

The mission of Beeson Divinity School is to prepare God-called persons to serve as ministers in the Church of Jesus Christ. For information on Henri Blocher's lectures or Beeson Divinity School, call Gregg Morrison at 1-800-888-8266.

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Beware the Spotlight

We are called to be suspicious of the Christian celebrity culture.



Several years ago, in the aftermath of Christian musician Michael English's affair with a backup singer, one Nashville pastor told *Billboard's* Debra Evans Price: "We dress people up, put make-up on them, have stylists do their hair, put them on a stage in front of thousands of people, shine a spotlight on them, and then expect them to be humble."

And this is the surprising part: We are still surprised when they are not humble or when Christian celebrities fall.

This past February was the ten-year anniversary of the public disgrace of Jimmy Swaggart, who has become a powerful symbol of Christian celebrityism gone wrong. On page 30 of this issue, Randall Balmer recounts a visit to Swaggart's church and reports on a weary evangelist and preacher who has had a hard time forgiving those who were critical of him and who has not been entirely successful at learning from his mistakes.

Swaggart, the media figure, reminds us that the Christian-leader-as-personality cult is dangerous for both the celebrity and his or her followers. Humility is indeed a tall order for those in the seductive glow of the spotlight. Celebrityism, even among Christians, is a snare.

Wisdom demands that we become suspicious of celebrities. A big, red "Be skeptical" sign should

flash in our minds whenever we see Christian personalities plastered on our book and magazine covers or hear their smooth voices sweetening our TVs and radios. Skepticism is not cynicism; Paul's poetic description of how love "believes all things" (1 Cor. 13:7) is not an excuse for credulity or blind faith, least of all not in human beings with feet of clay. After all, Jesus admonished us to be "as shrewd as snakes" as we try to be as "innocent as doves" (Matt. 10:16, NIV) in a sinful world. And Paul knew the necessity of testing everything (1 Thess. 5:21). We need to recognize the painful truth that the pervasiveness of worldly entertainment values within the evangelical subculture has a tendency to minimize the gospel content.

Martin Luther King, Jr.'s antidote to racism—that we judge people by "the content of their character"—also

works as a powerful antidote to the personality culture in which we live. The headlines make it painfully obvious that fame cannot be equated with character.

So we ask: Have we learned these lessons about celebrityism in the church? Have we taken to heart the painful truths Swaggart taught us?

Transformers vs. sectarians

Christian singer Steve Camp doesn't think so. In an October 1997 manifesto studded with 107 theses (a 13 percent gain over Luther's 95), Camp raised alarm over the contemporary Christian music (CCM) industry's lack of holy living, its penchant for skewed doctrine, and its unequal yoking with the secular owners of the once-Christian record labels. Camp called for a renewed devotion to Scripture along with a renewed infusion of biblical teaching in CCM lyrics. And he called for the record labels to buy back their independence from the media conglomerates that own them.

His separationism, he claims, is not isolationism (We must befriend unbelievers and witness to them he explains). Neither is his vision one that could ever be as salt and light, transforming an industry. His harsh denunciations of Christian artists working for secular companies makes one wonder how Christian conductor Herbert Blomstedt, to take on

example, could work for the Communist government of East Germany as the director of the Dresden Staatskapelle for many years and have such a vibrant witness. How artists can have a Christian witness while working for secular organizations is unimagined in Camp's philosophy. Yet many have.

Despite his naïve come-outism, many of Camp's prescriptions are precisely what will preserve or rescue those whose lives are devoted to the personality-driven worlds of the CCM industry, of religious broadcasting, and of the writing and publishing of bestselling Christian books. Those prescriptions are a return to *biblical morality, literacy, and accountability*—and, above all, *repentance*.

Interestingly, that is what some Nashville sources say is now happening. Having covered the Christian music business for over ten years, *Billboard's* Price says that the spiritual discipline of musicians has actually grown as the industry has exploded from just a handful of music celebrities whose influence was largely locked inside a Christian subculture to a new era when Jars of Clay can appear on *Late Show with David Letterman*, and Christian singers are entertaining and witnessing in a broader context.

"Our industry has ambassadors taking the message to the mainstream," Price says, "but I haven't seen negative fallout from that. People in our industry take great pains to be grounded in their faith and not to be distracted."

Many artists have now established advisory boards to hold them accountable, she says, and Nashville pastors have begun focusing their ministry more tightly on the spiritual needs of touring musicians. Sadder but wiser artists have learned the hard way that they need to focus quality time on their families and home congregations. Singing in other people's churches every weekend has proved to be a great way to lose your own soul.

Prescriptions for humility

In the culture of celebrity, the entertainer, or radio preacher is driven to be more persona than person, more icon than individual. Maintaining the persona forces artists into isolation, demanding the grooming and constant maintenance of an image. The result is a social life rich in glamour but poor in community. But as Christians know, only by the grit of community is our spiritual roughness worn smooth.

Late last year, singer Sandi Patty talked candidly with CT editors about the way she has restructured family, church, and community responsibilities as she moves back into public life after a public fall. An important part of her new plan is full participation in her own local church, where people know her well and are unimpressed, in a healthy way, with her celebrity. Artists who, like Patty, avail themselves of communities of true accountability put themselves in position to be known as people by those who love them as friends, not fans, and who can warn them in strong language as well as support them in prayer.

Artists' managers are key as well, as we learned from talking to Patty's Matt Baugher and dc Talk's Rob Michaels. Says Michaels, "We constantly remind our clients that God has given them an opportunity, and with opportunity comes responsibility. They do not have a call to celebrity, but a call to be faithful with their gifting. Whatever celebrity they have is a mantle, not a right."

All public figures—politicians, radio preachers, performing artists—need someone close to them who can say *balderdash* when they begin excusing self-serving behavior. Writers' agents and artists' managers and all those close to religious broadcasters have a high moral responsibility to avoid being mere acolytes.

Artists also need to model commitment. Says Michaels, "People who sing to you and people who make you laugh can get things through to you that your pastor can't. Fans give celebrities power over their lives, and the celebrity must use that power responsibly." God bless those artists who have called their fans to service and sacrifice—as have the bands who play in the Rock for Life concerts. God bless those who use their brief fame for good and for telling the good news.

If the Christian music industry has needed to work at cleaning up its act, so do other parts of the evangelical subculture. Stories continue of egotistical celebrity authors who abuse ghostwriters and publicists, and politics is, well, still politics. Particularly in religious broadcasting and political activism, power and money are often treated as zero-sum games. These "industries" need to pray much about the calling of the Christian in the spotlight.

Our role

Ultimately, the responsibility for change is not centered in Nashville or Colorado Springs or any other concentration of personality-driven Christian ministry. We the public have a responsibility to be careful and critical consumers of mass culture—including its Christian forms. We have the power in our pocketbooks; we have power in our pulpits.

We can encourage what Camp calls a "Christ-less, watered-down, pabulum-based, positive alternative, aura-fluff, cream of wheat, mush-kind-of-syrupy, God-as-my-girlfriend" kind of music, or we can refuse to buy those CDs, attend those concerts, book those artists in our community's venues. We can forestall our own spiritual growth by growing dependent on largely imagined links with Christian celebrities, or we can thrive in the soil of our local congregations, where God has planted us, rightly dividing the Word of truth under the guidance of our local leaders.

As a spiritually critical public, we must be hard-nosed with our choices and purchases, supporting not only artistic excellence but spiritual maturity. And those decisions do not bear fruit in the market alone; they inevitably bring their own reward reaped in the growth of moral fiber. **CT**

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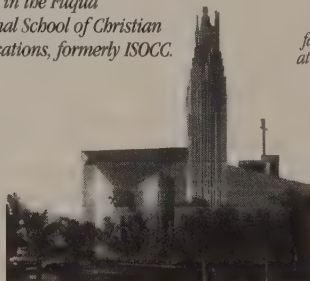
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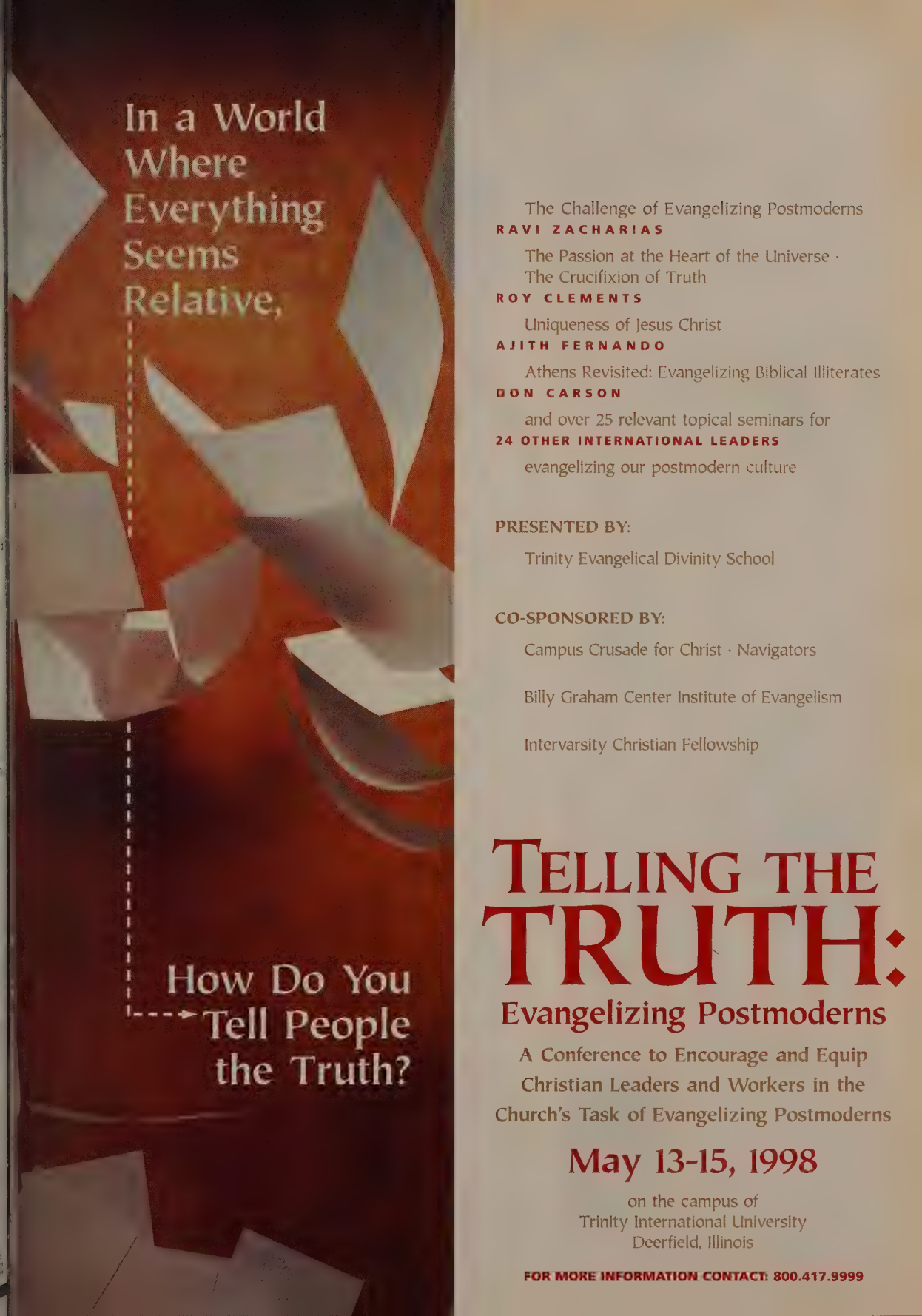
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* Indicates last month's position.
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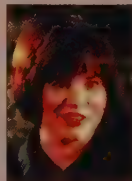
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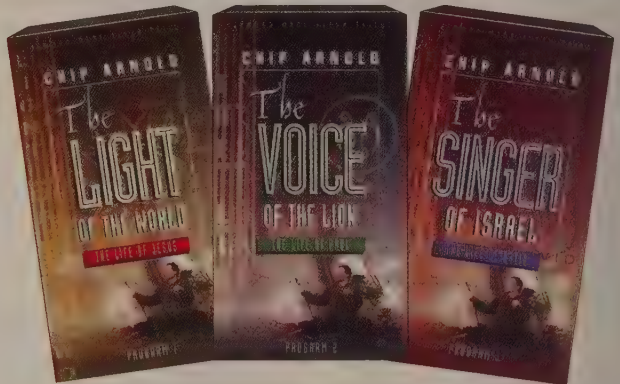
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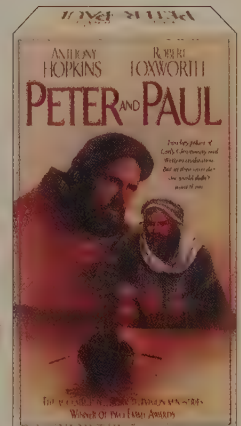
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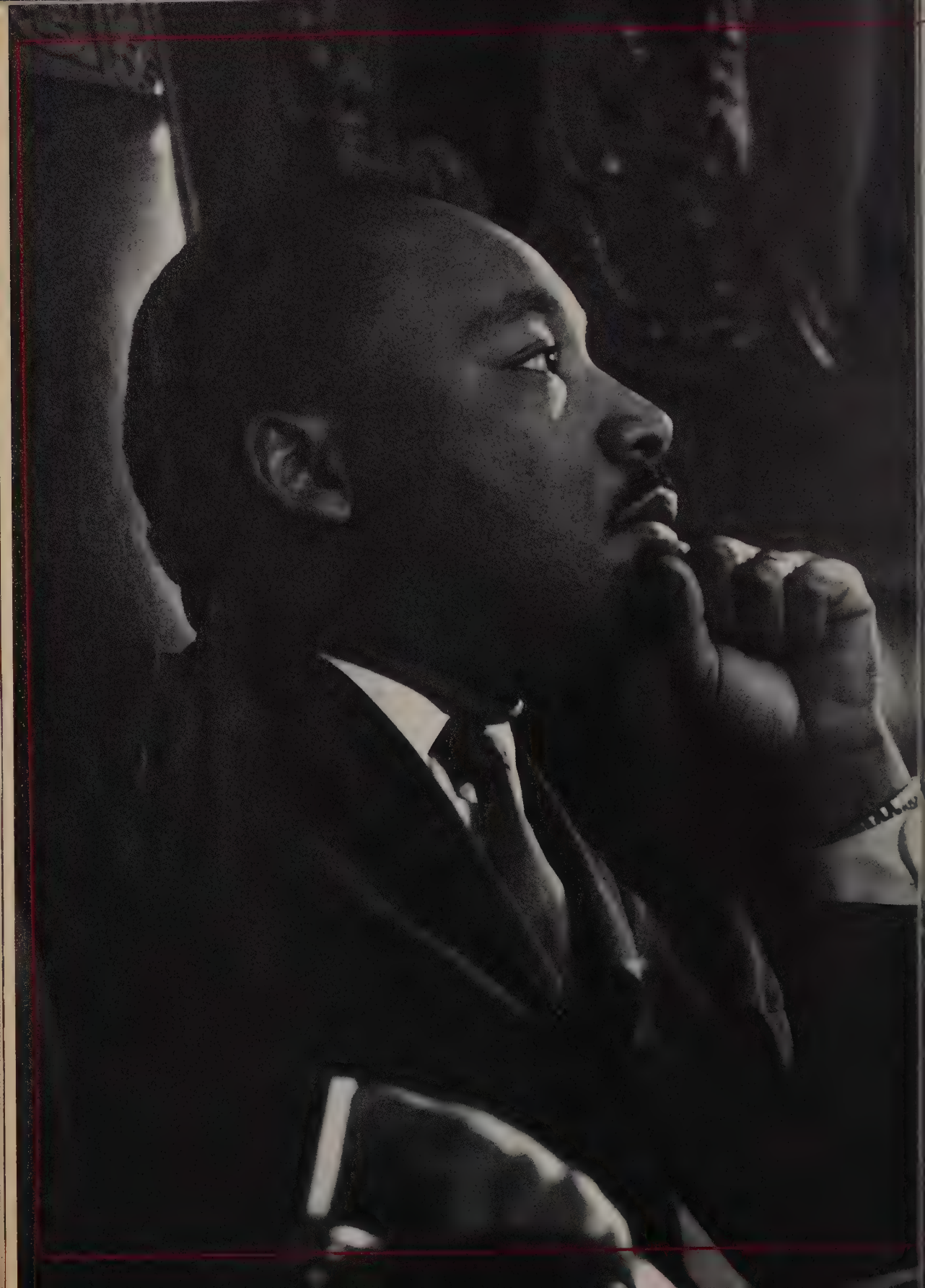
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CATCHING UP WITH A DREAM

Evangelicals and Race 30 Years After the Death of Martin Luther King, Jr.

EDWARD GILBREATH

As one of only two Negroes attending Los Angeles Baptist College (now Master's College), Dolphus Weary was having the time of his life experiencing a new world of white faces and middle-class culture. Born and raised in rural Mississippi, Weary had assumed he would spend the rest of his life there—until a recruiting team offered him and a friend a chance to attend a Christian liberal arts college in southern California. Other Christian schools that Weary had been interested in refused admission to Negroes. But through the urging of a bold admissions director and an ambitious basketball coach, this ultraconservative institution agreed to make Weary and his friend the first blacks who attended in its 30-year history.

Weary earned above-average grades (knowing anything less would be unacceptable) and helped lead the school's basketball team to a 19-and-5 record. Things were good. The poverty and provincialism of Negro life in southern Mississippi were out of sight, out of mind. Weary was glad to have escaped it—that is, until the day's big news made its way across campus.

As Weary left the library on April 4, 1968, a white student approached him and said, "Did you hear? Martin Luther King got shot."

"I remember running to my room, flipping on the radio, and listening to the news report," he recalls. A rifle bullet had ripped into King's neck as he stood on a motel balcony in Memphis, Tennessee. The civil-rights leader was rushed to a hospital in serious condition. "I was devastated."

As he sat on his bed holding back the tears, Weary

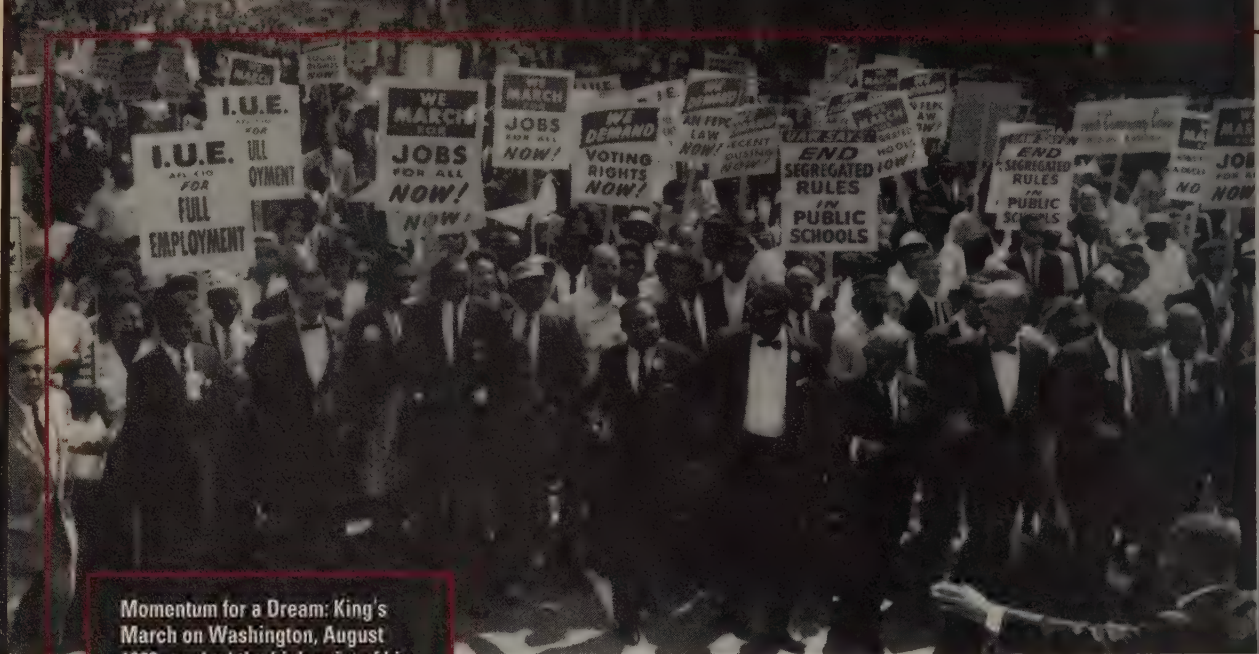
could hear voices down the hall: white students talking about King's shooting. But Weary quickly realized that they were not just talking; they were laughing.

"I couldn't understand what I was hearing," he says. "These Christian kids were glad that Dr. King—my hero—had been shot. I wanted to run out there and confront them." Instead, he steeled his fury and laid prostrate on his bed. Finally, as the newscaster delivered the awful update—"Martin Luther King has died in a Memphis hospital."—Weary could hear the white voices down the hall let out a cheer.

That was 30 years ago. Today Dolphus Weary is the executive director of Mission Mississippi, a Jackson-based community-development ministry that has drawn together black and white Christians throughout the state that King once described as "sweltering with the heat of oppression."

After hearing the white students cheer on that terrible spring day in 1968, reconciliation was the last thing on Weary's mind. "I had to ask God how to respond," he remembers. "It was around the time that H. Rap Brown, Stokely Carmichael, and other young militant leaders were starting the Black Power movement, and I was tempted to join them. Laughing at Dr. King's death was just like laughing at me—or at the millions of other blacks for whom King labored."

Deep inside, Weary wanted to hate white people, to separate himself from their prejudice. "But then I remembered the heart of Dr. King—responding to hate with love. The Lord brought to my mind that those students were only playing back the tapes that



Momentum for a Dream: King's March on Washington, August 1963, marked the high point of his influence.

had been recorded in their heads, and I needed to help change the tape."

Weary resolved to "take every opportunity on that campus to help those young minds think differently." He engaged students and professors in discussions about race. He welcomed them to ask him questions about the Negro experience in the South. He rechanneled his anger into building genuine relationships with his white peers.

"I think that is the way Dr. King would have approached it," he says. "King's heart was to look at the broader picture. The small picture is to be angry. The broader, more prophetic picture is to devote yourself to changing the system and changing minds. That was King's great work: He brought the race issue to the table and put it on the minds of the American people. It was not on our agenda before that. But he came along and told us that we're all created in God's image, and that we ought to start looking at each other as brothers and sisters, especially those of us in the Christian church."

Three decades after the death of Martin Luther King, Jr., the race issue is still very much on our minds. Across the nation the news is regularly filled with stories of racial tension and economic disparity between blacks and whites. Divided attitudes on political issues like affirmative action and welfare reform signal abiding strains between the races.

A recent Gallup poll found that, by a margin of 76 percent to 49 percent, more whites than blacks believe blacks have equal opportunities for jobs, education, and housing. It also revealed that blacks are twice as likely as whites to favor affirmative action.

Faced with persistent "wake-up calls," the nation is recognizing the widening gulf. President Clinton's Initiative on Race has sought to get the issues "on the table" but has seen only lackluster results so far. Meanwhile, names such as Rodney King and O. J. Simpson have become symbols for America's racial dilemmas.

Despite our national lack of momentum, Martin Luther King's name has entered the national lexicon, evoking idealistic notions of integration, unity, and brotherhood—or, as King used to say, "the beloved community." King's memory stands as a reminder of how far we have journeyed as well as a disturbing beacon of the great distance left to travel.

For the church, King's legacy is as multifarious as the nation he sought to reconcile. While some revere him as a hero and a prophet of peace, others look on him with disdain, a fact that has been magnified by revelations of King's sexual improprieties and lapses in ethical judgment. Nonetheless, the enduring importance of King's life and achievements have led many evangelicals who once dismissed him as a liberal rabble-rouser now to acknowledge the spiritual validity of his social mission.

Volatile days

Robert Graetz was in a tight spot for a white preacher in Montgomery, Alabama. It was 1955, and the Montgomery bus boycott—an unprecedented effort mounted by the Negro community to protest the city's segregated bus system—was in its embryonic stages. The Negro of Montgomery had long endured the oppression of Jim Crow segregation with relatively few complaints. But with the quiet and unexpected revolt of Rosa Parks, a seamstress who had been arrested when she refused to give up her seat to a white man ("My feet were tired," she later said), the Negro community found itself inspired to take a stand.

As the pastor of the all-Negro Trinity Lutheran Church, Graetz could either remain silent and preserve his privilege as a white man, or forfeit his family peace and safety by identifying himself with his Negro congregation. Graetz, lanky, sandy-haired Caucasian, chose to remain faithful to his Negro flock and became the only white publicly active in the boycott. Graetz, now a 69-year-old interim pastor in central Ohio, explains it: "My family and I had to get involved. If we had remained aloof, our effectiveness as spiritual leaders in the black community would have disintegrated."

His involvement with the bus boycott introduced Graetz to Martin Luther King, then 26 years old and pastor of the middle-class Negro congregation in Montgomery's Dexter Avenue Baptist Church. "From the first time I met him,

was impressed," says Graetz. "In terms of his intellect, speaking skills, and ability to motivate people, he was at the top all by himself. He had the remarkable ability to inspire everyone in his presence."

Graetz remembers that King and his wife, Coretta, had only been in Montgomery for a year when he was tapped to lead up the boycott. According to Graetz, King was recruited partly because of his charismatic leadership skills and partly because of his newness to the community—he hadn't made any enemies yet.

Though the boycott was ultimately a success, it was not easy. As the movement picked up momentum, angry segregationists cracked down on the protesters. King's home and those of other Negro leaders were bombed. Graetz was called a "nigger lover" and was frequently awakened at night by the blast of bombs tossed into his yard.

According to Graetz, the whites of the Klan mentality" were a minority (others were just indifferent). But those who were racist made it clear that they would do everything possible to keep Negroes in their place. There was an even smaller number of Montgomery's whites who were "neo-abolitionists"—those who did everything possible to change the plight of blacks. "They were not nearly as outspoken," says Graetz, "because as soon as people spoke up, they were fired from their jobs, or their mortgages were foreclosed. Even a rumor that a white businessman was helping black people was enough to put him out of business."

But King and his movement ultimately secured integrated busing in Montgomery, and blacks throughout the South were buoyed by the triumph. Soon King, along with fellow Montgomery pastor Ralph Abernathy and other Negro Christian leaders, formed the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), a national civil-rights organization. "The thing that is often overlooked is that the civil-rights movement was a church movement," observes Graetz. "The leaders were pastors, and the mass meetings were church services, with prayers, hymns, sermons, and offerings."

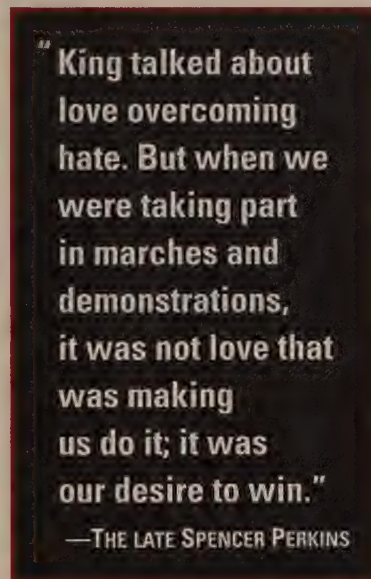
Church as conscience

The son, grandson, and great-grandson of Atlanta preachers, King was raised under the religious pieties of the black Baptist church. "King came out of a very fundamental, evangelical church," explains H. Malcolm Newton, director of urban stud-

ies at Denver Seminary. "They taught the Bible at Ebenezer Baptist Church [in Atlanta]. That was his roots."

King's intellectual curiosity and desire to understand the very unchristian race situation in the South (combined with his education at liberal northern seminaries) compelled him to ask questions that would stretch his theology far beyond fundamentalism. Nonetheless, on a practical level, King's Baptist heritage always shone through. "In the quiet recesses of my heart," he often said, "I am fundamentally a clergyman, a Baptist preacher."

It was no accident that an effort as socially positive as the civil-rights movement began in the church, says noted New York pastor Suzan Johnson Cook, a member of President Clinton's Racial Advisory Board. "Martin Luther King proved that our faith and our struggle



should never be separate. Faith and struggle—when coupled—make us more effective leaders."

"Dr. King taught us that Christianity could be a vigorous voice for conscience in this nation," adds Robert Franklin, president of the Interdenominational Theological Center, an ecumenical coalition of mostly African-American seminaries in Atlanta. "He showed us that the church did not have to marginalize itself. That it could play a major and necessary role in the public square."

In August 1963, King's movement organized its massive March on Washington, the event that begat the legendary

"I Have a Dream" speech and represented the pinnacle of his fame. A Nobel Peace Prize came in 1964. And there were rousing legislative victories as well, such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

King's political efforts received criticism from white religious leaders from both conservative and liberal circles. His famous "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" was actually a passionate response to eight "moderate" clergymen in Alabama who saw King's continued use of nonviolent resistance as "unwise" and encouraged him to let the fight for integration continue in the local and federal courts. Unlike those clergymen, King could not fathom a separation between his faith and politics. He wrote:

In the midst of a mighty struggle to rid our nation of racial and economic injustice, I have heard so many ministers say, "Those are social issues with which the gospel has no real concern," and I have watched so many churches commit themselves to a completely otherworldly religion which made a strange distinction between body and soul, the sacred and the secular.

The price of protest

On a steamy July evening in 1967, James Earl Massey's plane touched down at the Detroit Metropolitan Airport. Massey, then the senior pastor of Detroit's Metropolitan Church of God, had been attending a clergy convention when one of the worst urban riots in U.S. history erupted in the Motor City. Incessant gunfire filled the evenings, rocks and bricks bashed downtown windows, storefronts were looted of their goods, flames consumed entire city blocks. When it was over, 43 lives and \$50 million in property damage had been the cost.

To get home, Massey had to drive through the riot zone. He made it safely, but the biggest challenge still lay ahead for Massey and other leading Detroit ministers who began working to restore peace to their tortured city. "Our church became an outpost for reaching out to people who had lost their homes to fires or had no food because stores had been destroyed." And Detroit was not alone. Racial uprisings had recently erupted in other cities as well—Los Angeles, Harlem, Cincinnati, and several others.

The urban riots were an ugly symp-

tom of the growing spirit of despair that had gripped the Negroes of many northern cities. "There was a lack of jobs and a growing social dissatisfaction," remembers Massey. "With the rise in automation at factories, there were a lot of layoffs, and blacks were feeling the severity of the pinch far more than others."

Although King's civil-rights endeavors had made strides against racism and Jim Crow in the South, issues like poverty, unemployment, and racial discrimination were raging out of control in the North. As a result, younger members of the broader civil-rights movement grew impatient. Leaders of groups such as the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) tossed aside King's "ineffective" nonviolent strategies in favor of more radical "black power" tactics. Malcolm X had been killed in 1965, but the Black Muslim movement continued to win converts in the inner cities. In 1966, SNCC leader Stokely Carmichael vowed never again to "take a beating without hitting back." King, though troubled, understood what drove the militant factions. "The Black Power slogan did not spring full grown from the head of some philosophical Zeus," he said. "It was born from the wounds of despair and disappointment." Nevertheless, black power did not understand King. Massey observes, "King was being looked upon by black militants as an 'Uncle Tom.'"

Massey, now 68, is dean emeritus and professor at large of the Anderson University School of Theology (Ind.) and interim dean of the chapel at Tuskegee University in Alabama. With his neatly trimmed mustache and stately demeanor, Massey was sometimes said to resemble his friend Martin King. He often spent time with King during his trips to Detroit and was aware of his distress and self-doubt over the fragmenting civil-rights scene. Massey points out that, although King remained committed to methods of nonviolence, he was making a clear shift in his rhetoric. "He had moved on to speaking out strongly against poverty and America's participation in the Vietnam War," recalls Massey. "He was, in fact, sounding quite radical."

He wrote in his last book, *Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community?*: "Whites, it must frankly be said, are not putting in a mass effort to re-educate themselves out of their racial ignorance. . . . It is an aspect of their sense of superiority

that the white people of America believe they have so little to learn."

Despite his personal struggles, in early 1968 King was working to organize a massive Poor People's Campaign in Washington for both Negroes and whites. In late March, he arrived in Memphis to support a Negro sanitation workers' strike. His popularity had long since waned. FBI director J. Edgar Hoover (and others) fancied him a "Communist," and for many white Americans, Martin Luther King and urban unrest had become synonymous. The anger and hostility he had been encountering at different protest events, particularly in the large cities, began visibly to erode King's spirit. Says Massey, "In the pictures of him marching in Memphis, you can see the grimmest look on his face. He was very tense. And the speech he gave the night before his death reveals how much he was expecting hostility to rise against him."

**"Evangelicals should
have been involved
simply because it was
the right thing to do."**

—J. C. WATTS

On the night of April 3, a violent thunderstorm drenched Memphis as a somber-looking Martin Luther King took the stage at the Mason Temple (denominational headquarters of the Church of God in Christ). Despite the furious storm, an enthusiastic crowd of 2,000 people had gathered to hear King deliver what would become his final speech. After an impassioned appeal to the audience to continue the work the movement had begun, King's address concluded on an eerie note. "We've got some difficult days ahead," he preached. "But it doesn't matter with me now. Because I've been to the mountaintop. . . . Like anybody, I would like to live a long life. . . . But I'm not concerned about that now. I just want to do God's will. And he's allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I've looked over. And I've seen the promised land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people, will get to the promised land."

The next evening the 39-year-old preacher was shot down as he stood on

the second-floor balcony of Memphis's Lorraine Motel.

Massey remembers being at a Detroit television studio that night with his church choir to record a local broadcast for the following Sunday. "While we were preparing to tape, the studio announcer called me aside and told me the news. My heart sank. I didn't tell the choir until after the taping, because I knew they'd be too upset to sing. After King's death, something in me just died."

Something died within the Negro community as well. King's assassination sparked riots in 125 cities, which led to 21,270 arrests and 46 deaths.

Just not getting it

In September 1968, five months later Glen Kehrein, a white senior from Moody Bible Institute, was on a student retreat at the Green Lake Assembly Grounds, an American Baptist camping and convention center in Wisconsin.

Sharing the huge convention ground with Moody that year were Ralph Abernathy, Jesse Jackson, and other leaders from the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. The SCLC had been turned upside-down since the murder of King, and it was time to pause and take account of the organization's future.

Kehrein was familiar with a few of the SCLC's surviving leaders, but King had intrigued him the most. He had heard about King's reputation as a "Communist" and troublemaker, and Christian leaders had warned him about the dangerous theology contained in King's "social gospel." Kehrein didn't know what to believe. After King's murder, the streets of Chicago had turned into a war zone. The sounds, sights, and aromas of sniper fire, burning buildings, and armed National Guardsmen were fresh in his mind. Even the relationships between black and white students at Moody seemed to carry some underlying strain. "I saw the racial divide vividly in the dorm when King's shooting was announced," Kehrein recalls. "There was a completely different reaction between the blacks and whites. It was not that dissimilar from the conflicting reactions that came after the O. J. Simpson verdict. We definitely were not on the same page."

In Wisconsin, Kehrein wanted to put those disturbing memories out of his head. But he somehow knew they were matters he needed to confront. He was hopeful when his professor announced



"In the pictures of him marching, you can see he was very tense. His speech the night before his death reveals how much he was expecting hostility to rise against him."

—JAMES EARL MASSEY



"There's danger of only seeing him as a dreamer [because] we too easily let ourselves off the hook from dealing with the realities that he was dealing with."

—CHERYL SANDERS



"I now understand the black community's huge public catharsis of anger and frustration and hopelessness that followed King's assassination."

—GLEN KEHREIN

hat Ralph Abernathy had agreed to share a few words with the Moody students, that perhaps King's closest colleague would be able to put some context to his confusion about race in America. "Dr. Abernathy completed his talk and entertained questions from my class. But with all that history in the room, and all that had transpired in the civil-rights movement over the last 10 years, the majority of questions we ended up asking him were about his personal salvation and his understanding of the conservative tenets of evangelical doctrine." Kehrein was stupefied. "Dr. Abernathy was gracious and attempted to accommodate all our questions, but we were clueless. I think our narrow focus said a lot about the evangelical mindset during that era."

Thirty years after the incident at Green Lake, Glen Kehrein is the executive director of Circle Urban Ministries on Chicago's West Side. Through years of ministry in the inner city and committed relationships across racial lines, Kehrein has worked out much of the angst he felt as a Moody student. "I now understand the black community's huge public catharsis of anger and frustration and hopelessness that followed King's assassination," he says. "While I knew the white community's response to King was not a good measure of the man, back then I wasn't astute enough to fully grasp what was going on among African Americans. And I think many white evangelicals have been on a similar journey since King's death."

"White evangelicals were, for the most part, absent during the civil-rights strug-

gle," admits National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) president Don Argue. Since assuming the NAE helm three years ago, Argue, a white Assemblies of God minister, has worked hard to forge relationships between black and white Christians, spearheading joint meetings between his group and the National Black Evangelical Association (NBEA), and assigning blacks to key positions in his organization. But he realizes the road to strong relationships will be a long and delicate one. According to Argue, white evangelicals missed their golden opportunity the first time. "When African Americans had their Moses in the person of Martin Luther King, we were either indifferent or, in some cases, critical and hostile toward what was happening."

Congressman J. C. Watts agrees. "We should have had more evangelical churches willing to be involved in the civil-rights movement during its heyday," says Watts. "Evangelicals should have been involved simply because it was the right thing to do. If there's an injustice against my fellow man, I have an obligation to say it's wrong, not as a politician but as a Christian."

Watts, the only black Republican in Congress (R-Okla.) and an ordained Baptist minister, speaks freely of his affinity for King, which is indicative of the evolution of King's legacy since his death. Today, conservatives from both the political and religious realms talk unashamedly of the positive contributions of the slain civil-rights leader. However, in King's day, his nonviolent

resistance and ambiguous theology were considered suspect. Even evangelist Billy Graham, who since 1953 had worked to desegregate his crusades and had recruited Negro evangelist Howard O. Jones to his team in 1957, was reticent to cast his wholehearted support to King's movement. "Some extreme Negro leaders are going too far and too fast," Graham wrote in 1960. "Only the supernatural love of God through changed men can solve this burning question."

But King saw his "social gospel" as a natural outworking of God's "supernatural love." He told *Playboy* magazine in 1965, "The essence of the Epistles of Paul is that Christians should rejoice at being deemed worthy to suffer for what they believe. The projection of a social gospel, in my opinion, is the true witness of a Christian life. . . . The church once changed society. It was then a thermostat of society. But today I feel that too much of the church is merely a thermometer, which measures rather than molds popular opinion."

In today's hostile climate of clashing ideologies, King would be considered "politically incorrect," says Congressman Watts. "Today people would say to Dr. King, 'No, no, keep your religious beliefs out of politics—remember the separation of church and state.' But everything Dr. King stood for was because of his faith. His faith transcended race and politics."

On the other hand, at least a few Christian thinkers are not convinced of the religious purity of King's public message. According to the late Spencer Perkins,

Breaking the Black/White Stalemate

Jesse Miranda and William Pannell discuss the next step in racial reconciliation.

Jesse Miranda and William Pannell often find themselves the lone representatives of their ethnic groups on evangelical boards and on speakers' platforms. Perhaps, they suggest, it represents the current state of race relations: different ethnic groups and the majority white community have made contact with each other, but as mere aliens visiting one another from far-off planets. What does it take to transform these encouraging but often facile alien encounters into true Christian relationship? The answers are complex. But because Miranda and Pannell have lived in both the white evangelical world as well as the Hispanic and African-American evangelical worlds respectively, their insights are especially worth hearing.

Jesse Miranda is head of the Alianza de Ministerios Evangelicos Nacionales, a national alliance of Hispanic evangelical ministries best known as AMEN, and is associate dean for urban and multicultural affairs for the Haggard Graduate School of Theology at Azusa Pacific University. He also serves on the board of Promise Keepers and is an executive presbyter for the Assemblies of God. Bill Pannell is professor of preaching and dean of the chapel at Fuller Theological Seminary and serves on the Taylor University board. He is also the author of a number of books, including *The Coming Race Wars?* (Zondervan). They met in Pasadena for this discussion, moderated by CT's Kevin D. Miller.

How would you evaluate the current state of racial reconciliation in the church?

Miranda: I was watching a cable television station that was carrying a meeting of evangelicals on racial reconciliation. I

was excited to see this demonstration of Christian unity. But then my phone rang, and a Hispanic leader on the other end asked if I was watching this. When I told him I was, he asked, "Is your TV in black and white? Because mine is; it looks like a rerun from the 1960s. Why aren't we part of this discussion?"

As it turns out, there have been five national high-profile meetings on racial reconciliation since 1994, conducted by evangelical, Pentecostal, and mainline groups. All have been between black and white participants. Another meeting, between the National Black Evangelical Association and the National Association of Evangelicals, is scheduled for 1999. This makes me think of what David Atencio, a Hispanic minister and educator, has said: "If this is as far as reconciliation meetings go in the American church in terms of inclusivity, then the effort toward reconciliation will not only be limited, but limiting as well." One of the reasons we began AMEN is to provide a point of contact for dialogue on this and other issues.

But isn't there a priority to the black/white reconciliation effort given the history of slavery? In your book *Race Wars*, Bill, you write, "For white American Christians, this issue at gut level and historically is still primarily an issue between African Americans and Euro Americans." How so?

Pannell: For one, the history of whites enslaving blacks does give their conversation a special place in the dialogue on reconciliation, making it something of a family feud. I also think the racial issue became focused as a black-and-white issue because the most objectionable thing in white society from early days on was blackness—not ethnicity, not culture—but color. That

King's theme of nonviolence and love was probably more a matter of pragmatism than faith. "Like Gandhi, King used it as a strategy to win a battle when the power and numbers were not on his side," said Perkins. "King talked about love overcoming hate. But in my own experience, when we were taking part in marches and demonstrations, it was not love that was making us do it; it was our desire to win."

Eugene Rivers, pastor of inner-city Boston's Azusa Christian Community and an outspoken black voice on matters of race in America, believes King's non-violent methods were outcroppings of the man's political savvy. "King understood that you could not successfully win the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act by appealing to the historical grievances of black people," he says. "So the moral pageantry of the 'beloved community' was tactically the only way to secure those victories."

Dolphus Weary is less cynical about King's motives. For Weary, Martin Luther King was precisely the kind of preacher southern blacks needed. "I used to see many preachers being exploitative of the black community," he says. "They would say stuff like, 'It's OK that you're going into the back door of restaurants. It's OK that you're going to second-class schools. It's OK that you're the last hired and the first fired. Because one day you're going to heaven, and everything will be all right.' But then King came along and said, 'No! You're not a second-class citizen. God is concerned about you right now. Go vote. Go stand up for your rights.' It was what we needed to hear."

White evangelicals should have borne witness to the truth of the gospel by standing with their black brothers and sisters and opposing racist terrorism against black churches, observes Rivers. He adds that conservative evangelicalism

can only blame itself for the liberalism in King's theology since in his day black were not welcomed at evangelical colleges and seminaries. "White evangelicals blew an opportunity to shape the intellectual and moral development of King; and an entire generation of church-based civil-rights leaders," says Rivers.

Despite their tardiness, Kehrein knows evangelicals have matured in their view of King. "For the most part, evangelical today no longer have the 'social gospel' concern. They have come to see that the gospel must have social implications and have recognized the great contribution of King and other civil-rights pioneers."

Clearly it is a new day among white evangelicals. This decade alone has witnessed groups as diverse as Pentecostal Southern Baptists, and the Promise Keepers offering public repentance for past racial transgressions. Nonetheless, NAE's Argue believes there remains

still prevails. For example, if darker complexioned Puerto Ricans come to the United States, they face greater discrimination than do lighter complexioned Puerto Ricans, even though they are of the same ethnicity. Ours is a society that talks of democracy while behaving as if were a pigment-ocracy.

Miranda: Yes, it is a "family feud," but you must remember we are part of that family. What today is the southwestern United States was Mexico. This means that my Mexican-American father's ancestors were here before Texas or California were even states. And my mother's ancestors, who go back to the Spanish Conquistadors, have a history here that precedes both Anglo and African presence on the continent.

Pannell: But even in the Hispanic community this pigment-ocracy can be seen in the fact that only in recent years have certain Latino professionals of a lighter complexion been willing to finally admit that they are Latinos and begin using Latino names. Black folks never could pass easily as nonblack.

The one group of people who do not like to think of themselves as ethnic are white folks. Here at Fuller Seminary we can talk about multi-ethnics, but the white community, including professors and administrators, don't think of themselves as ethnic people or as having an ethnic theology. When people from, say, Russia come here, they get off the plane, and it doesn't take them very long to know that they're going to survive here in terms of upward mobility and power—not by being Russian Americans, but by being white Americans.

Miranda: I agree that blackness has been a deficit. There are

persistent inability among white evangelicals to comprehend the race issue.

"Whenever I go to a black Christian gathering, I find that the subject of racism is always on the agenda, and it's near the top. They're not whining or complaining, but they are deeply concerned," explains Argue. "On the other hand, you go to a white meeting and very rarely, if ever, is racism on the agenda. I've come to the conclusion that it's because African Americans deal with racism on an ongoing basis. They have to justify who they are when they cash a check more often than a white person does."

What of the Dream?

In 1963 on a jetliner zooming from Atlanta to Los Angeles, Martin Luther King sat quietly, peering outside from his window seat. He was drinking in the view of the serene Appalachian Mountains below when the plane suddenly

bounced and jerked in a fit of turbulence. King looked up from his pillow, flashed a smile at the *Time* magazine reporter seated beside him and said, "I guess that's Birmingham down below."

Birmingham was turbulent territory then. King called the city the greatest stronghold of Jim Crow in the South.

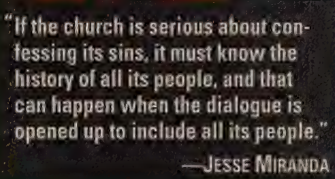
Today, if King were to fly over Birmingham, he would experience friendlier skies. In a city once governed by white supremacists, there is now an African-American mayor. In the downtown district, not far from where attack dogs and fire hoses once assailed nonviolent protesters, there stands the Civil Rights Institute. Inside this sobering memorial of a not-so-distant America, visitors can review the artifacts of the Birmingham revolution and actually explore the jail cell that housed King during his famous imprisonment.

A few miles northeast of downtown,



"The pastors in the civil-rights movement saw that the core of the issue theologically was righteousness and justice, and that without those there would be no reconciliation."

—WILLIAM PANNELL



"If the church is serious about confessing its sins, it must know the history of all its people, and that can happen when the dialogue is opened up to include all its people."

—JESSE MIRANDA

PHOTOS BY KEVIN D. MILLER

what we call Afro Latinos who purposefully speak Spanish to avoid being thought of as African American. This gives them a leg up on the social ladder.

But isn't it time we move beyond the superficial definition of color? Even Martin Luther King, Jr., did not stop at blackness. He never denied it, but he pointed to something deeper—the content of character. I'm saying that Christians, at least, should see the issue of racial reconciliation as a question of human dignity and identity. This opens the conversation up to include other ethnic groups that have suffered indignities.

In many ways, African Americans and Mexican Americans have strong reasons to be in direct dialogue because of our shared experiences of discrimination. Mexican Americans experience a double standard of business people pulling them in to do their manual labor while politicians push them away with pro-

in a low-income neighborhood near the Birmingham airport, stands a small church building, surrounded by rows of public-housing projects. The sign out front reads: DOERS OF THE WORD CHURCH. And the members of the interracial congregation of 150, on any given day, can be seen side-by-side serving the hungry and homeless from their church-run soup kitchen. On Sunday mornings, the half-black, half-white body of believers celebrates their common bond in Christ during an exuberant, cross-cultural worship service. The little church seems a million protest marches away from the Jim Crow spirit that stifled the community in Martin Luther King's day. According to Arthur Johnson, the African-American senior pastor of Doers of the Word, his church is a testament to the enduring power of King's vision.

"Dr. King's dream of his children 'not being judged by the color of their skin

positions and laws. Like Native Americans, we live with unresolved land grants and thousands of broken treaties. My wife's grandfather died believing that he had property because he had a title, but it was never honored. Hispanics are the fruit basket of our nation, and yet others don't seem to care that we struggle with low wages and die from the environmental hazards that come with these jobs. So all of these things, I think, are matters that need to be reconciled in society and in the church. If the church is serious about reconciling and confessing its sins, it must know the history of all its people, and that can happen when the dialogue is opened up to include all its people.

Pannell: To talk reconciliation among people anywhere in the world forces us to talk about power and the relationship between reconciliation and justice. There is a sense in which the struggles that we can now identify as beginning in the sixties were simply a continuation of struggles that never did get resolved in significant ways as Euro Americans continued moving in conquest across the face of what is now the United States. Wherever they went, these kinds of subjugations and injustices took place—against Native Americans, Hispanics, and later Asian Americans.

It's not that whites are the only people in the world who do this. But a fact of human nature is that when people have power and decide to use it, it most frequently comes across as oppression. So a common mistake has been to talk about reconciliation in isolation from injustice. The pastors who gave leadership to the civil-rights movement saw that the core of the issue theologically was righteousness and justice, and that without those there would be no reconciliation.

Miranda: Bill, one small example of how easy it is to talk about reconciliation while failing to base it in justice is a story your former student Paul told us. He and his father, both of whom are Hispanic, went to the Atlanta conference of Promise Keepers, which had a strong message on reconciliation. Afterwards, the guys started hugging each other, and a long row of

Anglos lined up to hug Paul, but not his father.

Paul wasn't sure what he was reconciling about, and he was puzzled why they were ignoring his father. Then it dawned on him that it was because his skin was darker than his father's. What's ironic is that it was Paul's father who could have told the stories of riding in the backs of buses and drinking from fountains labeled "Mexicans only." He was the one carrying the pain, but he was ignored because he wasn't "visible." I'm saying that true reconciliation must be more than meets the eye. A focus on skin color is not a focus on the total person.

Jesse, you have said that the Exodus story may have to give way to the Samaritan story. What do you mean by that?

Miranda: When Jesus talked with the Samaritan woman at the well, he was bringing his gospel to a mixed race that didn't fit the traditional Jew/Gentile paradigm. Jesus' action represents a missiological shift, a reversal in thought categories from a provincial identity to a global community. It is the fulfillment of Jesus' words in Matthew 12:49 that "obedience is thicker than blood" (The Message). Obedience and empowerment, not ethnic loyalty or domination, are the defining characteristics of God's people.

Pannell: If we do move from Exodus to Samaria, it becomes even more risky because Samaria is about a woman. It seems to me that what Jesus taught us by going to Samaria was not so much a movement over against the Exodus so much as it was breaking into a new frontier, an extension of the implications of the Exodus experience to be much more inclusive. And the radical breakthrough was the inclusivity in the kingdom.

Miranda: I want to be careful here to say that by suggesting the priority of the Samaritan story I am not negating the relevance of the Exodus story. Latinos, like African Americans, use that image as a lesson on liberation.

Pannell: Almost all oppressed peoples do, which is why I think you are right in suggesting the need for a dialogue be-

but by the content of their character'—we're living that out every day," says Johnson. "Eleven o'clock Sunday morning at Doers of the Word is definitely not 'the most segregated hour in America.'"

So if Martin Luther King's Dream of an integrated and benevolent society is the ideal by which Christians and the nation should measure their progress in race relations, how are we doing?

Johnson's congregation seems to be an exception. Though an increasing number of U.S. congregations have become intentionally cross-cultural, in many ways local churches are America's final frontier of segregated institutions. "The church is segregated now because that's what we like," said Perkins. "In King's era, churches were segregated because whites didn't want to be around blacks. Now it's two-sided. Today we both choose to be separate."

But Rivers doesn't think that is neces-

sarily a bad thing. In fact, Rivers, who regularly raises eyebrows with his unsympathetic views regarding King, argues that King's perspective on integration was too idealistic. He explains: "King's theological and racial liberalism gave inadequate attention to the primacy of culture, tradition, and history. The truth is, both blacks and whites identify with their particular traditions—and that's not wrong. It only becomes wrong when it promotes injustice." For Rivers, the "remarkable irony" is that King never sought to desegregate black churches. "How is it that the apostle of integration never did this?" Rivers asks. "My sense is that he understood that it was not in the best interest of black preachers to surrender their power by desegregating black churches."

Perkins, late son of racial-reconciliation pioneer John Perkins, disagreed with Rivers. "Being segregated is a weakness of the church. Everybody is com-

fortable being around their own kind. But that type of thinking puts comfort and culture over Christ."

Robert Franklin, of the Interdenominational Theological Center, says he is "cautiously optimistic." However, Franklin thinks the most pressing racial matters lie in the "institutional" domain. "When one looks at the expansion of the black middle class and the ongoing dismantling of racist legislation and customs throughout the culture, we have to acknowledge that we've come a long way in a short period of time," he says. "But when one looks at the disparate economic culture between blacks and whites and at corporate boardrooms where there is a relatively small number of people of color and women, it's clear that we're still lagging."

Rivers is less generous: "Much of the current race-relations discourse, like what happens at Promise Keepers, substitut-

between groups like Hispanics and African Americans that hold his in common.

Does the church really care about racial reconciliation?

Pannell: Sometimes I feel black people are the only ones who really give a fig about reconciliation. Other ethnic groups have expressed very little interest. The initiative for these sorts of things doesn't usually come out of the white community, either. Go down to the Christian booksellers convention and look at what people are reading and writing and publishing—the stuff that sells—and you will find there are no bestsellers written by white people on the subject. And so I'm saying, Are we, the black community, nuts?

But then I hear the Holy Spirit say, "Pannell, I didn't seek your counsel. I didn't ask you for permission to do anything. You're not in charge here. This is the agenda. This is the thing for which my Son gave his life. I gave him up for this—for reconciliation. This is not an option. This is not an elective." And so I get called back to it again.

One thing that has excited me in this conversation is learning here is a national Hispanic evangelical association. I hadn't ever heard of AMEN! Now we've got a point of reference that I never knew was there. What are the other points of reference out there that we don't know about? Is there a comparable move among Native Americans? Is there a comparable move among the Asian community? I know, of course, any number of Asians who are evangelicals. But how do we find each other in ways that suggest an evangelical movement beyond where we are now that can demonstrate that the issue of reconciliation is not a fad, doesn't depend on getting 6 million guys in a stadium some place?

Miranda: I think you are right in saying other ethnic groups typically show little interest in reconciliation, because their interests go beyond what you call pigmentocracy. This is true of much of the Hispanic community, many of whom are more interested in insulation than reconciliation. How-

ever, there is some interest among Latinos from different backgrounds to reconcile the strong ill will that exists among and between them. That is why AMEN came to exist.

But generally speaking, I think many Hispanics wonder what good there is in joining a black/white dialogue that was begun in 1776 and was vigorously resurrected in 1960s—but still is nowhere close to being resolved. Who are we to come in and try to make the issues more complex and probably mix things up? We are better off staying on the sidelines and watching to see if there can be any real resolution or progress. Many wonder what price would be paid to get into that dialogue. Often the result is whites defining blacks, so we'd rather remain free and define ourselves.

Also, I think evangelical Hispanics are reticent to join a dialogue that feels foreign to us in the sense that it is aimed more at truth than at the Latino ideal of relationship. Blacks and whites confront to get to "the bottom of the issue," while Hispanics tend to avoid the issues if it will save face. Perhaps it's because we come out of a Latin Catholic ethos as compared to the Protestant ethos that whites and blacks speak from.

And yet, with you, I agree that disengagement is not the Christian way. Hispanics owe a lot to the black community for taking up the baton of human rights and of civil rights. It isn't the Christian way to take a free ride or to sit back and see how things do or don't get worked out. Whatever the consequences, we need to get into the dialogue, and perhaps we can bring something to the table that would help us all work through the differences of skin pigmentation, culture, or history.

Pannell: One of the reasons Christian attempts to speak about reconciliation in the broader culture are not taken seriously is because the Christian movement itself has demonstrated such little commitment to it. Before there can be any meaningful reconciliation, evangelicals who are black, white, Korean, or Hispanic must once and for all come to terms with this mandate of our God that this is the core of the curriculum. To be a Christian is to be in the ministry of reconciliation. CT

fundamentalist hufgests for the kind of deep, substantive dialogue that has a genuine impact on institutional decisions and public policy. Too much of the reconciliation rhetoric of white evangelicals focuses on interpersonal piety without any radically biblical conception of racial justice."

Oberlin College religion professor Albert G. Miller believes the church has a watered-down understanding of King's vision. "I think we are stuck in our image of King at the 1963 March on Washington," he says. "The 'I Have a Dream' King was a kinder, gentler King. There was a more complicated man that evolved after that point who was very frustrated with what he saw with the limited progress of blacks. In his latter days, King was not just protesting for blacks to eat at the lunch counter, but for blacks to have employment at the lunch counter and to own it."

Cheryl Sanders, professor of Christian Ethics at Howard University and senior

pastor of Washington's Third Street Church of God, concurs. "The problem with the Dream language is that it draws attention away from the reality of what King was speaking about throughout his life. There's a danger of only seeing him as a dreamer, and if we only see him as a dreamer, we too easily let ourselves off the hook from dealing with the realities that he was dealing with."

Toward the end of his life, King returned to his Baptist theological roots, "stripping himself . . . of Protestant liberalism's pieties," writes Willy Jennings in *BOOKS & CULTURE* (March/April 1998), emphasizing the words of Jesus and the coming judgment.

Denver Seminary's Malcolm Newton adds: "King and the other Christians of the civil-rights movement put their lives on the line. Protesting, marching, getting bombed and lynched and thrown into jail hundreds of times for the sake of

biblical justice. That's a legacy that King left for us, and the church hasn't grabbed on to it yet."

Still, others are guardedly encouraged. "Compared to where we were, I think we've done very well," says Mission Mississippi's Weary. "People are talking today who haven't talked in a long time. There's still a long way to go, but at least we're talking about it."

In the meantime, away from the din of philosophical debates and unfulfilled hopes, the everyday business of coexisting together must go on. And one senses there might be something to learn from unheralded efforts like Arthur Johnson's Birmingham contingent. Says Johnson: "I know we've still got a lot of issues to work through, but as long as we're pursuing the Dream, I believe God is pleased." CT

Edward Gilbreath is associate editor of New Man magazine.



Still Wrestling with the *Devil*

A visit with **Jimmy Swaggart** ten years after his fall.

The Family Life Center lies on the edge of Baton Rouge just down the road from the newly opened Mall of Louisiana. The parking lot for the shopping mall is burgeoning on a Sunday, while the acres of parking for the Family Life Center are nearly vacant. Such a contrast might occasion yet another commentary on spiritual apathy, misplaced priorities, and the false gods of consumerism, until one remembers that the preacher behind the pulpit at the Family Life Center on this Sunday—as well as most Sundays—is a man named Jimmy Swaggart.

To suggest that Swaggart is behind the pulpit, however, is somewhat misleading; he has never submitted easily to the constraints of pulpits—or, for that matter, to any other conventional boundaries. Instead, he bobs and weaves and shouts and cries and spins his own magic. “Preaching is like an orchestra,” Swaggart told me. “You have to be loud one moment and quiet the next. You’ve got to keep the people’s attention. You’ve got to keep the people’s attention.” Throughout a raucous and controversial career now in its fourth decade, Jimmy Swaggart has rarely had trouble keeping people’s attention.

Not welcome here

Despite the dearth of congregants, my presence at Family Life Center was not entirely welcome. I had made the mistake of chatting with the women at the welcome booth and, in the process, disclosed naïve-

ly that I was in town to write an article about Jimmy Swaggart Ministries ten years after his celebrated—and very public—downfall. I had just settled into my seat in the sanctuary, already awash in klieg lights, when one of the ushers, dressed in a burgundy sport coat, sat down beside me. “I understand you’re a reporter,” he said. I allowed that he was close enough. “First of all,” he barked, “no pictures in here.”

As I looked around, I understood why. The last time I had seen Swaggart on television, which was several years ago, it had occurred to me that all the camera angles had been rather narrow, suggesting that they were trying to cover up for the fact that the congregation was small. Indeed, the entire wrap-around balcony of the octagonal building was closed, shrouded in darkness, and huge sections of the main floor had been cordoned off by dark, burgundy curtains, which matched the carpeting and the blazers worn by the ushers. “And the other thing,” the usher announced brusquely, “I’m pretty sure Don and Jimmy don’t want you here. In fact, I’ll check with Donnie right now.”

Within minutes Donnie Swaggart, Jimmy’s son, a stocky man with an athletic build, dressed nattily in a dark, double-breasted suit, came bounding from the backstage area, almost running toward me. “What are you doing here?” he demanded. When I explained that I was writing an article for *CHRISTIANITY TODAY*, Donnie Swaggart’s eyes flashed.

— RANDALL BALMER —

"I don't like the press," he bellowed. "How come you didn't tell us you were coming?" I explained that I had called the office several times over the preceding weeks to inquire about dates and that I had made no attempt to hide my purpose for visiting. "Well you didn't talk to me," he said, his tone softening slightly.

"Listen, I've seen characters like you before," he continued, resuming the bluster and wagging his finger in my direction, "and you know what? It's the so-called Christians who are the worst." Ten o'clock was fast approaching, and Donnie had to assume his place on the stage. "Just remember," he continued, "blood is thicker than water. Do whatever you want to me, just don't touch my parents or my kids. If you do, I'm coming after you, you understand?"

Although I found these threats more amusing than intimidating—should I expect a knock on the door some night from a couple of thugs with cigarettes dangling from their mouths: "Hey, buster, some preacher fella from Baton Rouge wants to have a little chat with you"?—Donnie Swaggart clearly was paranoid about my presence. Throughout the service he kept stealing glances in my direction. A rather large usher whose name tag read "Bill Wilson" was assigned to follow me, tracking my serpentine movements after the service. Although I managed to lose him a couple of times, he caught up with me, breathing a bit heavily, and resumed his surveillance. When I approached Jimmy Swaggart, who had changed into a turtleneck and was greeting congregants near the stage, Wilson fidgeted nervously but kept his distance.

Swaggart himself couldn't have been more gracious. He is a kind man who, unlike some other "televangelists," is not afraid to meet your eyes. Lest there be any confusion or false pretenses, I informed him immediately of my purpose for visiting Baton Rouge and told him of my admiration for his preaching abilities. The mention of *CHRISTIANITY TODAY*, however, brought a change in his countenance, not so much anger or defiance, as it had with Donnie, but sadness. "I'm afraid I won't be able to help you," he said, shaking his head. "That magazine has said some pretty hurtful things about me." He shifted his eyes briefly toward the middle distance, then back at me. From the corner of my eye I could see my tail, Bill Wilson, shuffling nervously.

"Listen," Swaggart said kindly, "I'm not always right about this, of course, but I'm pretty good at judging people, and I detect a good spirit about you. But I don't want anything to do with that magazine. In fact," he continued, suddenly laughing, "I don't even want anything *good* about me going into that magazine!" He grabbed my hand, shook it warmly, and drove home the point. "I'm sorry. If you were writing for the *Washington Post*," he said, "that might be a different matter."

As I turned away, back toward Bill Wilson, so we could resume meandering around the Family Worship Center, I too was sorry. Jimmy Swaggart is an enormously likable man, and I would have loved to chat for awhile about life and preaching and failure and grace and the many doctrines we held in common, including providence.

Mentoring Jimmy

Little did I know that an affirmation of providence would occur within the hour, but to understand the scale of this theological demonstration I must reveal a mundane personal detail: I rarely eat lunch—once or twice a month, at most, and only when a business or social occasion demands it. As I pulled out of the parking lot at the Family Life Center, however, and drove past the vast array of restaurants on Bluebonnet Avenue, I abruptly decided to pull into a large, well-advertised seafood restaurant.

I wanted to look through Swaggart's autobiography, *To Cross a River*, which I had just purchased in the bookstore, and, relieved that Bill Wilson and the usher corps had not confiscated my notebook, I wanted to review my notes from the morning.

The hostess seated me at a table next to a fairly large group, headed by none other than a man wearing a gray turtleneck—Jimmy Swaggart. He noticed me almost immediately and, without a moment's hesitation, invited me to join them. I assured him that I had not followed him to the restaurant, but he was unconcerned and introduced me all around—his wife, Frances, his mother-in-law, and a missionary family from South Africa.

Swaggart was relaxed and expansive. Although he dropped out of high school, he is an exceedingly bright, literate, and articulate man. In the course of our conversation he talked about the preachers who had influenced him, A. N. Trotter and John R. Rice, a fundamentalist with whom Swaggart had formed an improbable friendship. "I've preached a lot of his sermons over the years," Swaggart said, citing one of his favorites in particular, whose theme was "all the Devil's apples got worms." He said that he had developed "my own style," but he very much admired the oratorical abilities of Martin Luther King, Jr., E. V. Hill, and "some white guy with a bald head." When I ventured the name Tony Campolo, Swaggart recognized it immediately. "Yeah, that's him! That guy can preach," he said, slapping the table with evident appreciation.

Swaggart's autobiography cites a couple of other preachers as influential in his early years. J. M. Cason, a young evangelist

If God forgot Sw

held revival meetings in Swaggart's hometown of Ferriday, Louisiana. He made an impression on Swaggart as "a highly emotional man who cried and preached at the same time."

Another young preacher, Cecil Janway, also played the piano. Swaggart remembers that he "brought life" from the church ragged upright piano, "life which flowed throughout the church building."

To this day, Swaggart opens his services at the keyboard, his right leg thumping up and down in time to the beat. As with many Pentecostal services, the opening songs blend seamlessly one to the next. "There is power in the blood" segues into "Alleluia, fill us afresh today." As the music whips the congregation into a frenzy, Donnie Swaggart claps and hops in time to the beat and then grabs a microphone. "I'm here to serve notice on the Devil today," he exclaims, "there's power in the blood. There's power in the blood of Jesus Christ." The congregation concurs with shouts and applause. "There's a new sheriff in town," Donnie announces. "The Devil has been defeated!" He does a little dance as the music segues back into "Power in the Blood."

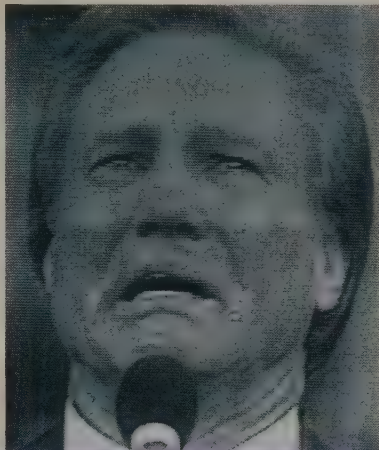
After still more music and an exhortation to "give the Lord a big hand," the crowd hushed as a woman in the front row spoke in tongues. Someone from the choir offered an immediate interpretation. Donnie once again grabbed the microphone. "I don't know if you can hear it. The Holy Ghost is saying, 'I want to enlarge your borders here at the Family Worship Center. There's not going to be an empty seat in the house.'"

True confession—sort of

For ten years now, there has been a surfeit of empty seats in the Family Worship Center, which has a capacity of 7,500. The last full house, in fact, gathered to witness the famous confession on February 21, 1988. "I do not plan in any way to whitewash my sin," Swaggart said in the wake of disclosures about having visited a motel room with a prostitute. "I do not call it a mistake, a mendacity. I call it sin." In a soliloquy that was baroque and eloquent at the same time, Swaggart apologized to his wife, his son, and his daughter-in-law.

He apologized to the Assemblies of God, "which helped to bring the gospel to my little beleaguered town, when my family was lost without Jesus, this movement and fellowship that girdles the globe, that has been more instrumental in bringing this gospel through the stygian night of darkness to the far-flung hundreds of millions than maybe any effort in the annals of history." He apologized to the "godly" pastors of the Assemblies of God, to its evangelists and missionaries.

Finally, Swaggart apologized to Jesus, "the one who has saved me and washed me and cleansed me." Swaggart's jaw quivered; rivulets of tears flowed down his cheeks. His eyes turned toward heaven. "I have



God imposed a three-month silence, which Swaggart accepted, the denomination extended the discipline to two full years. Swaggart, however, chose to abide by the Louisiana punishment. He resumed preaching on May 22, 1988, Pentecost Sunday, explaining that "Jesus paid the price" for his sins. Swaggart may have had little choice. Put simply, the scale and the reach of his operations in Baton Rouge and around the world demanded a steady infusion of cash. Donnie was not yet ready to step in—he had neither the experience nor the charisma—and Jimmy recognized that he had to go back on the air in an effort to salvage the various components of his empire.

In retrospect, that decision was probably a miscalculation. "He has isolated himself from those who could have helped eventually restore his ministry with integrity," CHRISTIANITY TODAY opined. "Swaggart was too impatient, too friendly with power, too short-sighted to see beyond his immediate desires and goals."

The General Presbytery of the Assemblies of God defrocked Swaggart for violating the terms of their suspension; Swaggart had burned his bridges with his own denomination. His basic constituency had already eroded, and Swaggart certainly did not help himself with his own recidivism. In 1991 he was

art's transgression, few others did.

sinned against you, my Lord, and I would ask that your precious blood would wash and cleanse every stain until it is in the seas of God's forgetfulness, never to be remembered against me."

The performance was vintage Swaggart—complete with anguish and tears and self-flagellation—but if God forgot his transgression, few others did. For Swaggart's many critics, moreover, he had finally received his comeuppance. Swaggart had earlier criticized "pretty-boy preachers," a thinly veiled reference to Jim Bakker, his fellow Assemblies of God minister and rival televangelist. Marvin Gorman, a Pentecostal preacher from New Orleans, had also tangled with Swaggart, and Gorman was the one who produced evidence that Swaggart had entered a Louisiana motel room with a prostitute—not for a sexual liaison, it turns out, but to engage in some sort of voyeurism.

Believers shuddered at the toppling of yet another televangelist, and the media, already in a feeding frenzy in the wake of Bakker's tryst with Jessica Hahn, had a field day. Swaggart became the object of ridicule and derision. He had engaged in something that was portrayed not so much as immoral as it was tawdry. Some commentators made much of the fact that Hahn (after the requisite plastic surgery) appeared in *Playboy*, while the woman linked with Swaggart appeared in *Penthouse*.

Swaggart promised to submit to the discipline of the Assemblies of God, with whom he held ordination credentials. He offered what the denomination characterized as a "detailed confession," which demonstrated "true humility and repentance" on Swaggart's part. While the Louisiana District of the Assemblies of

stopped by police in Indio, California, while driving with a woman who claimed to be a prostitute. The result was predictable. More scorn, more ridicule, more empty seats.

Fire in his veins

The compound that straddles Bluebonnet Road has a forlorn look to it. With the huge infusions of cash from his television program—Jimmy Swaggart Ministries pulled in \$141.6 million in 1986, the last full year before the scandal—Swaggart had built an impressive empire: the massive Family Worship Center, television production facilities, an administrative center for his worldwide operations, and Jimmy Swaggart Bible College across the street.

Most of the flagpoles, each of which once represented a foreign nation where Swaggart maintained a presence, are empty. The fountains are dry, the landscaping neglected and overgrown. At the Bible college, weeds and a chainlink fence surround the shell of what was to be a high-rise dormitory, its construction abruptly halted after the scandal. Only about 45 students attend the school now, Swaggart told me wistfully, a campus built to accommodate hundreds more. The entire scene resembles a fly trapped in amber, frozen in time.

And yet, a decade after the scandal, Swaggart soldiers on. He leaves the piano, steps onto center stage, removes his glasses, and exclaims, "I don't know about you, but I'm happy this morning!" He initiates a reprise of "I've got the Holy Ghost down in my heart, just like the Bible says," and then, referring to a recent downturn in the financial markets, remarks: "If you get your joy

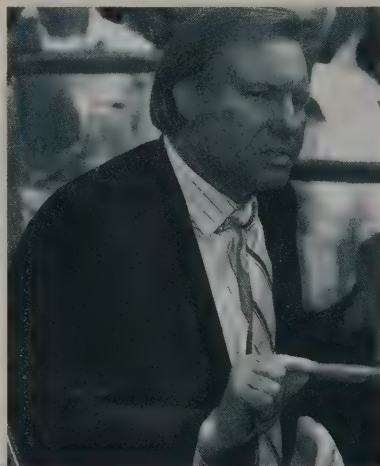
out of Wall Street, well, you got quite a jolt a couple of weeks ago." He invites members of the congregation to come forward for healing. As the choir and the congregation sing "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty," Swaggart, his son, and several elders pray for each one. Swaggart took particular compassion on a man who was badly deformed. "Lord, touch my brother," he cried, with his hands on the man's forehead, "from the top of his head to the soles of his feet."

Divine healing has always been a central tenet of Swaggart's ministry. The death of his baby brother, Donnie, when Jimmy was only four made a deep impression on him. While preaching his first revival in Sterlington, Louisiana, Swaggart came down with pneumonia (the same illness that had felled his brother). Swaggart went to the hospital but left after a couple of days, still burning with fever. He fell into a deep depression. "Dark, gloomy thoughts roamed through my mind," Swaggart recalled. "It seemed as if every demon in hell had crawled out to do battle with me."

He read a passage from the Book of Joshua, with the admonition to be strong and of good courage. "God's healing power surged through my body," Swaggart said. "It was like fire in my veins." He went on to impart his healing gift to others—as well as to the battered, blue Plymouth he used during the early years of his itinerancy.

Down in the bayou

The quickest route from Baton Rouge to Ferriday, Louisiana, is U.S. 61, also known as the Great River Road. It winds north past refineries along the Mississippi River, past antebellum plantations that have been turned into museums, and past sharecroppers' cabins sitting next to their modern counterpart, that peculiarly American oxymoron, the mobile home. Baptist churches outnumber gas stations and restaurants and taverns and just about every other sort of establishment in the piney woods of Mississippi. At Natchez the road connects to U.S. 84 west across the kudzu banks of



tracks themselves were removed some years ago.

After driving around town for half an hour, I still hadn't located the Assembly of God that had been organized in 1936 by Pentecostal missionaries Mother Sumrall and her daughter Leonia. When I asked for help in a convenience store, one of the customers interjected, "Oh, I can help you. Jimmy's my cousin." Carolyn Magoun, who later clarified that she was actually Frances's cousin, not Jimmy's, directed me to the First Assembly of God at the end of Texas Avenue. The Swaggart house, she said, had been torn down a long time ago.

When I offered that Jimmy Swaggart has had a rough time in recent years, Magoun agreed. "Yes, he has," she said, shaking her head, "but people just forget that we're all human." She added that when Frances Swaggart grew tired of the media glare during her husband's troubles, she would often slip away to Ferriday and Wisner, her hometown, just up the road.

The tiny clapboard building at the end of Texas Avenue was sagging somewhat, but it sported a fresh coat of white paint. I pulled into the gravel parking lot where Swaggart's uncle, Elmo Lewis, Jerry Lee's father, had pulled his sleek, black Cadillac in the spring of 1958, interrupting a church picnic. Elmo Lewis had just returned from Memphis with the news that Sam Phillips, the producer of Sun Records who had discovered Elvis Presley,

Johnny Cash, and Jerry Lee Lewis, had sent for Swaggart. Phillips had heard Swaggart sing and play the piano and found his keyboard style virtually indistinguishable from that of his cousin, Jerry Lee Lewis; he wanted to start a gospel line at Sun, with Swaggart as his first artist.

Swaggart was at that time, in his words, "a smalltime, wrong-side-of-the-tracks Pentecostal preacher" earning \$30 a week—in good weeks. He had a wife and a young son and the battered, blue Plymouth. He preached in a \$20 Steir suit and a single pair of shoes, while his cousin, known nationally as "the wild man of rock 'n' roll," was pulling in \$20,000 a week.

Playing by the book has never been

the Mississippi River and back into Louisiana to Ferriday.

When I told Swaggart that I planned to visit Ferriday, he said, "Well, it's still there." The large sign on the edge of town, just past Martin's Auto Shop & Used Tires, reads: Ferriday, La, Visit Our Museum, Home of Jerry Lee Lewis, Howard K. Smith, Mickey Gilley, Peewee Whittaker, Jimmy Swaggart, Ann Boyar Warner.

Ferriday is a town of convenience stores, cinder-block Laundromats, and abandoned houses. Most of the shops along Louisiana Avenue were shuttered years ago, although the hardware store and the pawnshop remain open. Many of the houses in town, not just the mobile homes, sit atop piles of bricks or cinder blocks, testimony to the perils of life on a floodplain. Poverty abounds on both sides of the tracks, although even the

Uncle Elmo had left the Cadillac running. The contract were waiting in Memphis, and Swaggart had been scheduled into the recording studio the next morning. Swaggart paused, surveyed the church folk, and said no. "I can't do it," he said finally, and the black Cadillac pulled away.

Swaggart believes that God gave him his musical abilities. After the arrival of Cecil Janway, the young preacher-pianist, to the Assemblies of God church in Ferriday, Swaggart prayed for a miracle. "Lord," I said, "I want you to give me the gift of playing the piano." Swaggart was so fervent that he even attached conditions to the request. "If you give me this talent, I will never use it in the world," he promised, adding, "If I ever go back on this promise, you can paralyze my fingers!" The gift came that very evening, a gift that he tried to refine with lessons from the

local band director, but Swaggart quit after four lessons, concluding that "playing by the book was a waste of time."

Playing it by ear

Playing by the book has never been Swaggart's forte. His preaching style is inimitable, and he is a consummate showman. (I often tell students that if they want to appreciate fully Swaggart's artistry, tune him in on television, turn off the sound, and watch his facial expressions and his gesticulations.) At 11:30 on Sunday morning, an hour and a half after the service began, Swaggart announced, "I'm not going to preach long, just enough to get through." He recited his text from memory: "I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire" (Matt. 3:11, NIV). He was already weeping. "I know I'm nothing."

He recounted the baptism of John along the "reedy banks" of the River Jordan. Swaggart loosened his necktie. "I believe that Jordan rained with shouts that day," he said. "There's nothing like people getting saved." His voiced cracked. "Forgive my emotion," he said and then launched into a riff: "When people come to God, the drunkard puts down his bottle and the drug addict his drugs!" He recounted how "Jesus came to my house" when Swaggart was five; his parents were converted. "When they got saved," Swaggart exclaimed, "the fighting ended." Behind Swaggart, in the pastors' gallery adjacent to the choir, Donnie Swaggart was sobbing convulsively. "I'm not going to push any more on this message this morning," Swaggart said, after a pause. "Here's what the Holy Ghost tells me to say to you right now," he continued, pacing the stage. "Come to Jesus."

And they came. Maybe not the hundreds, as in years past, but scores. They filed to the front steps, where boxes of tissues had been placed discreetly around the stage. Swaggart had invited them to come for salvation, for healing, for release from the bondage of sin or addiction.

As members of the congregation streamed toward the octagonal stage in response to Swaggart's altar call, a fascinating tableau unfolded. Donnie Swaggart, having dabbed his tears, strode purposefully into the audience, picked out a good-looking young couple, guided them forward, and positioned them

ciously. Jimmy Swaggart again opened the service at the piano, while Donnie tried to imitate his father's style. "The Devil does not own this town," he shouted. "He doesn't own this town. He doesn't own this state. He doesn't own this nation."

In show business terms, Donnie Swaggart was dying out there, so his father stepped from behind the piano and, smooth as butter, came to the rescue. After a few remarks about his early days as a preacher he began spontaneously to sing "The Old Rugged Cross." A woman near the stage was slain in the Spirit, caught as she fell backward by a man in a burgundy blazer. "Let me tell you," Swaggart told the congregation, "you'll make it if you hold to that cross." The music shifted to "O, Happy Day" and then "Where Could I Go but to the Lord?" "The crippled man can still go to him," Swaggart declared. "The drunk can still go to him. The lost sinner can still go to him."

Donnie, wearing (honest to God) blue suede shoes—midnight blue loafers to match his shirt and his pocket square—again came to the microphone and this time rose to the occasion. His father, seated behind him, was his biggest cheerleader, offering hearty amens and applause. Donnie, preaching from Numbers 13, proved that he is a competent, even better-than-average preacher, "reading" his audience in good Pentecostal fashion, trying one theme after another until something clicks. That Sunday night, it was his recounting of an interracial revival he had preached recently in Orlando, Florida. "We don't need Farrakhan," he shouted. "We don't need Jesse. We need Jesus!" The congregation cheered. "Racism is destroying this nation," he continued, "but Jesus is the cure."

The soaring rhetoric was a digression, but it worked; he had the attention of the audience. Swaggart then settled back into his theme, that "we are well able" to possess the land. For the younger Swaggart, that meant that the congregation, despite its setbacks in recent years, should move forward in faith. "The Devil took his best shot, but we are well able to go up and possess the land," he said. "At times it doesn't seem like there's many of us, but there's more for us than there are against us." He talked about filling the cavernous Family Worship Center once again, and he even talked about resuming construction on the high-rise dormitory across the street. "Doubt says the church is half-empty, but faith says the church is half-full."

The faithful remnant

In the course of the service, I had noticed a 30-something woman from afar. She had been one of the most enthusiastic participants in the service, arms outstretched, weaving back and forth with her eyes closed. Her name, I learned, was Vickie Whittenburg, and when I asked her why she attended Swaggart's church, she replied that it was "the Word, nothing but the Word." She professed not to be bothered by Swaggart's past transgressions. "It's the anointing, regardless of the sin in one's life," she explained. "It's a gift from God, and God doesn't take it back."

Ralph Walker, an usher, stopped by to join the conversation. "Nobody can preach like Jimmy Swaggart," he said. "I've never known anyone like him. I started listening to him on the radio. I was a heathen. I was just a rank heathen." Walker began attending the church when "it was bulging at the seams," he said, pointing to the empty balcony. "I had to stand at the back of the balcony."

Both Whittenburg and Walker consider themselves a remnant of the faithful. Whittenburg was drawn to Swaggart, in part, because of her passion for the underdog. "He's a fighter," she said. "I've never felt that I wanted anyone to make it as much as him, regardless of any error or failing on his part."

Swaggart's forte.

in front of one of the television cameras. He began praying fervently and animatedly. The camera's red light flicked on obligingly, while the couple, especially the man, looked rather bewildered. Midway through the prayer, moreover, Donnie signaled to one of his associates to bring someone else. He moved to another camera and repeated the performance.

Donnie Swaggart clearly is positioning himself for an even greater role in Jimmy Swaggart Ministries. He is the heir apparent, and when his father announced on Sunday morning that Donnie would preach that evening, the son let out a whoop, prompting his father to compare him to a racehorse chomping at the bit.

When I arrived for the six o'clock service, my friend Bill Wilson was waiting for me in the lobby, still eyeing me suspi-

Walker ventured that the downfall happened because Jimmy Swaggart Ministries was getting too big.

Lorraine Thomas had moved with her husband, a preacher (now deceased), to Baton Rouge from Arizona in September 1987, just months before the scandal unfolded. "God said, 'Go there and lift Jimmy up because he's going to go through a great trial,'" she recalled. All three said that they met with ridicule when they told others that they attended Swaggart's church. "Is he still preaching?" friends ask incredulously.

As the klieg lights dimmed and the conversation drew toward a close, Whittenburg asked, "Do you mind if we pray with you over this article?" A small crowd encircled me and joined hands. "Lord, we pray that you would send your Spirit upon this man as he writes this article," Walker intoned. "Help him to remember the things he should remember and forget the things he should forget."

What's wrong with this picture?

In the decade since the televangelist scandals we have forgotten some of the shame that was heaped upon evangelicalism in the 1980s, but evangelicalism itself, the most resilient and influential movement in American history, has managed to survive, even prosper. I wonder, however, if the fixation on the financial shenanigans and the sexual escapades of the scandals has allowed us to dodge some thorny questions. Surely the transgressions of Bakker and Swaggart were not that much more egregious than Pat Robertson accepting Rupert Murdoch's millions for the sale of the Family Channel, a property that Robertson developed from the tax-deductible contributions of the faithful. A focus on the transgressions of Bakker and Swaggart deflects attention from theological issues surrounding televangelism. The obscene sums of money pouring into the televangelists' coffers is an invitation to abuse, and we can only speculate on how much of that revenue has been diverted from local congregations.

Evangelicalism, with its relative lack of creedal formulas and the absence of strong ecclesiastical structures, moreover, has always been susceptible to the cult of personality, a weakness only magnified by television. Evangelicals once harbored a healthy—though, at times, excessive—suspicion of worldliness, but they too have been infected by the culture of celebrity. Although evangelicals have always been citational in the expression of their beliefs, the fixation on celebrity in the last couple of decades has produced an important shift. Evangelicals once referred directly to the Bible as the basis for their theology, but now, more often than not, the citation has been filtered through the celebrity preacher: "As Dr. Swindoll says . . .," or "As Dr. Schuller says . . .," or "Dr. Dobson believes that. . ."

Finally, while only the most obdurate Luddite would deny that the gospel can be proclaimed over the airwaves, evangelicalism's worship forms, with the overweening emphasis on the sermon and the relative neglect of the sacraments or the church as the body of Christ, has led some viewers to suppose that a Sunday morning in the easy chair might be the rough equivalent of an hour in the pew. Besides, those televangelists, with their high-tech graphics and their cuddly musicians, sure know how to put on a good show!

But no one, not even Swaggart with his remarkable artistry, has found a way to sustain the community of faith over the airwaves. Worship surely must be something more than watching a preacher trying to project bonhomie and intimacy into a television camera. Shouldn't the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation mean something? Jesus took on a fleshly form, after all; he didn't

rent satellite time. The gospel itself was flesh and blood, not an image flickering across the television screen, the medium capable of such extraordinary deception. No, the gospel is tactile and visceral, incarnate, the very characteristics we celebrate in Holy Communion. Blessed are the present, Jesus seems to be saying throughout the New Testament. Blessed are the present, for they are here and not absent.

Why Jimmy makes us uncomfortable

Swaggart's sermons and his autobiography are replete with references to the Devil and to darkness. He speaks of being "anointed by the Devil" as a young man, while playing the piano in a competition, and another time when the "darkened, oppressive forces of hell had been unleashed against me." He wrestled with demons luring him to the movie theater and the temptation to follow his cousins, Lewis and Gilley, into the secular music business. But for every account of slipping into dark waters, Swaggart eventually claimed a victory.

"Jerry Lee can go to Sun Records in Memphis, I'm on my way to heaven with a God who supplies all my needs according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus," he declared after a bout of envy at his cousin's wealth. "I didn't know how to explain it, but I knew I had won a great victory over the powers of darkness."

While preaching in Ohio on the camp-meeting circuit many years ago, Swaggart was awakened by a flash flood. The raging waters, he said, nearly swept him and his wife away, but God spared them. "The Devil had tried to take our lives, and I realized the struggles would become more intense as I moved forward with God," Swaggart recalled. "For years to come, I would dream about struggling against that current and almost drowning."

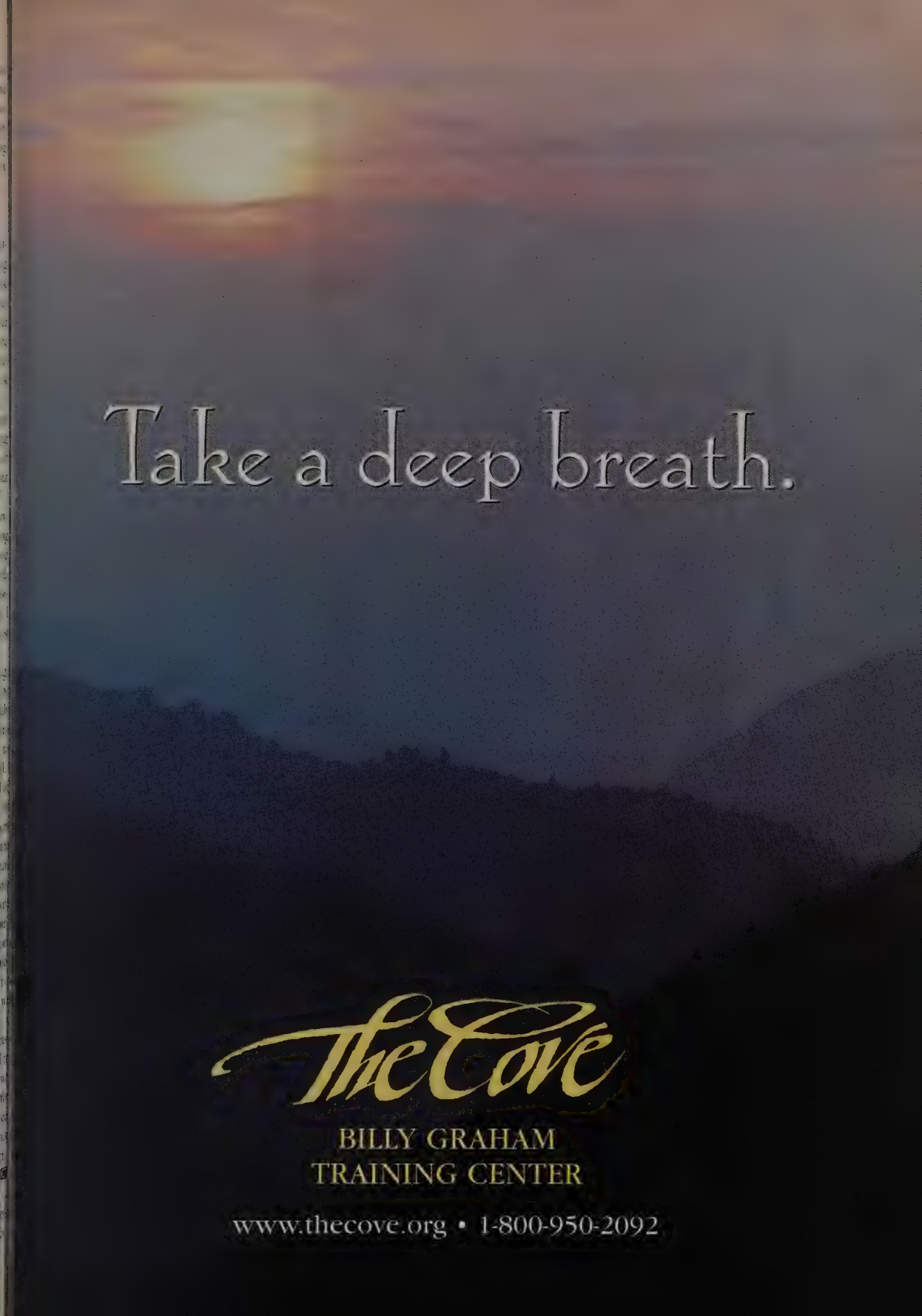
For more than a decade Jimmy Swaggart has been struggling against the current. But when he responds to his critics by saying that "as many scars as I have, another one doesn't really matter," I suspect he's talking about something more than scorn and ridicule and declining revenues. When Swaggart refers to the "stygian night of darkness," the reference is internal as well.

Perhaps that's why Swaggart makes us uncomfortable. All of us wrestle with demons, whether we use that terminology or not. They may or may not be sexual, as with Swaggart, but from time to time we feel ourselves slipping into dark waters, and the undertow seems all too overwhelming. Swaggart, with his tears and his sweat and his tortured confession, seems all too human and, let's face it, we evangelicals prefer our heroes to be anodyne and in control, tidy and triumphant. Swaggart makes us uncomfortable by reminding us of ourselves, but rather than facing our faults, our fallenness, our humanity, it's easier to change the subject and dismiss Swaggart with ridicule. More's the pity, for it is only by gazing into the mirror of our own wretchedness that we begin to comprehend the magnificence of grace.

A decade ago, groping for an explanation for his transgression, Swaggart remarked, "Maybe Jimmy Swaggart has tried to live his entire life as though he was not human." We've known about Swaggart's humanity for a decade now, and when in the course of a sermon he segues into "Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me," some would dismiss that as contrived and disingenuous, just another part of his act.

I think he knows whereof he speaks. 

Randall Balmer, professor of American Religion at Columbia University, is the author of Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory: A Journey into the Evangelical Subculture in America.



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Hospice Care Hijacked?

A bottom-line, cost-efficient mentality obscures the movement's original Christian vision.

ART MOORE



In January 1995, a physician diagnosed 50-year-old Cliff Dailey of Atlanta with a rare form of cancer. His doctor offered massive doses of chemotherapy as his only hope. Dailey's severe heart problems, though, lowered his already meager chances of survival to less than 10 percent.

"We knew going into this that there wasn't a great deal that medicine could do," says his widow, Rita. "But it was the only thing we had."

Finally, Dailey's doctor determined that continued chemotherapy would lead to a quicker death, and he recommended two different hospice programs.

Rita Dailey recalls that a representative of one of the hospices met her at the door. "She said, 'We'll help you all we can, and when he's dead, you call us. We'll pick him up.'"

In America's death-denying culture, hospice is struggling to overcome the perception that it is a choice to quit. On the contrary, its advocates assert, hospice is an interdisciplinary program that enables the terminally ill to live to their fullest with the time they have left.

Though the number of hospice programs has grown steadily—17 percent annually during the past five years—Yale University Medical School professor Diane Komp believes that a bottom-line mentality, fostered largely by managed care and Medicare, has "hijacked" the original hospice vision of the movement's Christian founder, Cicely Saunders. Saunders, a London physician, placed the spiritual dimension at the core of an integrated community team of lay volunteers and health-care professionals at Saint Christopher's hospice (CT, Dec. 17, 1990, p. 22).

"The idea that you can fund something by the government and duplicate what happened in London totally underestimates what Saint Christopher's hospice was all about," says Komp.

"The community came together to solve a problem in health care that the health profession, left to our own devices, wasn't doing a good job with," says

Komp, who serves at the Connecticut Hospice, Inc. in Branford, established in 1974 with the help of Saunders as the first hospice in the United States. "Communities of laypeople, doctors, nurses, clergy—even funeral directors in the large communities—came together with a common vision of doing a better job."

The more than 3,000 hospice programs in the United States serve 450,000 patients, according to the most recent statistics of the National Hospice Organization (NHO), an advocacy and membership group based in Washington, D.C.

Hospice researcher Joanne Lynn says no conclusive research exists to determine just how well hospice is doing its job and what effect managed care arrangements have had.

"The NHO puts out a survey in which they measure satisfaction in families, so you know that on the whole there is sort of a glow about things," says Lynn, director of the Center to Improve Care of the Dying, George Washington University in Washington, D.C. "But you wouldn't know if lots of people were getting bad or inadequate treatment, because you're relying upon the self-report of the family."

CONTAINING COSTS: Though hospice observers and caregivers believe that on the whole it provides the terminally ill with a welcome alternative to institutionalized medicine, they agree that managed care and Medicare have altered the movement.

The good news is that more people have access to hospice care. The bad news is that bottom-line-oriented management often minimizes spiritual and other nonmedical aspects of hospice care.

Further, there are signs in Oregon that cost issues may push hospice care toward acceptance of a moral nemesis, physician-assisted suicide.

"I'm happy to say it hasn't happened here," says hospice founder Saunders, who at nearly 80 continues to work full-time as Saint Christopher's chair. "I think the U.S.A. has a lot of restrictions because of your managed care." Great Britain has much greater

freedom, Saunders says, because much of the funding is voluntary.

Saint Christopher's origins go to 1958, when Saunders worked at a London home for the dying. Her published research on 200 cancer patients challenged conventional medicine's treatment of the terminally ill. In 1967, Saunders and a group of other London doctors and nurses opened the world's first residential hospice.

COMPETITIVE BUSINESS: For Rita Dailey and her husband, Cliff, the abrupt response to her initial question caused them to seek out an openly Christian alternative. At Southwest Christian Hospice, established in 1983 on the Saint Christopher's model, Dailey's husband died what the Union City, Georgia, hospice workers called a "good death" in August 1995. "I still go out and talk with their counselor when I've got to have somebody to talk to," Dailey says. "They always take time for me."

About 28 percent of hospice programs are independent community-based organizations, according to University of Chicago researcher Nicholas Christakis. Southwest Christian, fully financed by churches and corporate donations, is unusual because it does not charge its patients.

Another 28 percent of hospices are divisions of hospitals, 19 percent are divisions of home health agencies, 6 percent are divisions of hospice corporations, 1 percent are divisions of nursing homes, and 18 percent are "other" or not identified.

"There's more and more competition now in hospice care," says Southwest Christian Hospice director Michael Sorrow. "Once Medicare and Medicaid came out with the benefit, every Tom, Dick, and Harry jumped into the hospice business to make money on it." He believes that some of the newer hospice programs are not as concerned with overall quality.

Jack Gordon, president of the Hospice Foundation of America, says hospice programs are providing good care, but he notes, "The problem with HMOs and insurance companies is that they're very much into a fee-for-service mode, and so they try to buy pieces of hospice care that they think are important. They would limit the nurse visits. They're appalled at the notion of bereavement care—because after the patient's dead, they don't want to have to spend any money."

About 68 percent of hospices are nonprofit, 4 percent are government organizations, 17 percent are for-profit, and 11 percent are "other" or unidentified.

"Hospice has become kind of the medical management of a person's pain and symptoms," says Janice Campbell, hospice community liaison nurse for the Franciscan Health System in Tacoma, a member of Catholic Health Initiatives West. "Hospice programs

and doctors and other therapists can easily slip into looking at just the medical aspects of an individual, which aren't all of the aspects by any means."

Researcher Lynn believes that Medicare has played a large part in the hijacking of hospice, though its impact is not completely negative. "It converts hospice to much more of a business," Lynn says. "On the other hand, it made hospice available to a whole lot of people that were never going to get it on a volunteer basis."

The number of Medicare-certified hospices has grown from 31 in 1984, when the benefit began, to 2,154. Eighty percent of hospices are Medicare-certified. In 1997, Medicare paid a per-day rate of \$94 for home care and \$419 for general inpatient care.

DYING AT HOME: More than 90 percent of hospice care hours are provided in patients' homes.



PHOTOS BY JEFF KING

Helping hands: Unit technician Debbie Hornberger of Evergreen Community Hospice in the Seattle area comforts a patient.

Dana Pias, director of Hospice Managed Care of Shreveport, Louisiana, says that Medicare's flat benefit actually gives her more freedom in her program.

"I don't have to justify every piece of equipment, every piece of medication, every time a nurse goes out," she says.

But Pias and many others in the industry acknowledge that spiritual care often has a lower priority with managed-care organizations and insurance providers.

"They say," Gordon relates, "Well, we don't need the social worker, and the clergy ought to do it for nothing"—whatever they can do to cut down the cost below the Medicare reimbursement rate so they can make [a profit on] the difference."

In 1995, the Offices of the Inspector General and the Health Care Financing Administration issued the findings of Operation Restore Trust, which targeted abuse of the Medicare hospice benefit. It found that the flat daily rate, which is paid irrespective of the amount of services, created an incentive to provide fewer services.

ELEMENTS OF FAITH: For the Daileys, the spiritual dimension was essential to the care of Rita's husband, who she says was not a professing Christian when he entered hospice care. "They offered him life beyond this life," Dailey says. "It was led by God's hand."

During hospice care, Cliff Dailey met a man in his 80s whom he called "Mr. Christian." The elderly believer asked Dailey to pray before his meal. For the first time in half a century, Dailey prayed.

Researcher Christakis estimates that about 5 to 10 percent of hospice patients are cared for by church-run hospices.

Lynn believes that the health-care system should recognize the spiritual significance of the end of life as much as it does life's beginning. "In childbirth, you have to give the family a special room to bond with the infant," Lynn says. "In the same way, we need to learn some kind of language that allows us to make something very special at the end of life."

She says the challenge is striking a balance between professional commitment and moral commitment, and the willingness to serve the sick and financial inducements.

David Schneider, director of membership services for the NHO, says his organization views the spiritual dimension as of equal importance to the physical and psycho-social aspects of hospice care. "But it also is going to vary from patient to patient depending on their own level of spirituality," he says.

Cost restrictions limit the spiritual

dimension of care at many hospices, says Pias, who worked for two other programs before coming to Hospice Managed Care of Shreveport, which she notes is a free-standing, for-profit hospice not affiliated with an HMO.

"That's a very strong part of our program," she says, "but most hospices do not employ full-time chaplains. They look at that as an additional service, not a core service."

Camille Dierksen-Gamble, the founder of the Shreveport hospice, started it after her husband died in a hospice that did not include a spiritual dimension.

"The regulations do not say that you have to employ a full-time chaplain," Pias says. "All they say [is that] you have to meet the spiritual needs of the patient. That leaves it open to a huge interpretation."

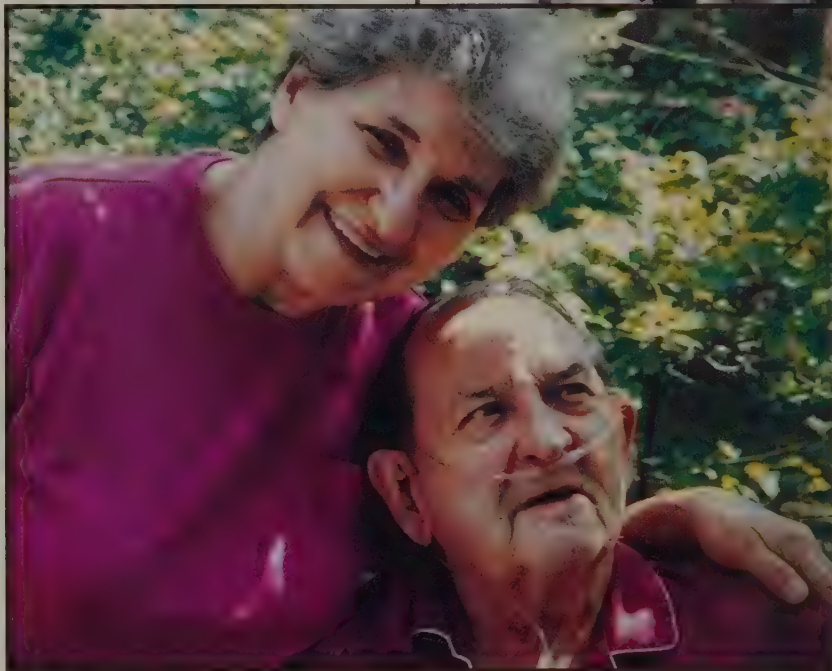
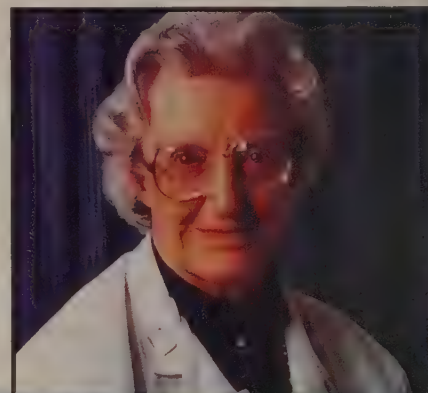
Many hospice workers across the country agree that spiritual care is lacking, says Fay Davis, director of the hospice program of Tri-Cities Chaplaincy in Kennewick, Washington.

"We have a lot more spiritual emphasis

"Absolutely everyone here is involved in pastoral care," says 15-year hospice worker Jane Quirk, a volunteer at Evergreen Hospice of Kirkland, Washington.

DIFFERENT BELIEF SYSTEMS: Though Southwest Christian may have been founded on the original hospice model, it takes a decidedly more evangelical stance on spiritual care than even Saint Christopher's.

"I have seen how the Judeo-Christian ethic is transferable to other cultures,



here than a lot of other hospices have," Davis says. "When I go out to meetings, they're just amazed at the amount of focus we have and what we have available on the spiritual side."

Chaplains are not the only hospice workers who give spiritual care, and some patients find they relate better to nurses, dishwashers, or cooks than to trained clergy.

other religions, and to the agnostic and secular world," Saunders says. "And I think that is right."

Yet, Saunders handles spiritual care the same way many hospice chaplains and workers do in the United States, approaching people from their own religious perspective.

"I wouldn't ever try to proselytize," she says. "We are here not to make people

think as we do, but to make them think as deeply as they can in their own way."

However, Sorrow says that Southwest's founders had evangelism in mind from the outset: "They felt that they could not charge the families from that vantage point, because it creates a unique opportunity for our people, our volunteers and our staff, to share the message of Christ—even with people who had never set foot in a church."

Extending quality care: Saunders (left) provided the model for surrounding patients with what is familiar, as does the Connecticut Hospice (below) and what is comfortable, as does the Southwest Christian Hospice (below left).



Sorrow finds New Age thinking commonplace in the hospice movement.

"When they talk about spirituality they talk about it in a totally different light than we would," he says. "They have to rely on a very broad brush to [discuss] the spiritual side."

Many have become Christians through the ministry, Sorrow says. "We don't browbeat people with the Bible when they walk in the door, but our mission statement focuses on the fact that it's the love of Christ that provides the dignity and quality, even up to the end," he says.

ASSISTED DEATH? Though hospice workers almost unanimously express a disdain for physician-assisted suicide, there are already indications that it may become an element of hospice care in Oregon, which in November became the first state to affirm physician-assisted suicide in a voter referendum (CT, Dec. 8, 1997, p. 64). A member of the Health Services Commission of the Oregon Health Plan, Amy Klare, says she expects

assisted suicide to be covered by the plan as "comfort care."

"Much to my dismay, I think that we will probably see most hospices allow assisted suicide on their premises," says Gayle Atteberry, director of Oregon Right to Life, which led the opposition to the assisted-suicide measure.

Atteberry says that since the law passed, many hospices that spoke out against assisted suicide are now hesitant to express their position.

"They feel—and I think with a lot of validity—that even if a person thinks, *Yes, at some point I might want assisted suicide*, once they get into a hospice program they will have their needs met and then they would not want assisted suicide," Atteberry says. "So this puts hospices in a touchy situation."

Rita Marker, director of the Anti-Euthanasia Task Force in Steubenville, Ohio, fears that HMOs and insurance agencies may favor hospices that allow assisted suicide because it is more cost-effective.

"Obviously they're not going to come out and say, 'We have a policy now that we're only going to contract with those agencies that provide assisted suicide, because it's cheaper,'" Marker says. "But we've seen it happening with physicians who have lost what is euphemistically called 'economic credentialing.'" When

the patients are doing well, it costs the HMO more than the HMO wants to pay, so they will not contract with that particular physician to provide services any more, she says.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST? Marker points out that many backers of the assisted-suicide measure are associated with HMOs.

"My worry in this country is not the slippery slope of a dictator who would begin to do these things, but the sweet seduction of the marketplace," says Southern Methodist University ethics professor William F. May, author of *Testing the Medical Covenant: Active Euthanasia & Health Care Reform* (Eerdmans, 1996). "It's cheaper; get 'em out of here. And we spare ourselves expensive care."

George Washington University's Lynn maintains that society must be taught to provide high quality end-of-life care. "Physician-assisted suicide cannot be debated and resolved except in the context of how we will choose to support one another at the end of life," she says.

"After all of this time, [hospice] is not as integrated into the whole scheme of things as it might have been," says Rosemary Johnson Hurzeler, director of the Connecticut Hospice, Inc. More grassroots involvement in hospice care is also a necessary ingredient for better integration with the health-care system.

Last September, Evergreen Hospice, Kirkland, Washington, launched its Faith in Action program to "raise awareness of end-of-life issues and help the faith community enhance their care-giving skills through seminars and presentations at churches.

"First let's take this subject out of the closet, then show people how to do it," says Faith in Action director Karen Modell, who has become known around the community as the "death-friendly one."

Volunteers at Evergreen must pass a rigorous training program. "If it's not the marrow of their soul, they don't stay," says Modell. "This is not easy work. Everyone at every level gets emotionally involved." Integration also requires that Americans change the way they deal with death and dying.

"With the continued expansion of medical care and the ability to keep people alive, with no quality, it's hard for some families to make determination, particularly ones who have no faith," says Fay Davis. "If they are out there with faith, they're going to stay in that medical model to the end."

The irony is that while a minority of the terminally ill die under hospice care, most Americans when surveyed say that they want the kind of care that hospice was originally intended to provide. The Connecticut Hospice, which for seven years owned the word *hospice*, requires any program that took that name to adhere to its ten principles of hospice care.

Those principles form the basis for a recent initiative of the Connecticut attorney general's office called Physician Assisted Living (PAL)—a counterpoint to assisted suicide that gives patients and health-care providers the opportunity to establish their choice of the hospice option in advance.

"If you have to anticipate death, and you're not ready to do that, then we've lost the opportunity, if you will, to help the people who really need it the most," Hurzeler says.

As one of PAL's originators, she hopes to see the initiative spread across the nation. "The ten principles are part of a whole value system that is couched in the sacredness of life," she says.

THE UNFINISHED

STEPHEN E. SAINT

Forty years ago my father, Nate Saint, and four other young missionaries (Jim Elliot, Pete Fleming, Ed McCulley, and Roger Youderian) were speared to death while trying to reach the "Auca" Indians in the Amazon jungles of South America. Today, I have a home among these people—properly called Huaorani—and some of the very men who speared my father have become substitute grandfathers to my children.

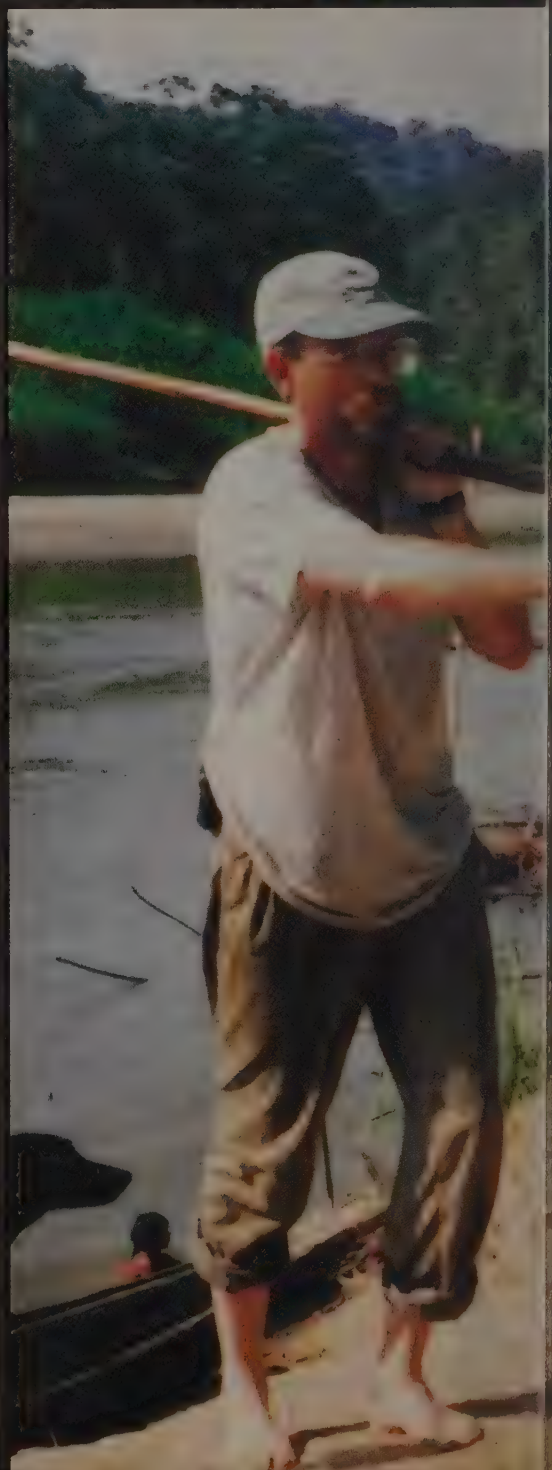
For various reasons, the Huaorani story has become a favorite missionary tale among evangelicals. But there is more to the story than the death of five fine young missionaries and the evangelization of the tribe by the sister of one of the martyrs. While it doesn't lend itself to the happily-ever-after tone that makes the simple version so attractive, it should be told since North American Christians continue to send missionaries into other cultures.

If the primary purpose of missionary effort is to plant indigenous Christian churches, our specific goal as missionaries should be to help these emerging churches become (to use the missiologists' terminology) self-propagating, self-governing, and self-supporting. I would like to examine here to what extent we have helped the Huaorani to achieve these goals after four decades of mission work among them. My hope is that a realistic appraisal of the Huaorani's present spiritual and social condition will serve as a case study from which to evaluate our mission strategies today.

First, let me say that there is unmistakable evidence among certain Huaorani Christians today of a strong desire not only to follow Christ but to share the gospel with others (self-propagation). I remember an encounter I witnessed between some Huaorani Christians and members of a secular North American tour group who were visiting a Huaorani camp.

There were 34 students in this group, all from the University of Washington and Western Washington University. To reach the Huaorani encampment, the students were transported by jungle bus to the end of a graveled path laid down by an oil company. From there, three Huaorani men led them through the eastern flanks of the Andes Mountains in Ecuador and down into the virgin Amazon basin. Their trek included 14 hours by foot on a jungle trail as well as paddling downriver in large dugout canoes to reach the campsite.

As the students unloaded their bags, I could see they had come to truly respect and enjoy their Huaorani guides. So much so, in fact, that as we settled around a campfire that evening, a student asked me where the "savage Huaorani" were that they had read about in preparation for the trip. Sitting on logs under a star-studded sky and with a chorus of jungle insects singing in the back-



GABA TONÁ

MISSION TO THE

'AUCAS'



Fishing for dollars: To become self-sufficient, Huaorani Christians are giving outsiders "Ste Age" tours (Stephen Saint with Onipodae and Epa).

ground, I explained that the very people they had been traveling, eating, sleeping, and hunting with were, in fact, these "savages."

Seeing the students' looks of disbelief, I suggested they ask some of the Huaorani who were middle-aged or older where their fathers were. One student, taking up the challenge, nodded toward a Huaorani woman. I translated.

"*Boto maempo doobae wendapa*," she replied—"He is already dead a long time ago. Having been speared, he died." Her tone of voice suggested any other cause would have been unusual.

Four more Huaorani around the circle gave similar answers, graphically showing on their own bodies where each victim had been impaled.

"Ask Ompodae," one student urged another. Several of the young ladies had taken a liking to Ompodae, an unusually warm and affectionate woman who was a wife and a mother of ten.

"My father, too," she said, the pain of the memory showing in her expression. Then, holding out her arm, she pointed at old Dabo, who was listening to our conversation a couple of feet away. "He killed my father and almost all of the rest of my family, too. Living angry, he speared them all."

"My God, I was just sitting next to him," exclaimed one of the young men from the tour group. Another added, "I've heard enough about killing."

But one more Huaorani woman, Dawa, who normally left the conversation to others, spoke up. Pointing to her aging and gentle husband, Kimo, who was sitting by me, she stated, "Hating us, he speared my father, my brothers, and my mother and baby sister whom my mother was nursing in her hammock. He took me and made me his wife."

Our visitors looked genuinely stunned. "How could she live with the man who murdered her family?" one of the young ladies asked. The students began whispering among themselves, and suddenly I pictured the setting from their perspective. They had gotten themselves in a situation where they couldn't travel without a guide. They were utterly dependent for their survival on a group of primitive people that had just admitted to being habitual killers.

It occurred to me that they didn't yet know my relationship to the Huaorani. Dawa had just finished telling how Kimo had killed her family and made her his wife. Now I put my arm around Kimo's shoulders and informed them, "He killed my father, too."

Silence. At last, the question on everyone's mind found a voice: "What changed these people?"

I interpreted the question, and Dawa, Kimo, and other Huaorani began to describe a life where everyone did as they willed. They explained how they threw babies away when they weren't convenient to care for. They talked about how people begged to be buried alive when they knew they were dying so their spirits wouldn't wander without solace when freed from their decomposing and unburied bodies.

One of the Huaorani, a gentle and happy woman, told the group how she had strangled her daughter with her own hands to meet the demands of her speared and dying husband, who wanted his children to be buried with him to keep him company. The one son she had refused to kill was the students' lead guide.

Then they explained to our 34 highly educated young people from the most technologically advanced society in history how they learned from the missionaries that the Man Maker sent his Son to die for people full of hate, fear, and desire for revenge.

"Badly, badly we lived back then," Dawa said. "Now, walking God's trail which he has marked for us on paper [the Bible], we live well. All people still die, but if living you follow God's trail,

then dying will lead you to heaven. But only one trail leads there. All other trails lead to where God will never be after death."

Dawa's clear explanation had left her audience spellbound. Now she had a question for her listeners.

"Have you heard me well? Which one of you wants to follow God's trail, living well?"

There was silence again. Then the seed of Dawa's message landed in the fertile soil of at least one heart as a lone hand raised into the night air. Dawa understood the American student's gesture and joyously clapped her hands. "Now I see you well," she said. "Leaving, we will still see each other in God's place some day." Then she looked around at the others. "Dying, I will never see you again if you don't follow God's trail. Think well on what I have spoken, so that dying, we will live happily together in heaven."

As I flew out of the jungle a few days later with the tour leader, I asked him what the students had said they liked best about the tour. "Living with the Huaorani and helping in the tasks of their Stone Age lives," he replied. Then he added: "What made the biggest impression on them, I think, was the

UNLIKE AN OIL COMPANY, T

realization that Christianity has the ability to change people's lives. I am not a Christian myself, but I would say this was a radical realization for most of these young people. Until this trip, they saw Christianity as just another code of conduct."

Looking back, I see I had been privy to a unique event. I had witnessed the twentieth century coming face to face with the Stone Age—and coming up short. In a fleeting but eternal moment, I had seen God's Great Commission coming full circle. Dawa's Spirit-led witness to the gospel was living proof that my father's blood and Aunt Rachel's lifetime of service had not been given in vain.

Dawa's story rightfully warms the heart. But how many of the Huaorani today are like Dawa? To what extent is the Huaorani church self-propagating? Self-supporting? Self-governing?

In 1995, at the request of the Huaorani, I returned to live with these people of my youth. This followed the burial of my father's sister Rachel, who had lived with them from the first peaceful contact in 1958 until she died of cancer in 1994. The harsh reality I encountered as I returned was that the Huaorani church of the midnineties was less functional than it had been in the early sixties when I lived with Aunt Rachel and the tribe as a young teenager.

The root of the problem, I eventually realized, was that insidious disease that has sucked the life out of many Native American tribes and continues to devastate many ethnic communities within North and South America today—dependency. The Huaorani have become dependent on outsiders—especially North American Christians—for education, for medical and dental services, and for radio communications to relay information between their many villages.

Some of the dependency, of course, had been created by oil companies, government agencies, and other special-interest groups that stand to benefit directly from that dependency—the Huaorani can't very well tell companies to quit exploring for oil while at the same time asking for outboard motors and cash gifts.

Unlike oil companies, however, the church has a great deal to lose from creating dependency. While most missionaries

would not consciously foster dependency, I believe the Devil deceives us into creating this state by prompting us to mix into our legitimate desire to help others a small measure of pride and a dose of cultural arrogance.

It happens almost undiscernibly. Those who have worked with the Huaorani know how very difficult it is for sophisticated, hi-tech North Americans to believe that "primitive" people can take over where we leave off in the process of establishing their church. Take medicine, for example. Health care is one of the most effective means of creating credibility and gaining acceptance in frontier areas. Medical work requires communication links between outposts and a clinic site. Patients must be transported to the clinic by airplane in many remote areas. Electrical power must be generated, clean efficient buildings must be built, and the list goes on and on.

Educated and sophisticated outsiders like ourselves find it hard to imagine—much less trust—people like the Huaorani with building clinics, doing dental work, and flying airplanes. Historically, the Huaorani have been hunter-gatherers who lived

demonstrated a kind of leadership that was both culturally and spiritually fitting for the Huaorani church.

One of the specific mistakes that we have made, I believe, has been to allow believers from the outside, who have never lived with the Huaorani and who don't understand their culture, to exert a great deal of influence over the Huaorani church. As innocuous as special Bible conferences and classes may sound, the presence of the outside leaders and teachers who conducted these conferences over the years (and still do) served to undermine the fragile belief among the Huaorani believers that they could govern their own church and teach their own people. (I've seen even the smallest gestures of kindness undermine responsible leadership. A Huaorani father and lifelong friend of mine asked me why outsiders give his kids sweets at the school. "Now my children won't drink their banana drink at home. Scolding their mother they just say, we want cookies like they give us at school.")

Lacking self-leadership and facing the loss of their old way of life, the Huaorani have been left poor both materially and spiritually. And sadly, virtually no effort was made by the missionaries

THE CHURCH HAS A GREAT DEAL TO LOSE FROM CREATING DEPENDENCY

in thatched-roof houses with dirt floors, hunting wild pigs, turkeys, tapirs, and deer with spears or nine-foot-long blowguns. Most Huaorani maintained houses and gardens in three or more locations, moving among them as dictated by game depletion or the threat of attack from enemies. They had no chiefs, council, or other means of organizing defense of their territory against outsiders or negotiating peace with each other. In fact, outsiders were not their greatest concern; killing within the tribe was so rampant that they were on the verge of annihilating themselves.

The gospel and the people who brought it gave the Huaorani reason to quit killing outsiders and each other, and in 40 years the tribe has nearly tripled in size (today there are around 1,500). From the beginning, there were signs the Huaorani had accepted for themselves the task of evangelism, and many from the older generation were converted by the witness of their peers. But the younger generation has not understood the perpetual fear and hate that dominated their parents' and grandparents' lives. Today only a handful of the younger generation demonstrates an abiding faith in the God and message of peace that so radically changed their parents' lives.

What has blunted this initial Huaorani desire for winning and discipling their own? I believe it was a failure as missionaries to help the Huaorani church become self-governing. Here, too, the Huaorani had demonstrated early signs of leadership, in spite of the fact that "organizing" and "governing" are totally new concepts to their culture. When I was a teenager, one of the Huaorani friends that I was baptized with led some other young boys in killing a witch doctor's son. The believers knew that this was wrong and that Inihua needed to be punished. One of the older believers and the father of one of Inihua's accomplices suggested that the guilty ones should be killed. Others said that, as Christians, they shouldn't kill anymore, even for punishment.

At last they decided they would pray and ask God himself to punish Inihua. Within days, Inihua, a healthy young man, fell on the ground in front of witnesses, convulsed, and died. While not a typical North American leadership approach (or result), it

over the last four decades to help the Huaorani establish a viable economy from which they could financially support their church, their families, or God's commission to reach their own people.

The Huaorani believers are now in the midst of an experiment at becoming self-supporting. In just two-and-a-half years they have built and are running their own dental clinic, pharmacy, trading post, and school. As they drill and fill their own people's teeth, they share God's message with them. They are hosting tours of outsiders (hence, the college students from Washington), who pay to visit these "Stone Age" people. Recently, the Huaorani have asked me to help them build and learn to operate their own aircraft, which they see as critical to their long-term independence as a church and as a people.

My contribution has been to cheer them on and to convince them from the Bible that this is God's will. I have also played the thankless task of challenging foreigners who seem bent on perpetuating "missions" here.

Will it work in the long run? I am convinced it can. So are the Huaorani. I believe that this is the tribe's only spiritual and economic hope. Outsiders will never get the job done. Neither should they, for we have no business doing what the Huaorani are capable of doing themselves. We must limit our involvement to helping them in the areas they are not yet able to overcome, making every effort to help them become self-sufficient in those areas as quickly as possible.

Christ said that we should "make disciples of all men, teaching them to observe all" that he had commanded us to observe. Faithful missionaries such as Cathy Peek, Rosie Jung, Pat Kell, and Aunt Rachel gave the Huaorani the New Testament in their own language. This is a fundamental building block for establishing any church. I am excited that the Huaorani have begun to see themselves as true participants in this Great Commission. I pray that we North American Christians, too, will learn to view them—and the others we are reaching out to—in the same way. It is, after all, the gospel way.

Steve Saint and his family maintain a state-side base in Ocala, Florida. For information on tours to the Huaorani, call (352) 694-1998.

Jimmy Carter's Lesson Plan

Former President Jimmy Carter is the most famous Sunday-school teacher in America—a task he's been at since age 18. Even during his tenure as President, he taught Sunday school occasionally at the First Baptist Church of Washington. Today he continues teaching at Maranatha Baptist Church in Plains, Georgia. After the surprising success of his religious autobiography, *Living Faith* (Times Books, 1996), Carter worked on a sequel: *Sources of Strength: Meditations on Scripture for a Living Faith*, a selection of 52 out of the 1,600 Sunday-school lessons he has taught over the years. In a telephone interview with *CHRISTIANITY TODAY*, associate editor Richard A. Kauffman talked to Carter about everything from Sunday school and personal faith to the Southern Baptist Convention and world politics.



In 1957 *Life* magazine said that Sunday school was the most wasted hour of the week. You must disagree.

We have hundreds of people who come to Maranatha Baptist for the Sunday-school experience. One Sunday we had folks from 28 different nations. I realize that a lot of them come just to meet a former President. But a lot tell me afterwards, "This is the first time I've ever been in a church." Some say they would like to pursue religion more. So this book, I hope, will reach out to these people.

The former President reflects on pursuing peace in the world and among Southern Baptists.

In *Living Faith*, you write that as a young person you had doubts about your faith. How do you deal with doubts now?

One of the facets of a sound Christian faith is to level with God about your doubts or disbelief, your lack of wisdom or strength. God can withstand tough, honest prayers. I try to face my doubts and fears forcefully with confidence that God will forgive me.

When Paul was asked what are the things that never change and are important, he replied: the things you cannot see. These things that you cannot see epitomize the life of Christ—justice, truth, peace, forgiveness, compassion, love, humility, service. These are the focus of the Christian faith.

How do you view the division between moderates and conservatives within your own denomination, the Southern Baptist Convention?

I would like very much to see this rift healed. This past week we had twenty-some leading conservative and moderate Baptists come to the Carter Center in Atlanta for a private session just to talk about where we can go from here, how we can heal the wounds that exist. I presided over the group. I asked everyone present not to make a single negative comment about any other Baptists, and we didn't. We just explored future directions in a positive fashion. We're going to follow up with some other private meetings, just exploring possible things on which we all can agree.

A lot of Christians, not just Baptists, have been alienated from active participation in the church—including some of my children—by the highly publicized disharmony that exists among Christians.

In *Sources of Strength* you mention your daughter Amy's reaction in particular.

Her participation in the church has been adversely affected by the Southern Baptist Convention's stance against the equal role of women in the church. Within our seminaries, a professor who espouses equality of women in the church is denied the right to teach. We have about 3,500 Baptist churches in Georgia; only one has a woman pastor. I believe that women should be treated equally with men in affairs of the church.

If you were invited to speak to a national gathering of the Christian Coalition, what would you say to them?

Last year I was on Pat Robertson's show, and we discussed our basic Christian faith. I disagree pretty strongly on some facets of their faith. For

instance, separation of church and state. It's contrary to my beliefs to try to exalt Christianity as having some sort of preferential status in the United States. That violates the Constitution. I'm not in favor of mandatory prayer in school or of using public funds to finance religious education.

I don't, however, see anything wrong with Christians, Muslims, and Jews exhibiting their own faith in the political arena. Christ tried to change the society within which he lived. He didn't hold public office and wouldn't have. But you don't have to hold public office to try to change the basic policies of a country.

How can Christians help bring about what you call "a social reformation" in our country?

The obvious answer is to follow the standards and the priorities that were established so clearly by the words and actions of Jesus Christ, who was dedicated to justice, peace, humility, service, compassion, and love. I would put an emphasis at this moment among Christians on forgiveness and accommodation.

We have a very harsh society now. It's almost totally devoted to punishment. In *Living Faith* I pointed out the dramatic difference in attitudes now toward criminals from what it was when I was governor of Georgia over 20 years ago. We governors then were competing with each other over who could have the fewest people in prison and the most aggressive program rehabilitating the lives of inmates. Now the governors brag about how many new prison cells they're building.

What do you think the United States ought to be doing about persecution of Christians in places like China?

When I normalized relations with China in 1979, China did not permit any religious worship or distribution of Bibles. Deng Xiaoping promised me he would change the constitution of China to guarantee freedom of religion, which he did in 1982. And he also promised to permit the free distribution of Bibles, which they have done and still are doing. China has made a great deal of progress but still has a long way to go. There are still restraints on worship in China. Each congregation has to register with the government, and a lot of people disagree with that.

Our government ought to publicize abuses, although I'm not sure that our government should single out Chris-

tians. I imposed human-rights standards for all people, not just for one faith.

Should Most Favored Nation status be used as a carrot or a stick?

We shouldn't link Most Favored Nation status with China's attitude toward religious freedom. The best way to keep China increasingly open to worship—and trade, commerce, and political change—is by them being in relationship with the outside world. The same with Cuba: we shouldn't isolate Cuba but allow free trade, commerce, and visitation back and forth. That's the best way to break down totalitarianism.

What are your thoughts on U.S. policy toward the Middle East peace process and Iraq?

Concerning the Middle East, the U.S. has changed its policies dramatically. I and all my predecessors in the White House since 1948 characterized Israeli settlements in the West Bank and Gaza as both illegal and an obstacle to peace. Nowadays, U.S. policy is that the Israeli settlements in the West Bank and Gaza are neither illegal nor an obstacle to peace if they're somewhat restrained. The United States government has got to play a much more forceful role in putting forward acceptable solutions and not just stand back and listen to the complaints from the Palestinians and the Israelis.

On Iraq, I was one of the few people who did not think the Gulf War was necessary. The Iraqis were attempting, through the Saudi Arabians, to negotiate their problems peacefully with Kuwait, but by then the United States had already decided to go to war. The massive bombing of Iraq by the U.S. will not be supported by other nations and will result in the deaths of many innocent civilians.

I'm not a pacifist, but I think many wars can be prevented if we as a nation commit ourselves to the enhancement of peace. Possibly two wars were prevented in 1994 as a result of work by the Carter Center: North Korea, as Kim Il Sung was apparently evolving a nuclear capability; and Haiti, when 30,000 American troops were poised to invade the country until we worked out a peace agreement. There are times when our country needs to defend freedom and liberty for ourselves and others, the most brutal case being against Hitler. There are other times when we might avoid a war by more careful diplomacy.



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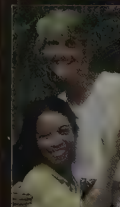
"I don't generally subscribe to magazines, so when I received your premiere issue, I was not at all interested until I opened it and started to read. Instead of dry 'how to's,' I was reading feelings from the hearts of other women who desperately want to serve God, who also struggle in the process. I immediately felt a bond with these women and the encouragement that I am not alone."

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Adventures in Fasting

What happens when you put a spiritual leader on a long, restricted diet? First you get a few complaints, and then this insightful essay, reprinted from CHRISTIANITY TODAY's sister publication LEADERSHIP: A Practical Journal for Church Leaders. The author is Ben Patterson, dean of the chapel at Hope College in Holland, Michigan.

Someone said the prospect of standing before a firing squad marvelously focuses one's mind. Other things can have the same effect—like the telephone call from a friend last March in which he told me, “Perhaps the Lord is leading us to fast for 40 days.”

Us? I hate to fast. I'd tried fasting, and instead of insights I got irritable.

When Bill Bright reported on his 40-day fast, I held him in awe—the same detached awe I have for someone who can run a mile in under four minutes. It's amazing he can do it, but it would be futile for me even to try.

My friend's call got my attention. As I prayed, the unwelcome conviction grew that a 40-day fast was precisely what God was asking of us. So we covenanted with 30 or 40 people to fast for the 40 days leading up to Pentecost.

The purpose would be to fast and pray for the two things Jonathan Edwards urged the churches of eighteenth-century New England to pray for: the spiritual awakening of the church in our town and beyond, and the spread of the kingdom of God worldwide. The mode of the fast would vary from person to person. Some would take only juices. My wife and I would do a “Daniel” fast and eat only fruits, vegetables, and grains—no meats, fats, or sugar. From time to time during the fast, as the Lord led, we too would have a day of juice only. Whenever possible, we who had covenanted to fast would meet for an hour of prayer on Friday mornings.

The fast is now over. What our prayer and fasting meant for the kingdom of God remains to be seen, but my mind has been marvelously focused.

The first focus is on what a slave I can be to food. Am I sad? I eat. Am I happy? Eat. Tired? Eat.

Angry, depressed, bored? Eat, eat, eat. Do we have a social occasion? We must eat. My life can parody 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18: "Be eating always, eat continually, and eat in all circumstances."

I was surprised, then exhilarated at how free I was during the fast. What began as a command quickly became a permission. The permission? Not to have to live on the level of my appetites. “Do not work for food that spoils,” said Jesus, “but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you” (John 6:27, NIV). As the fast came to an end, I actually became a little afraid to go back to eating normally, fearful I might lose the freedom I had gained. (So far, so good.)

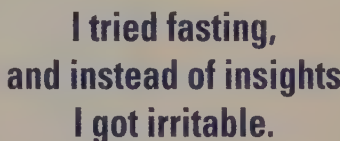
Second, my mind was marvelously focused on the fact that gluttony is about more than mere volume of food. It can express itself also as an inordinate interest in the *experience* of food, making taste buds promiscuous and stomachs ravenous for novelty and variety. I eat out often, and some menus describe the exotic, even spiritual experiences I will have if I order this item or that. I've seen chocolate desserts described as "Pure Sin."

The fast focused my mind on the simple goodness of God's creation. At first the foods I restricted myself to made the prospect of a meal boring. Beans again? Another salad? Not carrots! But I rediscovered how good a mere carrot can be. Or a bare slice of bread, or a crisp apple. With simplicity comes gratitude and joy.

Which leads to the third and most marvelous focus the fast brought to my mind: that food is ultimately not about food, but about God. The meaning of hunger—indeed, of all desire—is to point us to God, our only true Provider. We shouldn't be too quick to make hunger go away, for it can teach us much about our frailty, need, and emptiness apart from God.

A full stomach can be cause for deep gratitude, or as it has so often been for me, cause for spiritual dullness and torpor. A little hunger never hurt anyone, but its absence will.

To join the 70,000 church leaders who already subscribe to LEADERSHIP, call 1-800-777-3136.



Shouldn't your church include indigenous mission in its annual missions budget?



Some 6000 indigenous ministries have more than 200,000 missionaries in the field

In most "mission field" countries, they carry out 90% of all pioneer evangelistic work among unreached people groups, even though they have only 10% of the financial support which American missions have. In closed lands such as India, Myanmar (Burma), Vietnam, Iraq, Iran, Communist China, and Cuba they do 100% of the work.

Shouldn't your church have a share in their ministry?

\$50 monthly supports a missionary

God has raised up about 6000 indigenous missions worldwide. Half are in countries that are closed to missionaries from the USA. Altogether they have over 200,000 missionaries on the field, most of whom live on \$50 per month, or less. Thousands have no support at all. Christian Aid has their names and photographs, and will send one to each sponsor who gives \$50 monthly to support a missionary. Many churches support over 100 such missionaries.

Shouldn't your church be supporting some of these missionaries?

Over 500 Bible Institutes

Indigenous missions operate over 500 Bible institutes and missionary training centers. Often their students must go without food, or if they do eat it may be only rice or beans for days at a time. Many Bible institute teachers must work at full time jobs to support themselves and their families, and still teach 30 or 40 hours a week.

Shouldn't your church be helping to provide financial support for indigenous Bible schools?

Transportation needs

Thousands of native missionaries must walk 30 miles a day because they don't have money to buy a bicycle. Hundreds of mission boards with 100 or more missionaries on the field can't get their workers together for conferences, or send leaders to visit them on the field, because they don't have a motor vehicle.

Shouldn't your church be helping to provide bicycles, jeeps and vans for indigenous mission boards and traveling evangelistic teams?

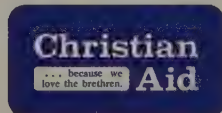
Many needs to meet

Indigenous missions need financial assistance for printing Bibles and literature, Scripture translation, radio and broadcasting, care for homeless children, medical clinics, and to provide emergency food and shelter for victims of persecution, typhoons, floods, fires, earthquakes, epidemics, wars and famines caused by drought.

Shouldn't your church be meeting some of these needs among the poorest people on earth?

Christian Aid links U.S. churches with indigenous missionary ministries both in closed countries, and lands of poverty where Christians lack resources. To learn how you can help contact:

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Chocolate Theology

David Augsburg

The mysterious and mystical *theobromine* (literally, "the food of the gods"), which is commonly called *chocolate*, is a substance deserving of thoughtful and tasteful theological analysis. As one of the primary motivators of human behavior (hunger, thirst, pain, pleasure, self-esteem, sexual desire, and chocolate), it is a force deserving ontological, theological, historical, ethical, and relational reflection.

Ontologically, chocolate raises profoundly disturbing questions: Does not chocolate offer natural revelation of the goodness of the Creator just as chilies disclose a divine sense of humor? Is the human born with an innate longing for chocolate? Does the notion of chocolate preclude the concept of free will? If chocolate is a foretaste of heaven, what does it mean that chocolate is freely available to all?

Theologically, the creation of chocolate demonstrates both the unity and the diversity of humanity. Wherever you taste it, in every country of the world, it is immediately recognizable. Other things, in every cuisine, are just food, but chocolate is chocolate. At the same

that contains the letter *a*, *e*, *i*, *o*, or *u* is the proper time to share it with others.

Historically, the discovery of chocolate by the Mayans and Aztecs dates to the dawn of time. The drink they made from the beans of the cacao tree, called *xocoatl*, was the queen of nutrients, medications, aphrodisiacs, and social lubricants. Hernán Cortés, the sixteenth-century Spaniard, wrote, "One cup of this precious drink permits one to walk a whole day without taking nourishment." Its introduction to Europe by the Spanish invaders in 1528 began the worldwide spread of *cho-co-LAH-tay*. By 1615 it was served at a royal wedding in France. By 1662 it was reported in England as *chocolata* (Stubbs), and in 1669 as *jocolatte* (Pepys). By 1700 it had become an almost universal common denominator.

Ethically, chocolate is meant to be shared. Its essential purpose is the creation of community, of joint experiences of joy, of celebrating the goodness of creation. Chocolate is a primary means of strengthening the human will. *Willpower* is the ability to break a piece of chocolate into four pieces with your bare hands and then eat only one of them.

Relationally, chocolate has been widely touted as a substitute for love. Phenylethylamine is identical to the substance manufactured in the brain during infatuation, so the sweet stuff is nothing more than a counterfeit affection. Is chocolate only a self-medication for loneliness, or does the true chocolate lover sometimes substitute love and affection for the real joy of chocolate?

The central issues we face in confronting this essential substance of the life force, this elixir of existence, are: How shall we maintain the courage of our confections? How shall we live a life worthy of the glory of this good gift of God? and, How shall we confront those who see chocolate as a symbol of wickedness and guilt? (I refer to all those desserts named "Chocolate Decadence" and "Chocolate Sin" and to those references to the "devil's food" that defame this means of healthful living, this virtuous vital force that can carry us through the light and dark, the bitter and the sweet of life.)

David Augsburg is professor of pastoral counseling, Fuller Theological Seminary. This article is taken from The Complete Book of Everyday Christianity, edited by Robert Banks and R. Paul Stevens. © 1997 by Robert Banks and R. Paul Stevens. Used by permission of InterVarsity Press, P.O. Box 1400, Downers Grove, IL 60515.

Primary motivators of human behavior: hunger, thirst, pain, pleasure, self-esteem, sexual desire, and chocolate.

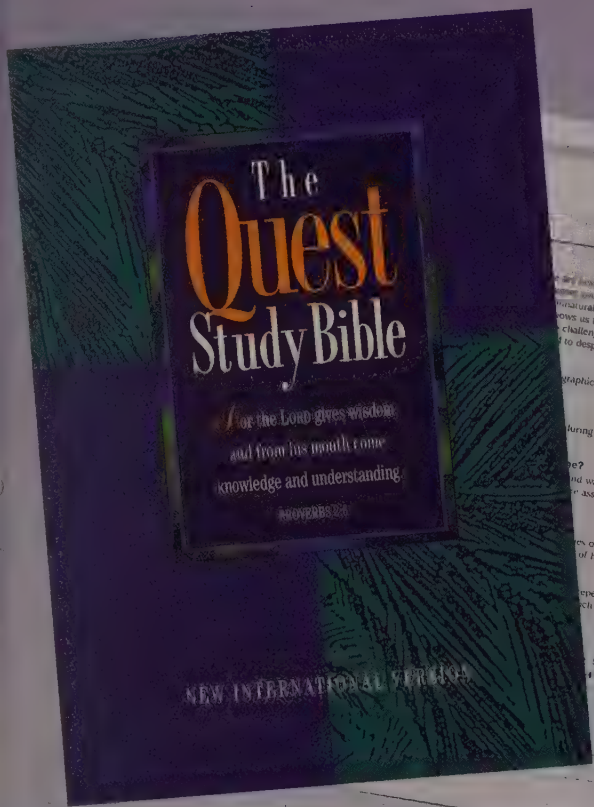
time, each country, or culture, makes its own distinctive chocolate: French chocolate has a bitter bouquet; Belgian, a whisper of hazelnut; Swiss, a hint of condensed milk;

English, a slight burnt-sugar finish; American, an undertone of peanuts; Dutch, a silken waxy texture; Indian, a trace of spices; Japanese, a touch of soy; Russian, a rumor of cabbage. Yet wherever chocolate is made, chocolate is chocolate. And any month



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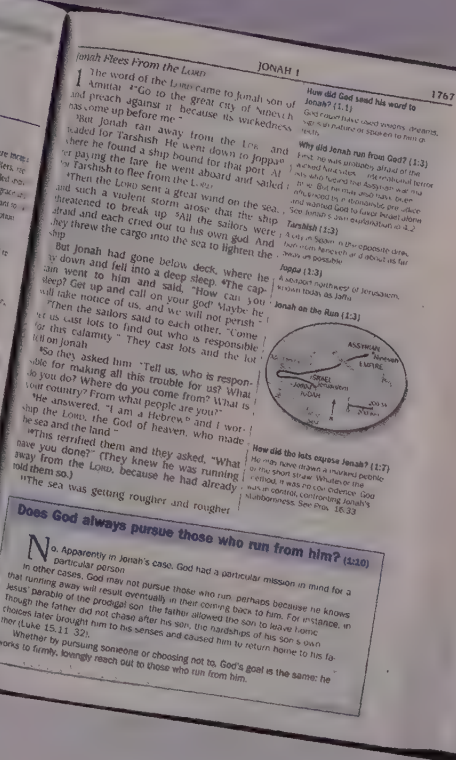
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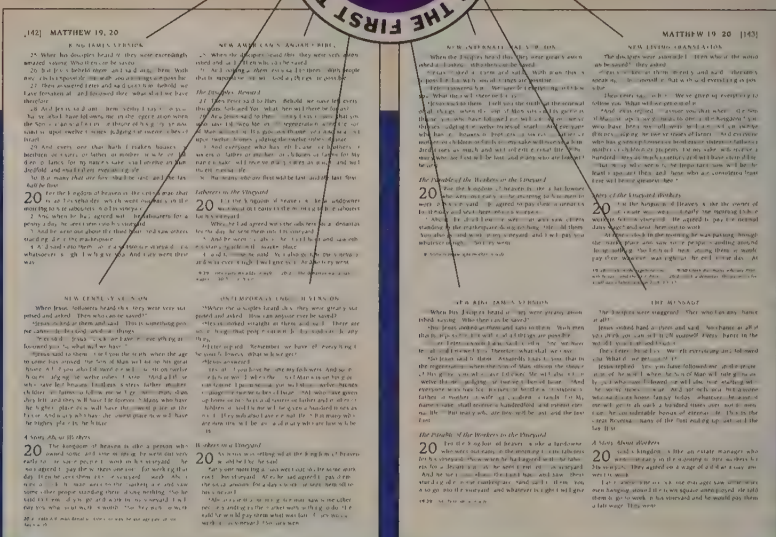
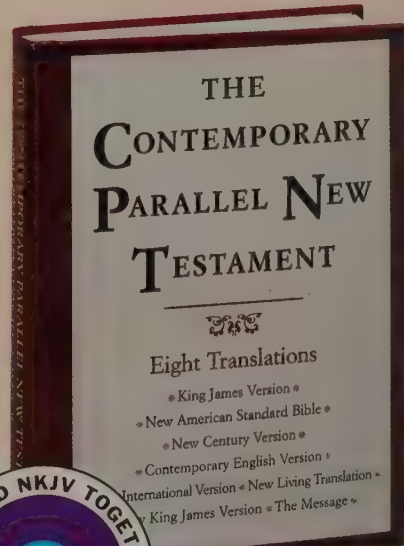
Prison Fellowship International

Christian ministry responding to the needs of prisoners, ex-prisoners, victims and those affected by crime.

World Vision

An international Christian relief and development agency intent upon helping the world's poor by meeting their immediate needs and equipping them to meet their own future needs.

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Should We Give Up on Government?

Christians are flirting with libertarianism, but it is not a biblical option.

Ronald J. Sider & Fred Clark

Like many Americans these days, John Stagliano loves his country but hates his government. The entrepreneur and self-made millionaire views government as a necessary evil at best and, at worst, a restrictive and regulatory nightmare intent on usurping his personal and economic liberties.

Stagliano's antipathy is directed not only at the current Congress or administration, but at government itself. He is a major, outspoken contributor to the Cato Institute, an influential libertarian think tank. Groups like Cato have moved political debate away from discussions of good government versus bad government. Their presumption is that government, by definition, is bad. So the debate becomes big government versus small government.

G. K. Chesterton said, "The poor object to being governed badly, while the rich object to being governed at all." This is especially true of rich people like Stagliano, who makes his fortune in an industry that is particularly prone to government "interference": pornography. Stagliano produces and directs hard-core sex videos. His company, Evil Angel Video, is one of the leading players in America's \$8-billion-a-year trade in sexually explicit material.

Fatal attraction

Perhaps it is not surprising that libertarianism is an attractive philosophy for a millionaire pornographer. What is surprising is the extent to which libertarian ideas have begun to influence politically active Christians, especially evangelicals.

We evangelicals are experiencing an adolescent growth spurt in our political engagement and thinking. Still heady with the zeal of newfound political activism, we haven't yet demonstrated the patience or discipline for sustained political reflection, for engaging the centuries-long conversation on Christianity and politics, on statecraft, and on the

proper role and responsibilities of the civil authorities instituted by God.

Nature abhors a vacuum. To the extent that we have failed to adopt a biblical, Christian understanding, we have instead adapted to the prevailing ideologies of our secular culture. This ideological vacuum has left evangelicals particularly susceptible to ideologies shaped by our individualist, modern culture and the logical conclusion of individualistic liberalism: libertarianism.

Libertarianism permits only an extremely limited role for government in maintaining civic order and providing national defense. It is attractive for its sim-

**"Government exists to administer [God's] justice on earth."
—Abraham Kuyper**



plicity and its "one-size-fits-all" principle of individual liberty. This pro-choice-on-everything framework clashes with the Christian insistence that *what* one chooses also matters, and that some choices must be limited or prohibited for the common good. The trump card of unlimited individual liberty leads libertarians to many conclusions traditionally opposed by Christians and social conservatives, including support for abortion on demand, same-sex marriage, and unregulated markets in pornography.

and narcotics (hence its attraction for John Stagliano).

Can libertarianism be reconciled with the Christian understanding that government is "instituted by God" as "God's servant for your good" (Rom. 13:1, 4)? To their credit, some Christian libertarians take great pains to distinguish their views from those of secular libertarian thinkers. The problem, of course, is that it is difficult to do so. Evangelical Doug Bandow of the Cato Institute asserts, "Libertarianism is not synonymous with libertinism," but he has a hard time explaining why. His libertarian colleagues David Boaz and Charles Murray, or Massachusetts governor William Weld, still seem unconvinced. Michael Uhlmann, a Catholic fellow at the conservative Ethics and Public Policy Center, finds the very idea of Christian libertarianism puzzling, owing "more to John Stuart Mill than to anything distinctly Christian."

The influence of libertarianism has led many evangelicals to adopt a starkly antagonistic view of the responsibilities of government and the church, the public and the private sectors. Operating from this either/or perspective, some argue that since individual Christians are commanded to care for the poor, it must not be any of the government's business. But such a conclusion requires that we dismiss the large body of biblical teaching that says the government has a responsibility to care for the poor. It also ignores centuries of biblically based Christian thought and teaching on the distinct but complementary roles of state, family, and church (exemplified in the Catholic idea of "subsidiarity" and the Reformed concept of "sphere sovereignty").

Critics of government programs, such as Marvin Olasky, are right to point out the ways in which government has sometimes failed miserably to meet its responsibilities, but it does not follow that the state therefore *does not have* any such responsibilities. It is also true that some of the best work empowering the poor is being done by faith-based nonprofit agencies, but that does not absolve other actors—governments, neighbors, relatives—from fulfilling their respective, God-given responsibilities as well.

What's a king to do?

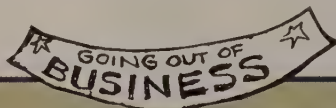
We should be extremely cautious in giving up on government. Before we do so we ought to examine the long history of Christian political thinking that we would be rejecting. It should give us pause that

Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Luther, Calvin, and Wesley all taught that the emperor, king, prince, civil magistrate, or elected officials were the servants of God, ordained for the common good.

The past century of Catholic social teaching and the Reformed tradition of Abraham Kuyper offer rich, instructive perspectives. These Christian movements were both unflinching in their opposition to state socialism and deeply suspicious of state intrusion into other areas of civil society. Yet they were equally adamant that government, under God, has a legitimate and necessary role to play, including doing justice for the poor and the disadvantaged. Kuyper, a theologian and a politician who was elected prime minister of the Netherlands, said in a speech, "God the Lord unmistakably

ple of using government power to correct economic injustice. The nobles were taking the lands of the poor and selling their children into slavery. Nehemiah, the top government official, denounces this abuse and compels the rich to return everything: "Restore them, this very day, their fields, their vineyards, their olive orchards, and their houses and the interest on money, grain, wine, and oil that you have been exacting from them" (v. 11).

The king's responsibility for justice means more than merely maintaining unbiased courts; the just king also strengthens the weak, heals the sick, and binds up the crippled (Ezek. 34:4, 16, 23). The king must seek justice as God does (Ps. 72:4)—and remember, it is the Lord "who executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and who loves



**"The poor object to being governed badly,
while the rich object to being governed at all."**

—G. K. Chesterton

instituted the basic rule for the duty of government. Government exists to administer his justice on earth, and to uphold that justice."

Our task as evangelicals—because we *are* evangelicals—is to study this rich Christian tradition in the light of biblical revelation. Scripture is our bottom line, and our understandings of the role of state (as well as church, commerce, families, and individuals) must be shaped by biblical principles.

Throughout the Bible, God held leaders responsible to actively seek justice for the poor. Psalm 72 is a prayer for the king: "Give the king your justice, O God, and your righteousness to a king's son. May he judge your people with righteousness, and your poor with justice" (vv. 1–2, NRSV). The two key words here, *justice* and *righteousness*, pertain both to the legal system and to the economic order. The prophets condemn those who deprive people of the land that would enable them to earn their own way (see Isa. 5:8–9) and call on the king to correct such injustice. "May [the king] defend the cause of the poor of the people . . . and crush the oppressor" (Ps. 72:4).

Nehemiah 5 offers a fascinating exam-

ple of using government power to correct economic injustice. The nobles were taking the lands of the poor and selling their children into slavery. Nehemiah, the top government official, denounces this abuse and compels the rich to return everything: "Restore them, this very day, their fields, their vineyards, their olive orchards, and their houses and the interest on money, grain, wine, and oil that you have been exacting from them" (v. 11).

Interestingly, these norms apply not just to Israel's rulers, but to rulers everywhere. Daniel 4:27 calls Nebuchadnezzar to bring justice and mercy to the oppressed. Proverbs 31 directs King Lemuel (probably a northern Arabian monarch) to "defend the rights of the poor and needy."

None of this means that the government is the only institution or agency responsible to empower the poor. Individuals and congregations are commanded to share sacrificially with the poor. We also need a vast array of nongovernmental institutions in society that lift up the needy. Often, in fact, these intermediate institutions will do the job better than governmental agencies.

But it is simply unbiblical to claim that government has no responsibility to seek justice for the poor. Government is God's servant for good. Part of its God-given task is to make sure that the poorest have the resources to earn their own living.

CI

Ronald J. Sider is president of Evangelicals for Social Action. Fred Clark is the managing editor of Prism magazine.

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PROVIDENT MUTUAL



How Apin Akot Redeemed His Daughter

It was February 1995 when the dawn raiders attacked the Sudanese village of Sokobat in northern Bahr-El-Ghazal. Apin Akot was already out tending his cattle with his two-year-old son when his wife and two daughters, ages five and nine, were rounded up by fundamentalist Islamic militia. They had been armed and encouraged by the government of Sudan to carry out a *jihad* (holy war) against the Africans—mostly Christians—of the south. The government, the National Islamic Front

become a concubine and much more “valuable.”

Apin Akot did not have enough money for her and had to return with his wife and little daughter, leaving his eldest daughter to her fate. As he left, she said, “The worst thing for me would be to die. As long as I stay alive, I know you will come for me.”

Our group met Apin Akot soon after his return and felt his family’s grief. His wife told us, “The Arabs came at dawn and captured us; on the way they did what they wanted with us. They tied babies

onto horses, and our daughter has a paralyzed leg as a result. We walked on foot for two days. We were taken north to a camp where they built a fence around us. We were beaten every day. They took girls to work. Sometimes we had to work as domestic slaves or as water carriers. For food we were given only unground sorghum—no milk, no oil, nothing else.”

We were able to provide the necessary funds for Apin Akot to redeem his elder daughter. Risking his life again, he returned north and negotiated her freedom—just in time. This year, she would have been subjected to a barbaric clitorrectomy (“female circumcision”). His daughter, Akec Apin, told us her story: “When I was captured, my hands were tied with strong rope. All the bad jobs were given to me—grinding *dura* and carrying water from the well at night. If I was slow fetching the water, my master beat me with a big stick. All the family beat me.”

She was told by her owner that this year she would be married to his son. She would be forced to join in Muslim prayers and wear Muslim women’s headress. She said that when her father came the first time, she could not believe her eyes; she looked again and again and thought it was a dream. When she had to say good-bye on that first occasion it was “a bad time,” and she could not eat anything for days.

Now she is happy, and Apin Akot is overjoyed, saying, “When I got my daughter back, I felt as if I had been born again—like God giving me new life.”

Despite their suffering, they still smile with the famous Sudanese smile. I wish you could see the joy on their faces when they worship in what they call their “cathedrals” under the beautiful tamarind trees. **CL**

The Baroness Cox is the president of the U.K. branch of Christian Solidarity International, P.O. Box 99, New Malden, Surrey, KT3 3YF, England.



PHOTO COURTESY OF CSI, UK

Life as a slave:
“If I was slow
fetching the water,
my master beat
me with a big
stick. All the
family beat me.”

(NIF), is a totalitarian military regime, which seized power in 1989. The government cannot pay salaries, but the militias can keep the bounty of war as their reward—including human bounty. On that fateful February morning, when his wife and daughters were taken, his five-year-old could not keep up with the raiders as they drove their captives northwards. So they tied her onto a horse, damaging a nerve and paralyzing her left leg.

Apin Akot is a loving husband and father; he is also a brave man. He sold all his cattle, took his money, and, risking capture, torture, and death, walked north for many days to find his enslaved family. Paying an Arab to help him find them, he confronted their owner and tried to purchase their freedom. He negotiated the release of his wife and five-year-old daughter, but the master would not relinquish the nine-year-old: she was nearly old enough to

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The Moral Minority

What would Jesus do to influence culture?

**Sinners in the Hands of an Angry Church:
Finding a Better Way to Influence Our Culture,**
by Dean Merrill (Zondervan, 183 pp.; \$12.99, paper).
Reviewed by John Wilson.

If there is one thing that American Christians at the end of the twentieth century have in common, it is a strenuous wrestling with what it means to be the church. Sometimes, though not as often as we might hope, this questioning is pursued with full consciousness of the issues at stake; undergirded by sustained theological reflection, and always tested against Scripture; more often, questions like *What is the church, really?* and *How do we know what it should look like?* are taken up in a pragmatic, hit-and-miss fashion. But whatever form it takes, this questioning cuts across all the usual dividing lines of race and denomination and worship style. The members of the Willow Creek Association are rethinking church from the ground up—not least in dispensing with the name “church”! And so also, when Francis George, the new archbishop of Chicago and soon-to-be cardinal, makes *evangelization* the keynote of his program, he is asking American Catholics to rethink the meaning of church.

With *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry Church: Finding a Better Way to Influence Our Culture*, Dean Merrill has made a valuable contribution to this ongoing reexamination. Merrill, a former vice president at Focus on the Family and currently vice president and publisher of the International Bible Society, does what a long line of Christian provocateurs have done, going all the way back to the apostle Paul. The trick is simple. You merely ask Christians, *Suppose what you say you believe is really true—how should you then live?*

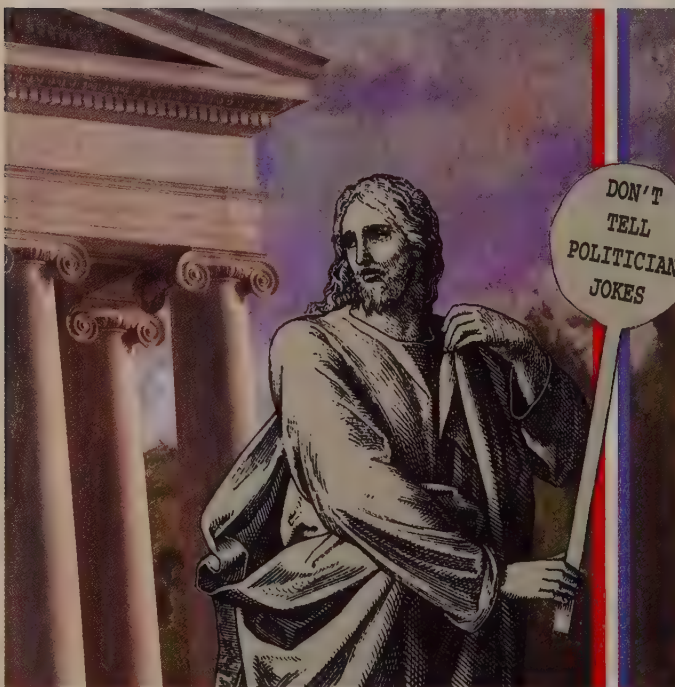
That question is too staggering in its implications to be treated fully in any one book (or any ten books), and the provocateur typically homes in on certain teachings that play against the complacencies of this or that segment of Christendom, as Dorothy Day did with the Catholic Workers, or as John Perkins has done in a series of challenging books calling for racial reconciliation, or Philip Yancey in *What's So Amazing About Grace?*

So too Merrill has a target audience in mind (though he wouldn't object, I'm sure, if other Christians listened in). He's primarily addressing evangelical Christians, especially but not exclusively those who share at least some of the concerns of the Religious Right.

Merrill's method is to take some notion that is axiomatic among the readers whose minds he hopes to change—and then turn that assumption upside-down or inside-out. Is America a Christian nation? *Well of course it is!* the unwary reader responds. *Just look at the Founding Fathers.* Yes, says Merrill, let's do that—and he proceeds to deconstruct that beguiling illusion. (See especially the wonderfully titled chapter, “Will We See Thomas Jefferson in Heaven?”) Is America sledding toward Gomorrah? *Absolutely!* *Why, just look at today's newspaper.* Not so fast, counters Merrill. A close-to-the-bone slice of his own family history, from “the Indiana heartland” in the year 1915, suggests that maybe the good old days weren't as radically different from our troubled times as we're encouraged to believe.

And so it goes. But Merrill is not simply taking these assumptions piecemeal; he has a broad strategy in mind. We Christians—or Christ-followers, as he prefers to say—constitute a minority, even in “Christian” America. Sounding a little like Stanley Hauerwas, he calls for a fundamental change in the way Christians seek to influence the larger culture.

Of course we live in a fallen world, Merrill says; what did we expect? But have we forgotten that God is still in charge? We are impatient; we want God “to



hurry up, to cure all ills, to settle all scores. When he does not, we often conclude that he doesn't really care, and so we'll have to take up the job he is neglecting." What hubris! "Whether fast or slow, dramatic or subtle," Merrill reminds us, "God's action in this messy world should never be undersold. He is still the supreme authority, and while his timing may mystify us, his power is not to be doubted."

So how *should* the Christian minority seek to influence our culture? Instead of fighting fire with fire, we can be salt and light:

What would it take for non-Christians to begin saying about us, "You know, I don't understand everything about those people, and I don't agree with them on some issues. But they're certainly good to have around. They're a valuable asset to society. I'd hate to see this town, this country, this nation have to get along without them."

This passage hints at the limitations of Merrill's book as well as its winsomeness. Unlike Hauerwas, Merrill doesn't take our fallenness quite seriously enough. What would non-Christians do if Christians were consistently following in Christ's steps? That would be interesting to see. Crucify us, maybe?

There's a lack of tough-mindedness at other points as well, most egregiously in the sappy "Short 'To Do' List for Christ-Followers" that concludes the book. This includes a number of bulleted items, the first six of which are as follows:

- Pray regularly for the president to hear God's voice.
- Pray regularly for the vice president to hear God's voice.
- Pray the same for your U.S. representative.
- Pray the same for your two U.S. senators.
- Stop telling politician jokes.

- Stop laughing at other people's politician jokes.

And so on. It's the sort of list that makes you run screaming to your files for an antidote—a good dose of P. J. O'Rourke, say. Merrill should visit the American history section of his local superstore to take a look at the recently published and extremely revealing volumes of tape-recorded history from the Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon administrations (And then there's the fellow currently in office.) *No politician jokes?* Does the man want to rob us of our only consolation?

But whatever bones you have to pick with Merrill—and every reader will have some—his book will repay your full attention. Pack it in the carryon bag on your next trip—you could read it in one long flight—or read it in your small group or Sunday-school class. But feel free to go ahead and enjoy a good politician joke now and then. C

Sproul on the Will

This influential Calvinist's account of the free-will problem would have profited from a stronger reading of Calvin.

Willing to Believe: The Controversy

Over Free Will, by R. C. Sproul (Baker Books, 224 pp.; \$15.99, hardcover).

Reviewed by Allen C. Guelzo, Grace F. Kea Professor of American History and chair of the Department of History and Political Science at Eastern College, Saint Davids, Pennsylvania.

Free will is one of those perennial tough-nut problems, like consciousness and expressway traffic, whose solution seems perfectly obvious until we start thinking about it. It usually appears, from our internal sensation of being able to choose (or to move or to pause over possible actions), that the human will has things perfectly up to itself. But then come the second thoughts: What is meant by the will *itself*? If our wills are free, do they still obey *us*? And what is the connection between the *us* of our consciousness and the *it* of our wills? Who controls whom, and under what circumstances? Let free will show up, and streetcorner scholasticism happens.

In addition to being a tough-nut prob-

lem, free will is also what you might call an iceberg problem, in the sense that whatever answer we give to it is usually connected to a larger mass of less visible assumptions about God and human nature. If the will is not free *enough*, we get a picture of human behavior that looks like puppets on a string, and a picture of God that looks like Miss Havisham. If it's *too* free, we get something that looks even less than human, "an erratic and jerking phantom" (in the words of Richard Taylor) "without any rhyme or reason at all," and a God who looks a good deal like Huck Finn's Aunt Sally.

As one of the most articulate popularizers of Calvinist theology today, R. C. Sproul does not like what he sees on the tip of the free-will iceberg. "A majority of professing evangelicals," complains Sproul in the introduction to *Willing to Believe: The Controversy Over Free Will*, have bought a careless and overoptimistic free-will-ism, and that has become linked

to the even more ominous adoption of a happy-face anthropology whose fundamental conviction is "that human beings are basically good." It is not clear, from the way Sproul frames his complaint, whether it is defective thinking about free will that has trickled down to "a clear repudiation of the biblical view of human fallenness," or the other way around. Nevertheless, it is clear to Sproul that there is a great deal wrong with the way evangelicals talk about free will.

In technical terms, Sproul sees this as the result of a lamentable shift away from a *monergistic* concept of the relationship

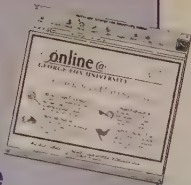
between human wills and God's (that is, that God is the single actor in regeneration) toward a *synergistic* concept (in which God assists and humans cooperate), which Sproul is clearly convinced is only a few paces removed from outright theological syncretism. Part of the reason for this shift, and part of the difficulty monergism has in making its case to modern

evangelicals, is the popular perception that freedom and monergism are "either/or" quantities, as though monergism inalterably means that human actions are inconsequential and human wills possess no meaningful freedom, and as though synergism was (by elimination) the only option.

Sproul argues that what monergism opposes in synergism is not human free-



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dom or moral responsibility but absolute human autonomy, "a degree of freedom that is unlimited by any higher authority or power," and which sits poorly beside the Christian idea of God as an eternal, creative, almighty being who moves people's hearts to act or to believe.

What this means, unhappily, is that Sproul has committed himself to telling two stories simultaneously, one about the psychological entity we call the *will* and how it operates, and the other about freedom and monergism, where the argument often runs toward ontological abstractions rather than telling us what a *will* looks like when it is *free*. Of the two, it's clear that the story about *freedom* has most of Sproul's attention.

Cast in the form of "an historical reconnaissance" of eight major writers (from Pelagius to Lewis Sperry Chafer), *Willing to Believe* never actually gets around to establishing what the *will* even is, which seems at the very least a strange omission in a book about free will. What Sproul does lavish his care upon is demonstrating through his "reconnaissance" how monergists have actually developed respectable definitions of human freedom without having to resort to synergism or free will.

The principal difficulty with this "reconnaissance" is that it rarely probes very deeply beneath the surface of its subjects. Despite Sproul's penchant for twirling Latin theological tags (the book includes a Latin theological glossary), all of the primary sources on Augustine are from nineteenth-century English translations, and his chapter on Pelagius is a summation of several antique secondary histories. There is also an unfortunate drift toward homogenization—to making all monergists say pretty much the same thing and in the same tone of voice. There is no attention here, for instance, to how Calvin made just the kind of conventional theological harmonization of freedom and monergism Sproul likes, but then also expressed a deep skepticism whether that harmonization would convince anyone who was not already convinced of the tremendous power of God and the equally tremendous impotence of humanity. "You ratiocinate, I admire; you dispute, I believe," was Calvin's ultimate reply to synergists in the sixteenth century who doubted the dominion of God over human wills, "Rather admire with me and exclaim: O the height and the depth! Let us agree to tremble together lest together we perish in error."

The temptation to routinize complex arguments has its worst effects when Sproul turns to two figures who, as a student of the late John Gerstner, he might have been expected to handle with more finesse. The first of these is Jonathan Edwards, whose *Freedom of the Will* (1754) is often read as though it were the *urtext* of American Calvinism. Oddly, *Freedom of the Will* was not, in strict terms, a theological book, since the most critical parts of *Freedom of the Will* were devoted to the psychology of the will and the logical inconsistencies of free-will-ism. What's more, Edwards's centerpiece argument about the will—that everyone possesses the *natural* ability to will freely (in that everyone can will and has the natural endowments to execute choices), but only those regenerated by divine grace possess a *moral* ability to will the good—generated deep and abiding suspicions among Old School Calvinists like Hodge and Warfield. For a century after Edwards's death Calvinist churches in America were racked with indecision over "Edwards on the Will" (it played a major part in the 1837 New School–Old School Presbyterian schism). None of this hinders Sproul from endorsing the natural/moral ability formula, despite the fact that this places him, rather strangely, on the side of the New Schoolers rather than the great Princetonians.

It also places him, even more strangely, on the same side as Charles Grandison Finney. Perhaps because Finney "is a hero" to the very "contemporary evangelical community" that he criticizes so strongly in his introduction, Sproul finds little in Finney "that is theologically orthodox," and a great deal that isn't. Finney not only reduced regeneration to simple decisionism, Sproul complains, but also heaved aside forensic justification, threw over any limitations on the extent of the Atonement, and defined human depravity out of existence. Sproul seems utterly unaware that Finney lauded Edwards as his great model and indignantly identified himself as a Calvinist in the struggle of Calvinism with "low Arminianism," and deployed precisely the argument Edwards had made on natural and moral ability throughout his great revival campaigns in upstate New York and New York City from 1826 to 1835 (and cited chapter and verse from *Freedom of the Will* to prove it).

That Finney had a particularly coarse and brash way of using Edwards is true, but it is also beside the point. Even Finney's notorious claim that revival was "a

purely philosophical result of the right use of the constituted means and not a miracle" was simply to say what Edwards had said about human choices being the right responses to motives. Some of Finney's other unorthodoxies have similar Edwardian roots, although there is no account of them here, either. Sproul takes no notice of how Edwards's doctrine in *Original Sin* has no concept of immediate imputation, nor does he recall that in 1750 Edwards explicitly endorsed Joseph Bellamy's teaching on unlimited atonement as "the proper Essence and distinguishing Nature of saving Religion." Between too much homogenization and too little reading, Sproul falls unwarily into articulating notions of freedom and monergism which, oddly enough, don't differ all that much from Finney—kinder and gentler, perhaps, but still more like Oberlin than Princeton than he seems to realize.

If Sproul can be faulted for not reading far enough into the details, he also has to be faulted for leaving too many genuinely important things out. Sproul touches on none of the late medieval theologians (Bradwardine, Ockham, Biel) and major Calvinist confessions and catechisms to examine notions of willing and freedom, and takes only passing notice of one of the most influential Protestant summations of monergism, the *Sententia* (or canons) of the Synod of Dordt. He is also strangely silent on the modern free-will debate, where the drift of both high and low culture has been, not toward assertions of overweening autonomy, but toward no-fault victimhood, evolutionary determinism, and abuse excuses.

What is missing most, however, is a conclusion. The final chapter surveys the semi-Calvinism of dispensationalist theologians Lewis Sperry Chafer and Norman Geisler, but without any summary of the previous chapters and without the missing definition of the will. We are left instead at the end with the assumption that monergism has only to be reconciled to freedom to get piety. I suspect that this might have surprised our most famous monergist, John Calvin, who believed that piety would get you to monergism, and then you would stop worrying about freedom. "Our view is simply that [God] possesses by right such great power, that we ought to be content with his mere nod," Calvin wrote in *De Aeterna Praedestinatione Dei* in 1552. "Attend to who God is and who you are. He is God, you are man." Four and a half centuries later, I still don't know of a better place to begin talking about free will. **CT**

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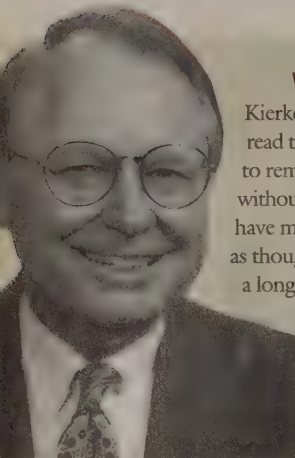
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When God finds us

Kierkegaard said that most of us read the Bible the way a mouse tries to remove the cheese from the trap without getting caught. Some of us have mastered that. We read the story as though it were about someone else a long time ago; that way we don't get caught. But if we see the Bible as the story of the triumph of God's grace, the story of God searching for us, then look out. The story will come alive. God will

find us and we will know that we are found.

—Maxie Dunnam in
Living the Psalms

More than one use

[Y]ou don't always have to chop with the sword of truth. You can point with it, too.

—Anne Lamott in
Bird by Bird

Worthwhile life

Let us so live that when we come to die even the undertaker will be sorry.

—Mark Twain, quoted in "A Word a Day" electronic posting

Desensitized about God

It is curious that people who are filled with horrified indignation whenever a cat kills a sparrow can hear the story of the killing of God told Sunday after Sunday and not experience any shock at all.

—Dorothy Sayers, quoted in
God in Pain,
by Barbara Brown Taylor

God in me

Compassion lies at the heart of our prayer for our fellow human beings. When I pray for the world, I become the world; when I pray for the

endless needs of the millions, my soul expands and wants to embrace them all and bring them into the presence of God. But in the midst of that experience I realize that compassion is not mine but God's gift to me. I cannot embrace the world, but God can. I cannot pray, but God can pray in me. When God became as we are, that is, when God allowed all of us to enter into the intimacy of the divine life, it became possible for us to share in God's infinite compassion.

—Henri Nouwen in
Seeds of Hope

Our human condition

There is no innocence in childhood, only less mature depravities.

—Gerald Early in
The Hungry Mind Review
(Winter 1996-1997)

Sin mars a work of art

When I feel my sin and am shaken because of it, it is not at all because of feeling inferi-

or to others. It is because one of God's masterpieces has become stained with sin.

—Paul Tournier in
Escape from Loneliness

Taste abandoned

We live in a country that has never made a movie about Leonardo da Vinci and has produced three about Joey Buttafuoco (famous only for having had a teenage lover, Amy Fisher, who shot his wife).

—Times Literary Supplement
(Dec. 9, 1994)

Shouting educators

I've always tried to be aware of what I say in my films because all of us who make motion pictures are teachers, teachers with very loud voices.

—Star Wars creator George
Lucas, on receiving an award for
career achievement

Home mission

The greatest mission field we face is not in some faraway land. The strange and foreign culture most American evangelicals fear is not across the ocean. It's barely across the street. The culture most lost to the gospel is our own—our children and neighbors. It's a culture that can't say two sen-

tences without referencing a TV show or a pop song, and that can't remember what it was like to have to get up and change channels. It's a culture more likely to have a body part pierced than it is to know why Sara laughed. . . . It's a culture that we stopped evangelizing, and have instead declared a culture war upon.

—Dwight Ozard in
Prism (July/Aug. 1996)

Amusing ourselves to death

People who want to be amused have lost the art of living.

—Holbrook Jackson in
Platitudes in the Making

Dual dangers

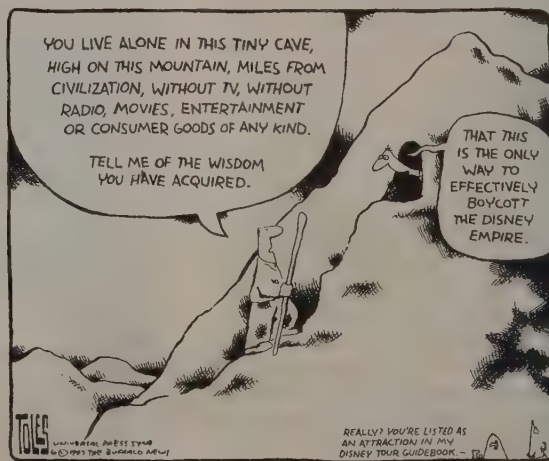
It is equally dangerous to man to know God without knowing his own wretchedness, and to know his own wretchedness without knowing God.

—Blaise Pascal in Pensées

Poor tradeoff

The tragedy of much modern life is that the abandonment of the knowledge of God means that futility has taken over.

—Leon Morris in The
Cross of Jesus



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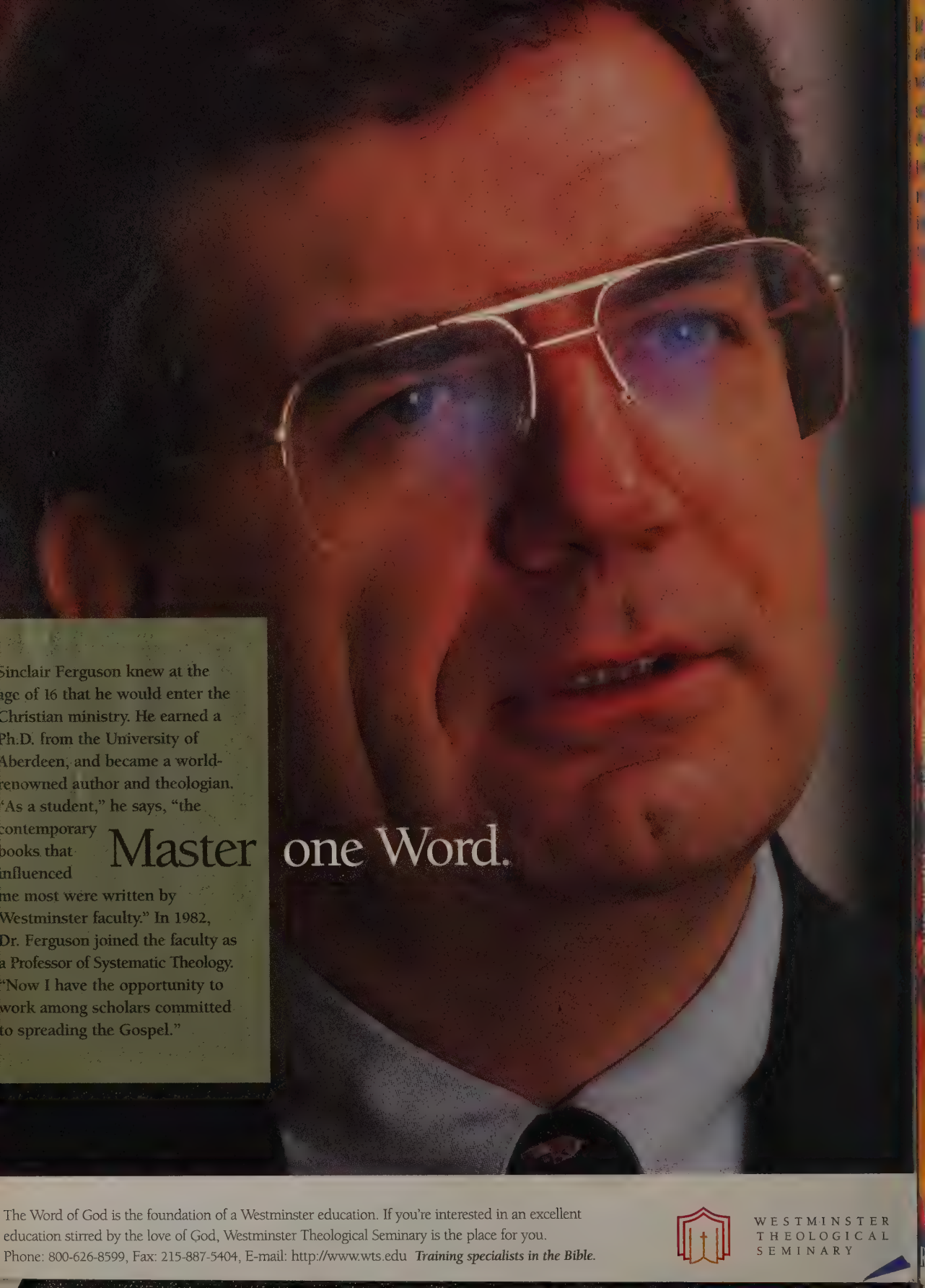


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sinclair Ferguson knew at the age of 16 that he would enter the Christian ministry. He earned a Ph.D. from the University of Aberdeen, and became a world-renowned author and theologian. "As a student," he says, "the contemporary books that influenced

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me most were written by Westminster faculty." In 1982, Dr. Ferguson joined the faculty as a Professor of Systematic Theology. "Now I have the opportunity to work among scholars committed to spreading the Gospel."

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MEXICO

Words Against Weapons

Evangelicals, Catholics dialogue to help bring peace to violent Chiapas.

As the death toll in Mexico's blood-stained southern state of Chiapas continues to rise, Protestant and Roman Catholic church leaders are intensifying their efforts toward peaceful reconciliation.

Starting in 1994, the Zapatista Liberation Army launched an armed campaign against the Mexican government. The Zapatistas are demanding greater autonomy for Mexico's 8.7 million Indians, who are among the poorest ethnic groups in all of Latin America. Much of the bloodshed has been concentrated in Mexico's southern states, including Chiapas, along the border with Guatemala. About 500 peasants have died in the conflicts, both in attacks by the Zapatistas and reprisal killings by government supporters.

TENSIONS INFLAMED: Since September 1996, official peace talks have been stalled. Last year, killings on both sides persisted, including two evangelical lay church workers ambushed and slain in November and 45 Indians massacred on December 22 in the Chiapan village of Acteal. More than 50 people face charges in the Acteal killings, including the community's mayor, a member of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), which has ruled Mexico since 1929.

The conflict has cut across many religious, political, cultural, and ethnic boundaries within Mexican society, and it has inflamed the long-simmering tensions between majority Roman Catholics and minority Protestant groups.

Evangelicals represent about 4 percent of Mexico's 96 million people. During the 1980s, evangelicals grew at three times the rate of population growth. Protestant evangelism has been concentrated not only in Mexico's cities, but also among

Indian groups, which may be Catholic in identity, but are often animistic in their belief and practice. Pentecostals and Presbyterians are the two largest Protestant denominations in a country that is more than 80 percent Roman Catholic.

"Religious differences, especially between evangelicals and Catholics, are an exacerbating part of the conflict, but not a root cause of it," says Phil McManus of SIPAZ International, a Catholic peace-making organization based in Santa Cruz, California, which has been active in Chiapas. "You have instances of Catholics and evangelicals squaring off and fighting each other. But you'll find them fighting over things that have little to do with religion."

OPEN DIALOGUE: Starting in 1996, a group of church leaders launched a series of community-based dialogues in hopes of stimulating reconciliation and curtailing violence.

"When you get in a room and sit face-to-face and each tell your stories, it's difficult to think of them as your enemy," says Ken Sehested, executive director of the Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America, which is involved in the dialogues.

For 1998, another dialogue and a peaceful march are scheduled. Abdias Tovilla, a Presbyterian pastor, lawyer, and seminary director, says the talks are "the best way to abate the violence." As head of the Evangelical Human Rights Office in San Cristóbal de las Casas, Tovilla says, "The Zapatistas are pressuring evangelicals, Catholics, and [others] to join their movement. When people don't join, the Zapatistas threaten and kill."

Typically, the discussions are held over a three-day retreat, using alternating venues. Participants met at a Presbyterian seminary for the first meeting and at a Catholic diocesan facility for the second.



Slain mourned: Bishop Samuel Ruiz celebrates mass before the coffins of 45 villagers murdered in Chiapas on December 22.

REUTERS

CT Editor Emeritus Lindsell

In order to build community, attendees served meals and cleaned up the kitchen in mixed groups. McManus says, "It's a very human thing and breaks down some barriers."

REFUGEES FLEE: As the conflict has worsened, thousands of Indians have fled their family lands and villages across the mountainous Chiapas region.

Refugee squatter camps of Indians have popped up around San Cristóbal de las Casas, a major population center. One such camp contains 30,000 people, mostly evangelicals.

Well-armed villagers and private militias have often carried out reprisals against Zapatista supporters and others, forcing Indians to flee.

Baptist Peace Fellowship's Sehested believes that violence in Chiapas stems in part from paramilitary groups of conservative Chiapans seeking to hold on to the current political system that has marginalized the participation of Indians in politics and the economy.

RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION? Among evangelicals, the task of peacemaking has been made more difficult because they are internally divided over the root causes of the conflicts. Church leaders have difficulty agreeing on where economic and politically motivated strife ends and religious persecution begins.

While a longstanding animosity exists between faiths, Sehested says that what some evangelicals define as religious persecution by traditionalist Catholics, such as banishment from their villages, may be motivated more by economic and cultural issues.

But evangelicals are targeted in numerous communities. In San Juan Chamula, evangelicals have been marginalized for more than 30 years. Human-rights activist Tovilla says, "I feel that the *caciques* [local bosses] are bothered by the continued advance of the gospel in Chamula."

GRASSROOTS PEACEMAKING: In late January, the government released more than 300 Chiapan prisoners in hopes of reopening talks with rebel groups, but the Zapatista leader Subcomandante Marcos has rejected new talks.

Meanwhile, evangelical and Catholic leaders remain committed to their own talks. SIPAZ's McManus comments, "If grassroots church leaders who have moral authority in their communities get involved, they can have a real impact. The churches now potentially have a very large role to play."

By Deann Alford, with additional reports from Compass Direct.

"No one can know too much or be able to do too much," Harold Lindsell wrote in a book on missions published more than 40 years ago. Lindsell, in applying such counsel to his own life, wrote more than 20 books, becoming a potent force for growth and development of the evangelical movement.

Lindsell died January 15 in Lake Forest, California, after a long illness. He was 84. Lindsell served as CHRISTIANITY TODAY editor from 1968 to 1978. Subsequently, he became editor emeritus and a director on the board of the magazine's parent corporation, Christianity Today, Inc.

Under Lindsell's editorial supervision, CT played an important role in rallying evangelicals after the U.S. Supreme Court's 1973 *Roe v. Wade* ruling legalizing abortion. As an author, Lindsell is best known for his 1976 book, *The Battle for the Bible*, which documented and deplored the defection of noted evangelical institutions from belief in the inerrancy of Scripture. His series of annotated study Bibles, including the *Harper Study Bible*, Revised Standard Version, and his 1973 study of Christian ethics, *The World, the Flesh, and the Devil*, also have proved to be enduring in their popularity and scholarship.

FOND REMEMBRANCES: "I loved him as a brother," says CT founder Billy Graham. "He was a counselor to both Ruth and me. Many times I called him for advice." Ruth Graham credits Lindsell with being used by God to save her doubting faith when all attended Wheaton College.

Although ordained a Southern Baptist and possessing a solid academic pedigree, Lindsell never had any seminary training and never held a pastorate. Yet in important ways his peers saw in him the heart of a pastor and a man for whom prayer was second nature.

"He was a man of prayer who not only wrote about the subject, but lived it out personally," says Harold L. Myra, president of Christianity Today, Inc.

STORIED CAREER: Lindsell met Carl F. H. Henry, who preceded him as CT editor, when they were undergraduates at Wheaton College in Illinois. Lindsell served as best man at Henry's wedding, and the two served together on the

faculties of Northern Baptist and Fuller Seminaries.

Lindsell sometimes came across as having a crusty demeanor. Backed by his firm convictions, he had been a debater in college, and throughout his life he thrived on enthusiastic exchanges of opinion, even at the family dinner table. Many found Lindsell remarkably tolerant. Coworkers liked his collegial bent as well. Arthur H. Matthews, who served on the CT editorial staff with Lindsell, hailed him as "the best boss I ever had."

At Columbia International University in South Carolina, then Columbia Bible College, Lindsell achieved his first academic post as history teacher and registrar.

There he met student Marion Bolinder, whom he later married. The Lindsells raised four children.

From there, Lindsell went to Chicago to teach at Northern Baptist Theological Seminary, then to Pasadena, California, where 50 years ago he teamed with Henry, Everett Harrison and Wilbur M. Smith as the founding faculty at Fuller. In

addition to teaching missions and church history, Lindsell served as the seminary's first registrar, and later he became dean and then vice president. He left Fuller in 1964 to become associate editor of CT.

"In many ways, he remains a hero to us," says Richard Mouw, Fuller's president. "We believe that his indictment of Fuller on the inerrancy issue was unfair. At the same time, we continue to affirm the need for theological vigilance along with a better understanding of how to exercise it." Mouw added, "Now he and Dave can talk things over," referring to David Hubbard, the late Fuller president under whose tenure the seminary deleted biblical inerrancy from its statement of faith.

Although Lindsell's views on biblical revelation did not prevail at Fuller, they proved to be a catalyst for the conservative resurgence in the Southern Baptist Convention, the largest Protestant denomination in America. After *The Battle for the Bible*, Lindsell wrote a 1979 follow-up book, *The Bible in the Balance*. Lindsell is survived by his wife, four children, a sister and a brother.

By David E. Kucharsky with Heather L. Johnson



Lindsell

God on the Box

PBS news show explores religion and ethics.

In 1994, as veteran NBC News reporter Bob Abernethy returned to the United States to retire after a five-year stint in Moscow, he pondered how to spend the rest of his life. He resolved to help television do a better job covering a long-ignored beat: religion.

"Even from 5,000 miles away, it was clear that there was a lot of growing attention in the U.S. to what was perceived as the problem of the national media ignoring religion," says Abernethy, who spent four decades at NBC. "It seemed there might be a niche for a national weekly half-hour news program on religion and ethics."

Abernethy, now 70, launched a one-man crusade that met resistance from networks and foundations. But when he

called on the Public Broadcasting Service and the Lilly Endowment, both enthusiastically endorsed the idea. In 1995, Lilly



Weekly assignment: Abernethy chats with correspondent Maureen Bunyan.

gave two grants totaling \$5 million, one of the largest donations to a single recipient in its history, enabling Abernethy to

establish an office and begin work on the first year's 39 half-hour programs.

Last September, *Religion & Ethics NewsWeekly* debuted to little fanfare and sparse audiences. But in the past six months, the show has been receiving growing attention and acclaim for its mix of news and features. Abernethy says the program is the first of its kind not funded by a religious institution.

BROAD, BALANCED COVERAGE

AGE: Similar in some ways to PBS's nightly *News Hour*, the weekly show begins with a summary of religion news from around the world before examining a few topics at greater length in feature stories and roundtable discussions. Each program closes with a calendar segment, which explains the meaning and relevance of forthcoming religious celebrations and holidays.

Some roundtable discussions in early episodes zigged and zagged more than they zinged. Still, the show has made significant improvements, even if it still falls somewhat short of Abernethy's goal of rivaling nightly newscasts.

While network news producers usually require compelling arguments to give a story three minutes on the nightly news, *Religion & Ethics NewsWeekly* has lavished up to nine minutes on bigger features, enabling viewers to understand believers' faith and values.

Thus far, the show has focused on a dizzying variety of religious trends and subjects, including Promise Keepers, research on prayer and healing, gospel performer Kirk Franklin, television's portrayal of Catholic clergy, physician-assisted suicide, the Salvation Army, the growing popularity of Eastern Orthodoxy, religion and sports, worldwide persecution of Christians, and school vouchers. Kim Lawton, formerly Washington editor of *CHRISTIANITY TODAY*, is the program's news editor.

A moving segment in December focused on the Community of Jesus, an Orleans, Massachusetts-based largely Protestant group, and followed members as they went on their rounds of work and worship and interviewed them about their decisions to join the community and their deep commitment to Christ.

"I don't think you can cover religion unless you let people talk about what they believe, and we're a little more comfortable letting that happen than other news outlets may be," says Abernethy, who

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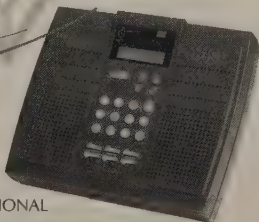
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studied theology and social ethics at Yale Divinity School during a 1984 sabbatical.

"There is no stereotyping or major distortion like you frequently see in the press," says Roy Larson, director of the Gannett-Medill Center for Religion and News Media in Chicago. "It's good to hear reporters who know what they're talking about."

THE HARD PART: Getting the show up and running may have been the easiest component of Abernethy's crusade.

A more difficult assignment has been to convince independent PBS affiliates to air the program. A spokesperson for New York's WNET, which produces the program, says only 190 of the nation's 349 PBS stations carry it. Several larger markets, including Phoenix, Denver, and Houston, do not. In some markets where the program airs, it is in the wee hours of the morning.

The biggest challenge will be obtaining more funds to keep the show on the air after its 39-episode run ends in June. Programs cost an average of \$100,000.

Jeanne Knoerle, program director for the Lilly Endowment's religion division, is optimistic. "We think this is a program that really needs to grow and be seen by more people, and that takes more time," she says.

People of strong faith may be uncomfortable with a show that gives fair and balanced treatment to all faiths but favors none. "We haven't been able to inspire a massive, organized support from national organizations down to individual congregations the way I had hoped," Abernethy says. WNET has created a free 20-page viewer's guide designed to help individuals and groups discuss the show. (It is available by writing the show at P.O. Box 245, Little Falls, N.J. 07424-0245.)

Richard Cizik, a policy analyst for the National Association of Evangelicals' Washington, D.C.-based Office for Governmental Affairs, gives *Religion & Ethics NewsWeekly* high marks. He says he is disappointed that evangelicals—who often complain about poor media coverage of religion—don't watch and support such a program.

"This program fills a void," says Cizik, "but it is editorially neutral and does not confirm evangelicals' prejudices. I would challenge our own community to view it not only as a chance to learn about the rest of the world but also as an opportunity to enter into dialogue with other faith communities."

By Steve Rabey.

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Groups Battle over Catholic Outreach

Despite an expanding dialogue between Roman Catholics and evangelicals on theological issues, conservative activists on both sides are not about to wave a white flag.

At a recent Ex-Catholics for Christ (ECFC) conference at Grace Community Church in Sun Valley, California, about three dozen demonstrators outside waved "Catholics for Christ" signs and distributed "Catholic Answers" tracts, which proclaim Roman Catholicism as Christ's one true church.

Meanwhile inside Grace Community Church, more than 500 former Catholics listened to leaders of ministries that evangelize Catholics. Condemnation of ecumenism between evangelicals and Catholics was a common theme. Speakers included Grace's pastor, John MacArthur; Word of Life's director, Joe Jordan; the Berean Call's Dave Hunt; and Good News for Catholics' Jim McCarthy.

The recent signing of "The Gift of Salvation" (CT, Dec. 8, 1997, p. 34) by Evangelicals and Catholics Together proponents holds little promise for opponents of the original ECT document. That controversial 1994 declaration, conceived by Prison Fellowship founder Charles Colson and Catholic priest Richard John Neuhaus of the New York-based Religion and Public Life, laid the groundwork for Catholics and evangelicals mutually recognizing each other as "brothers and sisters in Christ." Its purpose was to provide a framework for both sides to work more cooperatively within the pro-family movement.

Neuhaus told CT that Catholics and evangelicals "can agree on the meaning of salvation," and those who target Catholics for evangelism see the ECT project as "a serious threat to their niche market."

Nevertheless, inactive or nominal Catholics should be evangelized, Kent Hill, an ECT signatory and president of Eastern Nazarene College, told CHRISTIANITY TODAY. "Evangelicals ought to evangelize all nominal Christians, whether they are Catholic, Methodist, Presbyterian, Nazarene, or Baptist."

BLURRED THEOLOGY? For former Catholic Jim McCarthy, author of *The Gospel According to Rome* (Harvest House, 1995), differences in Protestant and Catholic theology remain his central concern.

"Our doctrine prevents us from accepting each other as brothers and sisters in Christ," he says.

At the conference, Good News for Catholics (www.gnfc.org) distributed, among other materials, a deck of flash cards, each with a belief commonly held by Catholics as a basic requirement for salvation. The reverse side of the cards give Bible verses, intended to dispute Catholic teaching on such subjects as the sacraments, church attendance, and keeping the Ten Commandments.

Catholic activists have been quick to respond to these doctrinal challenges from evangelicals. Catholic apologist Karl Keating, focusing on McCarthy's controversial video, *Catholicism: Crisis of Faith*, has accused McCarthy of using deceptive tactics to promote sales.

"It is cunningly packaged to look like a Catholic video for a good reason," Keating wrote in a recent review. "Its producers want to get it into the hands of unsuspecting Catholics."

In a related development, the Eternal Word Television Network, founded by Mother Angelica, has a new show, *The Journey Home*. The program highlights the stories of Catholic or Protestant backsliders returning to the "Mother Church."

The zeal among some evangelicals and Catholics is a byproduct of the signing of the ECT documents, says Mike Gendron of Proclaiming the Gospel (www.pro-gospel.org). Gendron believes that ECT has muddled "the biblical distinctions of the gospel and set the mission of the church back 500 years." He says, "If [ECT] is sustainable, then its endorsers must declare the Reformation was a terrible mistake and the martyrs who died defending the gospel died in vain."

But Neuhaus considers such talk "uncharitable" and "a sin against the living Christ who calls Christians to exercise grace with one another." Indeed, says Neuhaus, the Council of Trent "did not fully understand the intent of the Reformers. We can't go back to the sixteenth century and untangle it. We have discovered that when we encounter one another now, we can say we are in agreement on the meaning of salvation."

Some evangelical leaders who are supporters of ECT remain firmly committed to interaction with Catholics. Recently, Jack Van Impe, author, prophecy teacher, and broadcaster, spent the entire broadcast of *Jack Van Impe Presents* defending Pope John Paul II as a man of God. He warned that the next pope could be the false prophet of the Book of Revelation. "We've got to stick together as brothers and sisters in Christ," he says.

By Jackie Alnor in Sun Valley.

CHRISTIANITY TODAY

Web Site Directory

Calvin College (Alumni)
www.calvin.edu
Devotional E-mail
www.electricti.com/pkennedy
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Church Leaders Refocus on Ethics

For the past two years, Nigeria has ranked as the world's most corrupt place to do business, according to an independent survey of global business executives. But recently, thousands of church leaders gathered to take aim at the country's corruption problems and agreed to stop shifting blame to political leaders for society's problems.

"In Christian ethics, it is never wrong to do right and it is never right to do wrong," said James Ukaegbu, chair of the four-day Congress on Christian Ethics in Nigeria. More than 2,000 Nigerian Christian leaders have signed a new covenant recommitting themselves to biblical truth and ethics. The covenant reads in part: "We pledge to submit to the lordship of Christ, leadership of the Holy Spirit, and authority of God's word in every part of life."

GRACE WITHOUT REPENTANCE: "Although the church in Africa is experiencing tremendous numerical growth, it has failed to halt Africa's moral degeneration," said Goffried Osei-Mensah, deputy international team leader of African Enterprises. "The church has offered the grace of Christ to people without demanding thorough repentance. This has resulted in a lack of moral transformation."

"Covenant signers standing together is particularly important in view of the fact that many of the millions of strongly moral-minded Christians in Nigeria feel alone when it comes to open resistance to the massive extortion that surrounds us," said pastor Garry Maxey.

The covenant focuses on transforming society through Christian ethics. "We pledge to develop and maintain our families according to the principles of God's Word which prescribe marriage of one man to one woman for life," the document states. "We will practice faithfulness and fidelity by forsaking fornication, adultery, homosexuality, and all other forms of sexual abuse. We shall rear our children in the fear and admonition of the Lord."

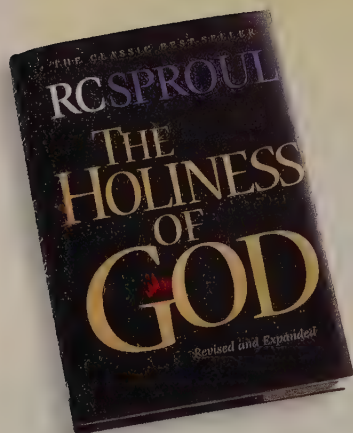
The military government has taken notice of this movement. It has set October 1998 as its date for the return of civilian rule. Nigeria's Lt. Gen. Jeremiah Useni says the forum not only identified problems in the church and the country, but also promises to "realign this nation morally and spiritually."

By Obed Minchakpu in Jos, Nigeria.

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Racial Reconciler Spencer Perkins

Spencer Perkins, an emerging leader in the racial-reconciliation movement, died January 27 at his home in Jackson, Mississippi, of heart failure. Perkins, 43, is survived by his wife, Nancy, and three young children.

Perkins's father, evangelical leader John Perkins, 65, issued a statement saying, "Spencer now sees clearly what I still see only dimly through a glass.

"Spencer is the one who invited me to Sunday school in 1957, out of which I came to know Jesus Christ," his father said.



Perkins

Wayne Gordon, who co-founded the Christian Community Development Association with John Perkins, said, "It's the wrong time in his life for [Spencer] to leave us. A few months ago, we were prepared for John to die." The elder Perkins has had successful surgery for prostate cancer.

Gordon said that Spencer, with his writing and speaking partner, Chris Rice, had forged "the most dynamic, deepest, strongest black-white relationship in the country—there's none like it."

Rice and Spencer Perkins directed the International Study Center of the Voice of Calvary Ministries, founded by John Perkins in the early 1970s in Jackson. The twosome served as top editors for *Reconcilers* magazine (formerly *Urban Family*) to champion the message of racial reconciliation and community development among evangelicals. In 1993, they coauthored *More Than Equals: Racial Healing for the Sake of the Gospel* (IVP).

At the funeral, Rice gave an emotional remembrance of his "yokefellow." Rice said, "I stand before you as a witness that racial reconciliation is possible."

Just three days before his death, Perkins blacked out while at an ethnicity and reconciliation conference hosted by Reconcilers Fellowship. He recovered from what turned out to be a diabetic seizure and insisted on delivering his closing address to the gathering. "Spencer outlined a new vision for a higher level of reconciliation—a call to radical grace among the races," recalls Rice. "He had been eager to deliver this message, and we thank God that he did."

The John M. Perkins Foundation (P.O. Box 32, Jackson, MS 39205) has established the Perkins' Children Fund for the children's educational expenses.

By Joe Maxwell in Jackson.

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POLITICS

Christian Coalition Retrenches

The financially strapped Christian Coalition has severed ties with subsidiaries geared to reach Catholics and blacks, as well as ceased publication of its flagship magazine. Contributions fell 36 percent from a record \$26.4 million in 1996 to \$17 million in 1997.

Layoffs have reduced the coalition staff from 110 to 90. The downsizing comes in the wake of last June's departure of political wunderkind Ralph Reed (CT, July 14, 1997, p. 60). The organization founded by Pat Robertson has had a lower profile under its new leaders, Randy Tate, a former congressional representative, and Donald Hodel, a former Reagan cabinet member.

In January, the Christian Coalition spun off the year-old Samaritan Project, which had focused on the poor and disadvantaged minorities (CT, June 16, 1997, p. 66). Earl Jackson, who remains director of the independent Samaritan Project, says it had difficulty being perceived as genuinely interested in minorities while under the

Christian Coalition umbrella.

Also in January, the Catholic Alliance ended all financial ties to the Christian Coalition. Since the break, prominent Catholics such as former baseball commissioner Bowie Kuhn and Domino's Pizza chief executive officer Tom Monaghan have joined the board.

"The Catholic Alliance now will be an authentically Catholic voice in public-policy debates and able to mobilize Catholic voters and public opinion," says Keith Fournier, president of the group. Legal separation between the two groups came two years ago (CT, May 20, 1996, p. 76).

The coalition also has ceased publication of *Christian American*, a glossy, four-color magazine. The advertising-supported bimonthly that had been mailed to 400,000 subscribers will be replaced with a more frequent newsletter.

Spokesperson Arne Owens says the moves will allow the coalition to return to its original focus of training people

of faith to become more active in politics.

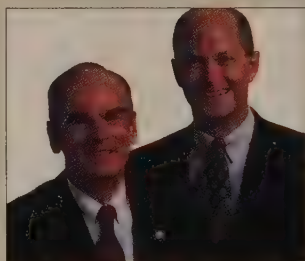
"We're reorganizing and refocusing programs around the core mission of grassroots activism," Owens says. "We believe the moves we made have been necessary to place the organization on a sound footing financially."

Tate and Hodel are considering the addition of a political action committee. The IRS has investigated whether coalition voter guides violated the ban on partisan politicking by tax-exempt groups.

In another development, Jeanne DelliCarpini, the former top financial officer at the Christian Coalition, received a six-year suspended sentence on January 22 after confessing to embezzling \$40,346. Circuit Court Judge S. Bernard Goodwyn ordered DelliCarpini, 43, to repay the money she had taken in 1996 and 1997. [CT]



Chuck Swindoll



New leaders: President Don Hodel (left) and Executive Director Randy Tate.



Ferry discusses treatment with a patient.

Adventist Doctor Targets Smoking

Research by Adventist doctor Linda Ferry shows that smokers using the drug bupropion are twice as likely to quit smoking.

Ferry, associate professor at Loma Linda University in Riverside, California, began to study the link between nicotine and depression in 1990 and discovered that a third of smokers are depressed. She eventually found that the antidepressant bupropion is effective in helping smokers to quit.

Richard Hart, dean of the School of Public Health at Loma Linda, says Ferry's research has provided "a major new tool" in the battle to stop smoking. "About 420,000 die every year from smoking in the U.S., more than from any other cause of death. If we get the word out to use bupropion, up to 300,000 will not die this year."

More than 175,000 prescriptions have been issued for bupropion, sold under the brand name Zyban, since its approval by the Food and Drug Administration last July. [CT]

WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD

Splinter Groups Dismiss Leaders

Founders of two splinter groups from the formerly heterodox Worldwide Church of God (WCG) have been booted by their own boards.

In December, the Church of God, International (CGI), of Tyler, Texas, revoked the ministerial credentials of Garner Ted Armstrong, who for 30 years was part of a WCG radio and TV saturation.

Armstrong created his own

organization in 1978 after being excommunicated from the WCG by its founder, Herbert W. Armstrong, his father.

The CGI board said it pulled Garner Ted Armstrong's credentials in the wake of both a sexual harassment suit by a Tyler masseuse and the discovery that Armstrong had a five-year extramarital affair.

According to Bronson James, secretary of the CGI's ministerial

council, the organization "will continue to do the work of the church in a freer fashion than before, without a cult of personality" that had grown up around Armstrong. "It was painful to have to exercise biblical judgment" of Armstrong's actions, he says, "but it was a wake-up call for all of us."

Armstrong has started an "evangelistic association" in Flint, Texas, and has tried to rally support via mass mailings and an Internet-based campaign.

On January 20, in a sepa-

rate development, the United Church of God (UCG) in Arcadia, California, fired its president, David Hulme. A former presenter on the WCG's *World Tomorrow* television program, Hulme led a movement to start the UCG in 1995, winning an estimated 17,000 WCG members dissatisfied with the older church's doctrinal shifts to orthodoxy (CT, June 16, 1997, p. 66). Hulme's dismissal involved differences regarding a plan to move headquarters to Cincinnati.

By Mark A. Kellner.

Storm Disaster Galvanizes Church

The most expensive natural disaster in Canadian history mobilized Christians as never before. The five-day eastern Canada ice storm in early January left more than 3 million people without power in Quebec alone. In some storm-ravaged areas, it took up to three weeks to restore power.

As the blackout persisted and temperatures plummeted to below zero, authorities went door to door evacuating citizens in danger of hypothermia or carbon monoxide poisoning from makeshift heating sources.

Church members spontaneously helped through an informal network of family and friends. Those with electricity or wood-burning stoves hosted those needy residents

without heat. Potlucks became feasts as Christians shared the contents of thawing freezers.

The Salvation Army reacted quickly, opening up shelters in four Montreal-area churches and organizing four mobile canteens to dispense meals and hot beverages to storm victims, repair crews, and Canadian army personnel who had been called in to help.

Other churches with electric power or generators turned their buildings into temporary lodging. Church-sponsored food banks expanded to meet demand, congregations collected nonperishables, and many Canadian denominations established storm-relief funds.

By Ginette Cotnoir in Quebec.



Closer look: Canadian Steve Freiria examines a tree-damaged church in Ottawa.

News Briefs

◆ More than 1,300 **United Methodist clergy** (about 3 percent of the denomination's total) have signed an "In All Things Charity" statement affirming "appropriate liturgical support" for same-sex marriages and dissenting from the denomination's teaching on homosexuality. The statement began circulating after the denomination's quadrennial meeting in 1996 in which voting delegates reaffirmed that "the practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching" (CT, June 17, 1996, p. 58). Signatories released the document as a show of support for Omaha, Nebraska, pastor Jimmy Creech, who faces a church trial after presiding at a "covenant partnership" service of two women.

◆ The Alabama Supreme Court ruled January 16 that Circuit Judge Roy Moore may continue to display a plaque of the Ten Commandments behind his bench and to allow prayers to be recited publicly before sessions begin (CT, Dec. 8, 1997, p. 60). The court rejected a religious-freedom lawsuit on technical



Moore



Passive resistance: Bell clutches rosary beads while being carried from court.

Pro-Life Activist Ordered to Jail

Pittsburgh Judge Raymond A. Novak ordered pro-life activist Joan Andrews Bell to Allegheny County Jail for 3 to 23 months on January 15 for refusing to sign a probation form promising to stay away from abortion facilities.

Bell, a 49-year-old Roman Catholic from Bayonne, New Jersey, has been arrested 200 times, and in the 1980s spent almost two years in solitary confinement in a Florida prison.

The criminal trespass case arises from a May 1985 passive resistance sit-in Bell and 14 others conducted inside Women's Health Services in Pittsburgh. She barricaded herself in an examination room of Women's Health Services, unwrapped sterilized instruments, and refused to leave. Police had to cut the lock on the door and drag her out after she went limp. Novak originally sentenced

Bell to three years probation in 1988, with orders not to trespass at abortion facilities. Bell refused, and Novak ordered her arrest last fall.

"I will not obey unjust laws nor consent to cooperate with the murder of the sacred lives of God's precious children," she says.

Bell's attorney Richard Traynor maintains that "Pennsylvania law prohibits the court from requiring the defendant to violate her conscience by assenting to a formal condition of probation."

At the end of her court case in January, Bell had to be carried from the courtroom by sheriff's deputies.

Don Treshman, national director of the Baltimore-based Rescue America, says Bell's passive resistance strategy helped ignite the spark to start his organization. CT

grounds, saying the judiciary will not "become a political foil."

◆ **Mission Aviation Fellowship** (MAF), with headquarters in Redlands, California, has appointed Gary Bishop, 50, chief executive officer. Bishop replaces Max Meyers, 62, who is returning to his native Australia. MAF formed in 1945 and is active in three dozen countries.

◆ Mark Sweeney is the new executive director of **Leadership Network** in Dallas. Established in 1984 by Bob Buford, Leadership Network provides networking and resourcing to senior ministers and staff of large congregations.

◆ The **Paul B. Henry Institute for the Study of Christianity and Politics** has been established at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan, with \$1 million in gifts from friends and supporters of the U.S. congressional representative who died of cancer in 1993. Calvin officials hope the center will stimulate discussions on the relationship between religion and public life by bringing a variety of conferences and seminars to the Calvin campus.

◆ Ward Gasque, 57, a former dean of Ontario Theological Seminary, has been appointed president of **Pacific Association of Theological Studies**, formerly known as Seattle Association for Theological Education. CT

President Disillusions Christians

In 1991, Frederick Chiluba, as Zambia's newly elected evangelical president, declared the southern African country of 10 million a "Christian nation." He promised to fight corruption and to infuse biblical values into the country's political life.

But today, outspoken critics—increasingly including some evangelicals—say the 54-year-old Chiluba is vindictive

against political opponents and tolerates corruption within the government.

Critics see a wide gap between Chiluba's religious rhetoric and his political practices. "Chiluba is saying good words but doing evil deeds," says Akashambatwa Lewanika, who served in Chiluba's cabinet in 1991 and is now an opposition leader. "He is proclaiming universal Christian love, but persecuting [the op-

position] with personal hatred and vicious vengeance."

Chiluba has come to his own defense. When the Zambian National Assembly opened in January, Chiluba said, "My government has clearly demonstrated its determination to change the face of this country for good and the better."



Frederick Chiluba

VINDICTIVE POLITICS? Critics cite Chiluba's treatment of 73-year-old Kenneth Kaunda, who led the country for its first 27 years, as evidence of vindictiveness.

Kaunda, irked by a Chiluba-endorsed law that barred him from running in the 1996 elections, mounted an international campaign to discredit Chiluba's rule. On several occasions, Kaunda's statements appeared to incite public disorder. In August, Kaunda suffered injuries in a confrontation with police, and he claimed Chiluba had plotted an attempt on his life, a charge the president has denied.

Then, in October, Kaunda predicted that an "explosion" would rock the country. A few days later, some soldiers seized the country's radio station and claimed they had toppled Chiluba because of government corruption and chaos. The dissidents held the radio station for three hours and attacked the homes of top military officers, but the army quickly subdued them.

Afterwards, Chiluba invoked state-of-emergency powers, which allow police to arrest and detain suspects for 28 days without a court hearing. Police arrested 90 opposition figures allegedly linked to the coup. On Christmas Day, police surrounded Kaunda's residence and whisked him to prison.

"People are upset and disillusioned because they don't know who will be arrested next," says Nevers Mumba, an evangelical leader who had been a confidant of Chiluba but now leads the opposition National Christian Coalition. "What has happened is humiliating to this nation."

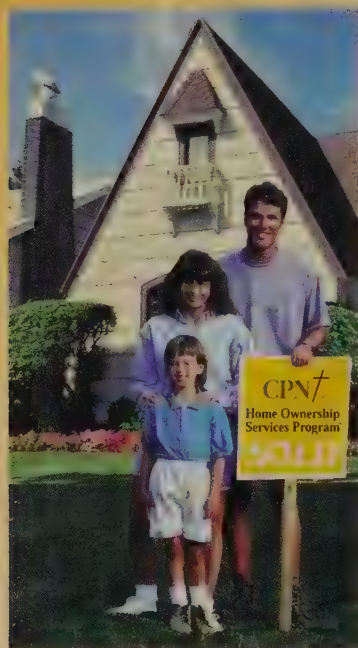
After international pressure, Chiluba released Kaunda, but placed him under a gag order and house arrest. Police cut off Kaunda's phone lines, fenced his residence with barbed wire, and camped outside his house.

During his own reign, Kaunda had arrested Chiluba, who became a Christian in jail. Now, Chiluba insists he is upholding the country's constitution, not seeking revenge. "You cannot break

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the law and expect to stay free," he says of Kaunda's actions.

CORRUPTION TOLERATED? Chiluba is also criticized for failing to control his money-hungry ministers, who drive expensive cars and own choice land. Mumba claims the country's political system is a haven for corrupt officials, an accusation that has been growing the longer Chiluba is in office (CT, April 3, 1995, p. 94).

Still, some evangelicals are solidly behind Chiluba. "He has the interest of the nation at heart," says Joshua Banda, vice president of the Assemblies of God, the country's largest evangelical group. "He has brought about an enhancement of democratic ideals in the nation." Chiluba worshiped at Banda's church the Sunday after Kaunda's arrest.

Some critics contend that Chiluba has kept key Christian leaders in tow by doling out cash. Human-rights activist Ngande Mwanajiti says church leaders only make public comments "when appealing for funding from the president for their churches."

Church leaders also shy away from directly challenging Chiluba because they fear losing privileges. Chiluba's government issues diplomatic passports to top clergy, but Mumba's was withdrawn when he criticized Chiluba's government.

FUTURE VISION: Christian leaders say Chiluba has not been effective in assuring that when he leaves office the country's citizens will have a firm grounding in Christian ideas and ethics.

Until late last year, church leaders assumed that Chiluba's then vice president, Godfrey Miyanda, would be Chiluba's successor. Miyanda, a retired general and a Christian, is popular in evangelical circles. But Chiluba stunned the Christian community when he dropped Miyanda from the vice presidency and offered him the politically low-profile post of education minister.

Besides Chiluba, Miyanda was the only visible Christian in the ruling Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD). Miyanda does not have enough clout in the MMD to clinch the presidential nomination without an endorsement from Chiluba. And Christians fear the next president may care little about Christian values.

Banda says he is consoled by the preamble to the country's constitution, which says Zambia "shall be a Christian country." Backed by such a statement, Christians can pressure the government to uphold Judeo-Christian values, Banda says. "But this is a matter for serious prayer."

By Isaac Phiri.



Our New Bible College is Making Headlines

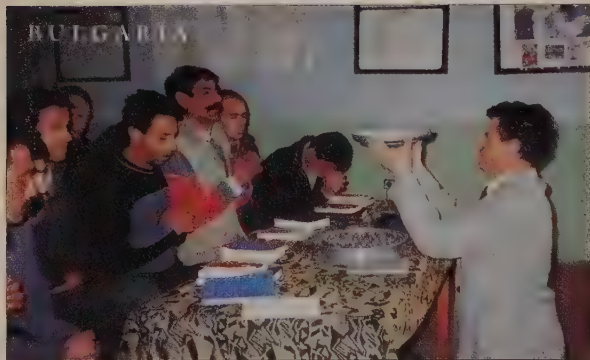
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Evangelicals Gain Legal Status

The Bulgarian Evangelical Alliance, a member of World Evangelical Fellowship (WEF), has been granted official registration, which will allow the organization to operate legally throughout the country.

"The wait has been a long one of many years, but not in vain," says Johan Candelin, director of the WEF Religious Liberty Commission.

The registration process began in 1993 in response to a growing anti-evangelical campaign and efforts to restrict the influx of new "sects" into Bulgaria. Escalating media attacks confused evangelical churches with non-Christian sects. Evangelical churches existed in Bulgaria prior to its liberation from Turkey nearly 150 years ago. Lyubomir Mladenov, director of the Directorate of Denominations at the Council

of Ministers in Sofia, also promises to grant official registration rights for seminary training for evangelical pastors.

"This is further proof that religious rights are gaining a stronger foothold in the country," says Jun Vencer, international director of WEF. "The greatest challenge ahead will be to soften public attitude, which is still very much against the small Protestant churches."

Nikolay Nedelchev, general secretary of the Bulgarian Evangelical Alliance, says the signing of the December 16 document granting legal status will have a profound impact. "We can open Bible schools, we can have bank accounts, we can buy property," Nedelchev says. The approval will also enable the alliance to conduct humanitarian aid and to organize training conferences. CT

VENEZUELA

Government Recognition Demanded

Venezuela's evangelical churches are demanding that the government recognize their right to exist and guarantee their freedom of worship.

Problems between evangelicals and Nestor Luis Alvarez, Venezuelan minister of worship, flared after the government last year expelled foreign Unification Church activists. Several Latin American gov-

ernments have expelled Unification missionaries under pressure from Catholic and Protestant groups (CT, Nov. 17, 1997, p. 76).

In the wake of the expulsions, congressional representative Godofredo Marin has accused Alvarez of blocking the legal recognition of 4,000 churches and religious groups, most of them evan-

NIGERIA

Muslims Aim to End Televangelism

While several Nigerian Muslims have converted as a result of a regional evangelistic outreach by the Christian Broadcasting Network, other Muslims are actively seeking to stop the telecasts from airing in other parts of the country.

Popular artists, athletes, and professors gave testimonies on *WorldReach Nigeria*, which aired the first week in December. Around 2,000 churches in Nigeria supported the effort.

However, Muslim leaders have succeeded in stopping the telecast in the Sokoto, Kano, Maiduguri, and Kebbi States in northern Nigeria.

Muslim leader Usman Jibrin, a former military governor of Kaduna State, warned that Muslims will not tolerate the shows because they are "against Islam." Several sheiks have claimed the show is deliberately aimed at foment-

ing religious crises.

Death threats have been received by some Muslims who have made Christian commitments. Also, the *WorldReach Nigeria* staff and some Christians at Nigerian television stations have been threatened in connection with their evangelism.

"Some of the participants in *WorldReach* have suffered harassment, assault, and intimidation for their faith," says pastor Ina Omakwu, director of *WorldReach Nigeria*. Saidu Dogo, secretary-general of the Christian Association of Nigeria, an umbrella association for denominations, says the government must help "resist the pressures being mounted by Muslims to retard the propagation of other religions in the guise of peace and security."

By Obed Minchakpu
in Jos, Nigeria.



Christian testimony: A Hausa music group performs a praise song for the TV show. Hausa is the major people group in northern Nigeria.

gelical. The legislator has joined some evangelical churches in accusing Alvarez of serving as "an arm of the Roman Catholic Church." Around 85 percent of Venezuelans claim to be Catholic.

Alvarez says there is no religious discrimination or persecution in the country. However, he says all church bodies must meet certain legal norms, including having a hierarchy and a legal representative.

"No state can allow informal groups of a religious

nature to be present and act in the country who do not provide authorities with a legitimate interlocutor," the minister told *El Universal*. Alvarez says the government often has had difficulty identifying church representatives to contact on legal matters.

Alvarez, in a veiled reference to the Unification Church, also says the government has a duty to preserve the security of the state against outside groups that might threaten its stability. CT



Early-morning pickup: James delivers a cassette to an interstate commuter.

Drive-Through Church: Food for Soul

Saint David's Anglican Church, with property facing a busy six-lane highway in Sydney, had problems making its presence known until rector Richard James came up with an idea. If drivers can pick up fast food for their bodies, why not a drive-through with food for the soul?

Thousands of commuters pass the little church in suburban Forestville each day. They often must slow down because of congestion. A sermon cassette tape to listen to on the way to work could relieve frustration and boredom, James figured.

Results have exceeded expectations. James and church members distributed hundreds of tapes to motorists who

pulled into the church's circular driveway from 7 to 9 A.M. for three days in November and December.

The congregation, with about 150 regular attendees, supports the drive-through days enthusiastically. On distribution days, a team of about two dozen helpers gathers at 6:30 A.M. to pray and organize signs to let motorists know the drive-through is open.

Topics tackle real-life issues. James called the first series "Sex, Lies, and God." The second series, "The Meaning of Life," came from the Book of Ecclesiastes.

The next drive-through is planned for Easter.

By Clare Booth.

News Briefs

◆ Evangelism, Inc., is sponsoring the first-ever national conference on the persecuted church, March 26–28 in Columbia, South Carolina. The gathering will bring together experts, scholars, and authors familiar with persecution of Christians around the world, including professor Walid Phares, authors Paul Marshall and Bat Ye'Or, and religious-rights activists Steven Snyder, Jim Jacobson, Steve Haas, and Ann Buwalda. For information, phone 803-252-4146.

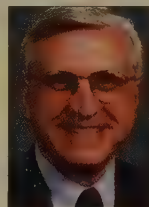
◆ Georgi Vins, founder of Russian Gospel Ministries International in Elkhart, Indiana, died January 11 at age 69. He had been diagnosed with an inoperable malignant brain tumor last fall. Vins had served as general secretary of the Council of Evangelical Baptist Churches, an organization of 2,000 persecuted congregations in the former Soviet Union. He spent nine years in prison and labor camps before being exiled to the United States in 1979.

◆ The Mongolian government has agreed to release 10,000 children's Bibles seized by customs officials last May. The government had received hundreds of letters of protest from around the world at the confiscation of Scriptures, which had been shipped to the Mongolian Bible Society. The government continues to hold 600 impounded Christian videotapes.

◆ World Concern Asia director Terri Eikenberry, 47, died January 11 in Bangkok from complications associated with scleroderma. Eikenberry had been with World Concern since 1980. For the past three years as Asia director, he provided leadership to 37 relief-and-development projects.

◆ Alan Bergstedt, 61, has become the first chief executive officer of the Orange, California-based Wycliffe Associates, which is the support ministry of Wycliffe Bible Translators. Bergstedt had previously been chief financial officer for World Vision and founder of Visionary Management Group.

◆ Alexander S. Haraszti, a 77-year-old Hungarian-born physician, professor, and Baptist minister who helped secure invitations for Billy Graham to hold crusades in five Eastern European countries in the 1970s and 1980s, died January 16 in Atlanta of complications from a hip fracture.



Bergstedt

ECUADOR

Mormon Church Suspends Construction

A Mormon congregation has suspended the construction of a church building in northern Ecuador after vandals damaged the structure twice.

Church officials say the project has been put on hold until a local plebiscite decides the question of the group's presence in Peguche, an indigenous community 80 miles north of the capital, Quito.

Opposition to the church came from indigenous leaders who charged that Mormons

are intent on changing cultural and social conditions in the community.

Carmen Yamberla, president of the Indigenous Federation of Imbabura Province, says, "Freedom of worship cannot be exercised when it leads to social conflicts."

Yamberla says Mormons have infiltrated the community, caused division, and disregarded the development of indigenous people.

Another resident, José

Quimbo, charges that the church's architecture would conflict with the traditional adobe construction.

Quimbo says the traditional celebrations and rituals of the community would be disrupted by the presence of a church that would hold the entire population of Peguche.

Holger Moncayo, legal representative for the Mormon Church in Ecuador, says that the cement structure would seat 700 people, slightly more than the number of Mormon believers registered in three towns in the area.

But the issue is more than

just the building, Quimbo says. "Our children will not know if their heritage is as a Mormon or as an indigenous person who speaks Quechua with a cultural identity forged for centuries."

Moncayo denies that Mormons are trying to change culture. "We ask that our members maintain their traditions, their hair braids, and their good customs."

Arrest warrants have been issued for four residents who have been charged with destruction of the church property.

*By Kenneth D. MacHarg
in Quito, Ecuador.*



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THE MARKETPLACE

Cost: 46 cents per character (each space & punctuation counts as a character); avg. 45 characters per line. Min. \$39.10 (85 characters). CT blind box number available at \$6 each insertion; checkmark box [X] \$14 each insertion. Supply permanent street address and phone number. Ads set display style: \$276/column inch. Combination package available for CHRISTIANITY TODAY, CHRISTIAN READER, & YOUR CHURCH: 2 magazines—44 cents per character per insertion; 3 magazines—42 cents per character per insertion. Display style: 2 magazines—\$263 per insertion; 3 magazines—\$252 per insertion. **All classified ads will now be automatically placed on CHRISTIANITY ONLINE at no additional charge. IMPORTANT: Prepayment & written confirmation required to process ads.** Visa, MasterCard, or personal check accepted; fax (630) 260-0114. Employment ads are given priority. All other ads will be placed in first available issue. Deadline for reservation or cancellation is seven weeks prior to actual issue date. Address correspondence to: Classified Advertising, Christianity Today, 465 Gundersen Dr., Carol Stream, IL 60188.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

ACTON INSTITUTE



for the Study of Religion and Liberty is a leading international educational organization. Our mission is to promote a free society characterized by individual liberty and sustained by religious principles.

We are seeking a DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT

The Director of Development will structure a development strategy for this growing institute (1998 budget: \$2,000,000). The right candidate will have the experience and track record to build upon past success in soliciting gifts from individuals, foundations, and corporations, as well as the ability to develop a major gifts and estate-planning program. This individual will supervise a small staff and report to the executive director.

Background and Requirements: A minimum of five years in increasingly responsible not-for-profit fundraising. Seasoned and experienced development professional with a demonstrated track record. Knowledge of philanthropic community, both corporate and foundations, a necessity. Strong grant-writing skills, along with superior supervisory, organizational, and communication skills are required. Competitive salary, based upon experience. Send résumé and salary requirements to: Personnel Director, Acton Institute, 161 Ottawa NW, Ste.301, Grand Rapids, MI 49503; fax (616) 454-9454; www.acton.org

CHURCH PLACEMENT SERVICE

Networking of churches & ministers seeking employment. CMPN, P.O. Box 1132, Barre, VT 05641; (802) 476-8902.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES: Advent Group Ministries, a Christian social service agency located in San Jose, CA, seeks resident counselors, night counselors, summer interns for adolescent residential treatment programs. Competitive salary, benefits. Residential positions provide room & board. Contact Deborah Norris: (408) 281-0708; (1-800) 96ADVENT; fax: (408) 281-2658.

CHRISTIAN MEDICAL & DENTAL SOCIETY seeks dir. of community-based ministries who will supervise outreach to 170 med/dent campuses. Strong organization and leadership skills required. Parachurch ministry experience a plus. Send résumés to CMDS, P.O. Box 5, Bristol, TN 37621.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

SENIOR PASTOR OPPORTUNITY

A traditional, Bible-teaching, Christian church seeks a senior pastor with a vision to help us as an inner-city church to become a vibrant part of our community. This pastor should have strong teaching/preaching skills and possess a passion for discipling, motivating, and shepherding us into the next millennium. Educational qualifications shall include completed graduate studies in theology (master's degree or higher) at a recognized seminary. Practical experience shall include full-time ministry in increasingly responsible positions and a demonstrated longevity (minimum 5 years) in at least one location. Interested applicants please respond with a résumé of pertinent qualifications to Elim Chapel, 546 Portage Ave., Winnipeg, MB, Canada R3C 0G3, Attention: Search Committee; fax: (204) 786-2184; phone: (204) 786-7477.

NATIVE-SPEAKING ENGLISH TEACHER for Hong Kong Christian schools: 2-year English-teaching experience required. U.S. \$5,000/mo. Call: (630) 942-0000.

MAKE A CHANGE! Teach English, business, or computers in China, Russia, Muslim Asia, or C. Europe. Call ESI at: (1-800) 895-7955. All college majors/degrees welcome.

ASSOCIATE PASTOR OF WORSHIP AND MUSIC MINISTRIES

Do you have a passion for leading others in worshipping our great God? Do you have a vision for using music, drama, and creative arts in the diverse expression of worship? Village Church of Gurnee (an evangelical church in a north suburb of Chicago) is seeking an experienced Christian leader to bring 1,000+ worshippers before our Lord in worship. Responsibilities include: active participation to plan and present Sunday morning worship, administer and enable a diverse music ministry, provide leadership and vision for active and growing drama and fine arts programs. Send résumé to: Village Church of Gurnee, Attn. Box 102, 1319 N. Hunt Club Rd., Gurnee, IL, 60031 or fax: (847) 244-6647

FACULTY: Covenant College, a Christian liberal arts college in the Reformed and Presbyterian tradition, seeks teacher/scholar to join the education department for possible openings in secondary education, middle grade education, early childhood education, and educational leadership. Must have academic background in the appropriate field, and teaching/administrative experience in either early grade, middle school, or high school level. Must be able to supervise student teachers. Ph.D. or Ed.D. (at least A.B.D. level) required plus a commitment to a Reformed world-view. Salary adjusts to experience/rank. Women and minorities are encouraged to apply. Position opens July 1, 1998. Send résumé to: Dr. Timothy Everitt, Covenant College, 14049 Scenic Hwy., Lookout Mountain, GA 30750.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

ASSOCIATE PASTOR

Trinity Presbyterian Church, located in the beautiful San Francisco Peninsula city of San Carlos, California, is seeking a full-time associate pastor. Trinity is a healthy and alive-in-Christ congregation with 530 members. It is family and youth oriented, with a warm and nurturing congregation which cares for its pastors. The focus of the position is to help others hear God's calling in their lives and to teach them to use their gifts. Must have experience in equipping laity for ministry and be able to manage and develop education programs. Also must have at least five years' experience in pastoral role. Will work closely with six full-time and five part-time staff members. Send PIFs to: APNC, Trinity Presbyterian Church, 1106 Alameda de las Pulgas, San Carlos, CA 94070.

DIRECTOR OF BILLY GRAHAM CENTER Wheaton College, a Christian liberal arts college, is accepting applications from and nominations of individuals who have an interest in serving as the director of the college's Billy Graham Center. The Billy Graham Center, a division of Wheaton College (IL), is dedicated to the advancement of world evangelization and works with Christian leaders from around the world to develop strategies and skills for communicating the gospel. With its unique resources and programs, the center serves the church in evangelism and missions through leadership training, research, networking, and strategic planning. Applicants should have a broad knowledge of and experience in administration and must be able to affirm the college's statement of faith and adhere to lifestyle expectations.

The director of the Billy Graham Center reports to the provost and provides leadership in achieving the operational objective required to fulfill the center's mission. Responsibilities include initiating, developing, and implementing new programs for the Institute of Evangelism and for overseeing the Institutes for Muslim Studies, Chinese Studies, East-West Christian Studies, and Prison Ministries. The director also oversees the center's resource programs (library, archives, and museum) and education and training programs.

An effective candidate will have a terminal degree and experience in missions/evangelism and teaching/research. Submit letter of application and résumé no later than April 15, 1998, to the Director of Human Resources, Wheaton College, Wheaton, IL 60187. Wheaton College complies with federal and state requirements for nondiscrimination in employment. Women and minority applicants are encouraged to apply.

USE MINISTRY AND LIFE SKILLS to reach the hurting, broken, and lost as a tentmaker in the 10/40 Window. HOW? contact: Mission to Unreached Peoples, toll free at (1-888) 847-6950, or E-mail: mupinfo@mup.org or [HTTP://www.mup.org/mupinfo/](http://www.mup.org/mupinfo/)

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

COLUMBIA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY (CIU)

- Vice President for Academic Affairs, available July 1998. This position exercises senior leadership in achieving CIU's higher educational mission and goals by demonstrating CIU's purpose, "To Know Him and To Make Him Known"; supervises a college dean and a seminary dean and other educational department leaders; and plans, organizes, supervises, and evaluates educational effectiveness. Must have earned doctorate in appropriate theological education content field or in higher education administration and substantial faculty or administrative leadership experience in Bible college or seminary education.
- Dean, Korntal, Germany, available Spring/Summer 1999. (Columbia Biblical Seminary, a division of CIU, extension campus). Chief academic officer on site, responsible to the Columbia Biblical Seminary dean for oversight and administration of all aspects of the educational program at the extension campus. In consultation with the seminary dean, exercise leadership in achieving the seminary's educational mission and goals by overseeing personnel, policies, and procedures in a manner consistent with CIU doctrinal and ethical standards. Candidates must have earned degrees from accredited schools, postgraduate educational experience in German and American contexts, and possess 10 years experience as a theological educator.
- University Registrar, available July 1998. Must have master's degree, three years related experience. This position is responsible for all aspects of student registration and records, including insuring the integrity and completeness of academic records and implementation of academic policies.
- Faculty, New Testament (Columbia Biblical Seminary), August 1998. Must have earned accredited doctorate, postgraduate educational ministry experience in teaching New Testament at seminary level.

Candidates for the above positions must be in agreement with CIU's evangelical statement of faith and emphases. Submit résumés to Don Jones, Personnel Director, Columbia International University, P.O. Box 1322, Columbia, SC 29230-3122; phone: (803) 754-4100, ext. 3009; fax: (803) 786-4209.

TRI-STATE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, located in scenic Galena, IL, is seeking an assistant administrator for the 98/99 school year. Other positions in elementary and high school will be available in grades K-11. TSCS, 11084 Hwy. 20 W, Galena, IL 61036; (815) 777-3800.

YOUTH PASTOR. Conservative, evangelical, Presbyterian church in western NJ seeks P/T youth pastor. Please direct inquiries to: Rev. John Groth, Kirkpatrick Memorial Presbyterian Church, P.O. Box E, Ringoes, NJ 08551; fax: (908) 782-1170.

CHRISTIAN ACADEMY OF KNOXVILLE, 9426 Dutchtown Road, Knoxville, TN 37923. K-12 independent Christian school of 800+ students, established 1977, is now accepting applications for all levels and disciplines of classroom teachers for the 1998-99 academic year.

MINISTER OF FAMILY LIFE. Innovative mainline congregation seeks second pastor to lead creative ministries to children, youth, and parents. Lead small groups, small-group leaders, and worship (on occasion) also. We're looking for someone who loves Jesus, students, and their families. Full-time. Excellent package includes salary, housing, and all benefits. Contact Rev. Jim Morse, First UCC, P.O. Box 222, Bremen, IN 46506; (210) 546-2459.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

PASTOR. Christ-centered (PCUSA) church in central NJ seeking biblically based pastor to lead, care for, and direct a diverse congregation of 150+ in their faith. Must possess a deep personal faith and be able to communicate that faith through solid expository preaching, teaching, and leadership skills. Submit dossier to PNC, P.O. Box 102, Lambertville, NJ 08530.

DIRECTOR. City Tree School, an outreach of First Presbyterian Church of San Diego promoting integration of Jesus Christ with academic excellence; 280 students from pre-K to 6th grade, with plans to expand. Candidate for accreditation—WASC. Req.: M.A. in Elem. Ed, CA-recognized teacher's credential, 6 yrs. exp., minimum 2-yr. supervisory/admin. Submit résumé to: City Tree Search Committee, First Presbyterian Church, 320 Date St., San Diego, CA 92101.

MALONE COLLEGE, Canton, Ohio, seeks qualified candidates for the following tenure-track, rank-open faculty positions for August 1998:

- Communication Studies: Ph.D. required. Will teach rhetorical theory & criticism, public speaking, persuasion, mass media capstone, & communication skills. Possibility for teaching graduate-level communication courses & performing administrative duties.
- Computer Science: Priority will be given to candidates having a Ph.D. in computer science; candidates with master's degree will be considered.
- Elementary Education: Will teach courses in elementary education & supervise student teachers. Student advising & other faculty responsibilities & committee assignments required. Appropriate earned doctorate & successful teaching at elementary or middle school level required. Applicants with successful college teaching & multicultural experience are preferred.
- Management/Strategy: Doctoral degree with strategy emphasis required, ability to teach international business, marketing, or finance as additional or secondary business discipline. Teaching will be in MBA program & traditional & nontraditional undergraduate programs. Salary competitive among Christian College Consortium institutions. Ph.D. or MBA required.
- MBA Director/Faculty: Half-time administrative position as MBA director (11-month position). Half-time teaching position in MBA program, & traditional & nontraditional undergraduate programs (9-month position). Salary competitive among Christian College Consortium institutions. Ph.D. or MBA required.
- Nursing: Will teach upper-level nursing in both generic baccalaureate program & in BSN degree-completion track for RNs. Requirements include MSN & current clinical practice. Doctorate in nursing or related field highly desired. Program is accredited by NLNAC & holds membership with AACN.
- Psychology: Will teach courses in special education at the undergraduate & graduate levels, supervising student teachers, & advising graduate students in research pertaining to special education. Appropriate earned doctorate & successful teaching at the elementary or middle school level required. Applicants having record of successful college teaching & multicultural experience are preferred.

Send letter of application, curriculum vita, names & addresses of three references, & statement of Christian commitment to Dr. Robert Suggs, Provost, Malone College, 515 25th Street NW, Canton, OH 44709.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

SR. MINISTER/OUTSTANDING PREACHER Asylum Hill Congregational Church, a historic and progressive Hartford, Connecticut, church of 1,500 members from greater Hartford, with average worship attendance over 700, embraces tradition and innovation. Annual budget of \$1.6 million and \$9 million endowment (with more than 800 pledging units contributing over \$1.1 million per annum) supports experienced staff of 17, including four ordained ministers, renowned music program, and demonstrated commitment to our city neighborhood. We are a warm, welcoming, growing congregation that seeks an open, outgoing, visionary leader, who can preach with contemporary relevance from personal experience. Competitive salary and benefits. Check our Web site: www.ahcc.org. Submit résumé to AHCC Search Committee, c/o Mr. & Mrs. Ben Terry, 46 Banbury Lane, West Hartford, CT 06107. We are an equal opportunity employer.

SENIOR PASTOR

Fairfax Baptist Church, Fairfax, VA (20 miles west of Washington, DC), is seeking a senior pastor. F.B.C. is affiliated with the Mt. Vernon Baptist Association, Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, and Baptist General Association of Virginia. Applicants should have a seminary degree, outstanding preaching skills, strong collaborative leadership abilities, and significant administrative experience. Our 250-member congregation has an excellent Sunday school and music program, as well as a friendly and committed membership. If interested, send résumé to: F.B.C., Pastoral Call Committee, 10830 Main St., Fairfax, VA 22030; fax: (703) 273-1822, or our Web page at: <http://www.fairfaxbaptist.org>; or call F.B.C. at (703) 273-1820.

TEACH IN JAPAN: Reach Asians for Christ. Teach in English. Several K-12 & ESL teacher openings. Mission school of 450; 2-year contracts. Must raise partial support. Write Dr. Bob Greninger, Okinawa Christian School, P.O. Box 14250, Gainesville, FL 32604; (1-800) 446-6423.

DAY CAMP SUNSHINE seeks counselors for summer ministry in NJ, June 22-August 21. Weekly salary \$250 plus room and board. P.O. Box 204, Liberty Corner, NJ 07938; (908) 647-9624.

CAMPUS PASTOR OTTAWA UNIVERSITY OTTAWA, KANSAS, CAMPUS

Ottawa University is related to the American Baptist Church, U.S.A. OU's vision is to become one of America's premier Christian universities. OU seeks a campus pastor who is responsible for creating a dynamic and inclusive campus ministry program for the university community. The campus pastor will also teach part-time as appropriate to his/her expertise and the university's needs. A master of divinity degree is required and a doctoral degree is preferred. Previous similar experience in a small church-related liberal arts college and previous pastoral counseling experience is helpful but not required.

Nominations are welcome. Consideration of applications will begin immediately and continue until the position is filled. Women and minorities are encouraged to apply. Interested persons should send a cover letter, curriculum vita or résumé, and the names, addresses, and phone numbers of three professional references to: Paul R. Rittoff, Dean of Student Development, Ottawa University, 1001 S. Cedar St., Ottawa, KS 66067-3399; E-mail: paulr@ott.edu; fax: (785) 242-6088.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

WILDWOOD PCA in Tallahassee, Florida is looking for a full-time Music Director/Worship Coordinator with a heart for God and a hunger to lead others into his presence. Join a great multi-staff team in a growing 500+ church. Responsibilities include worship planning, praise teams, adult choir, and development of a celebratory orchestra. We seek someone who can build a ministry, not a program. Blended worship style. Wildwood Presbyterian Church, 100 Ox Bottom Rd., Tallahassee, FL 32312; phone: (850) 894-1400; fax: (850) 894-1406.

DUE TO GROWTH AND EXPANSION, Belhaven College seeks those faculty who are excited to serve in the following areas at a college which prepares students to serve Christ Jesus in their occupation, relationships, and in the world of ideas.

- Director of the Library (Librarian master's required)
 - Sports Science Faculty (PhD & Athletic Training Certification required)
 - Theater Department Chair (MFA required)
 - English Department Chair (Ph.D. required)
 - Business Administration Faculty in Memphis (DBA or Ph.D. required)
- Send vita to Daniel C. Fredericks, Provost, 1500 Peachtree St., Jackson, MS 39202. Minorities are encouraged to apply.

JUDSON COLLEGE seeks candidates for full-time faculty positions beginning August 25, 1998. Send inquiries and vita by April 15, 1998, to Dr. David Dickerson, Judson College, 1151 N. State St., Elgin, IL 60123-1498. Both positions require doctorate or ABD, significant nonacademic business or management experience, proven teaching ability, a commitment to mentor and minister to students outside the classroom, and a vital, growing evangelical Christian faith. Both require teaching in residential 4-year program and in innovative degree-completion and continuing education programs; carry the potential for significant additional income through extended work year; and may require extension campus teaching.

- MIS: Teaching and leadership opportunity combining MIS and business management in practitioner-driven business programs.
- Management: Teaching such areas as business ethics, leadership, HRM, strategic management, and planning in practitioner-based programs.

Judson is a 4-year evangelical Christian college of the liberal arts and professions. Women and minorities are strongly encouraged to apply.

FACULTY OPENINGS at Northwest Nazarene College for fall 1998. Candidates must be evangelical Christians in agreement with NNC's theological and lifestyle commitments. Doctorates preferred. Positions and contact persons are given below. NNC reserves the right to extend the closing date or close early as conditions warrant.

- Athletic Director (Kinesiology): Dr. Samuel Dunn
 - Political Science: Dr. Steve Shaw
 - Accounting: Dr. Ron Galloway
 - Computer Science: Dr. Robert DeCloss
 - Art Education/Painting: Dr. Jim Willis
- Northwest Nazarene College, 623 Holly St., Nampa, ID 83686.

SEARCHING FOR MINISTRY?

Pastors & associates looking for churches. Churches looking for pastors & staff. Churches looking for interim pastors. Call Believers Dynamics: (503) 357-7830 or write POB 596, Forest Grove, OR 97116. Since 1977.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

☒ **PRAYERFULLY SEEKING SENIOR PASTOR** for active suburban Boston-area evangelical Baptist church-BGC. This medium-sized congregation located in fast-growing area with tremendous outreach potential seeks God's man of vision. Capable dedicated lay leadership and modern facilities offer great potential. Send résumé, doctrinal statement, and recent tape to: Emmanuel Baptist Church Search Committee, 63 Rockwood Rd., P.O. Box 145, Norfolk, MA 02056.

CHRISTIANITY TODAY, INC. seeks to fill the following positions:

- Advertising Sales Manager: Degreed individual with 5-10 yrs. sales-management experience in the Christian market to provide day-to-day management of advertising account executive staff and departmental sales efforts.
- Associate Editor: LEADERSHIP Journal seeks editor with 3-5 years of experience and a thorough, broad-based understanding of the Protestant milieu/theology. Pastoral experience strongly preferred. Must be editor first, writer second. Send detailed information elaborating on interest in ministering through a magazine for church leaders, and qualifications to do so, plus writing samples.
- Market Research Analyst: Degreed analyst with 2-3 years exp. in market research analysis. Should be skilled in PC & Mac software, survey development for both qualitative and quantitative research, data analysis.
- Director of Marketing: Degreed individual with 8 years experience (preferably in magazine/book publishing) to provide strategic direction for ancillary product direct-mail marketing, supervise marketing managerial staff, and give input to new product R&D. Must have proven experience managing direct-mail marketing efforts.

To combine career with ministry, mail/fax résumé with cover letter detailing salary history to: Christianity Today, Inc., HR Dept.-CT, 465 Gundersen Dr., Carol Stream, IL 60188; fax: (630) 260-0114; E-mail: CTiHRDept@aol.com.

DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S AND YOUTH MINISTRIES

Medium-sized Christ-centered church seeks a devoted and dynamic individual to lead a well-balanced and creative program of ministry. Full-time director will supervise four part-time support staff (in the areas of nursery, children, mid-high and senior-high), and oversee lay volunteers in a ministry dedicated to helping children and youth develop their relationship with Jesus Christ. Competitive salary and benefits offered to an ordained person with experience who has made a long-term commitment to ministry to children and youth. Motivated candidates send résumé and references to Marty Goehring, Ph.D., Heights Cumberland Presbyterian Church, 8600 Academy Rd. NE, Albuquerque, NM 87111. Deadline: May 1, 1998.

OUTREACH PASTORS. We are seeking individuals for two full-time pastoral staff positions—international outreach (missions) and local outreach. Candidates need to be proven leaders, equippers/developers of people, and innovators. Send/fax résumé to Chuck Olson, Executive Pastor, Rolling Hills Covenant Church, 2222 Palos Verdes Drive North, Rolling Hills Estates, CA 90274 or fax: (310) 521-5384.

SMALL GROUPS PASTOR wanted to join adult team of Casas Adobes Baptist Church, Tucson, AZ. For an application and info packet, call Kathy Young at (520) 297-7238.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

DIRECTOR OF WORSHIP AND MUSIC 3,800 member Presbyterian (PCUSA) church in Seattle seeks committed Christian with the heart of a pastor, a vision for worship and the ability to apply a strong Biblical foundation to worship. Candidate will plan and coordinate worship and music for three Sunday morning and other special services, conduct two adult choirs, facilitate development of the choir program across all age groups, and supervise evolution of a strong instrumental program. Must have an earned music degree, broad knowledge of and experience with the sacred music repertoire and demonstrated ability to administer a worship and music program in a large evangelical church. For an information packet, please contact Tom Oldham, Search Committee at University Presbyterian Church, 4540 15th Ave. NE, Seattle, WA 98105. Phone: (206) 524-7300; fax: (206) 523-1284, attention Christi Scovill.

DORDT COLLEGE

BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION FALL 1998 Dordt College is seeking a Christian academician to teach marketing and/or management. Qualifications: Ph.D. in business administration preferred; MBA with relevant experience will be considered. To receive application materials and a detailed job description, qualified persons committed to a Reformed biblical perspective and educational philosophy are encouraged to send a curriculum vita/résumé and a letter of interest which provides evidence of that commitment to: Dr. Rockne McCarthy, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dordt College, 498 4th Ave., NE, Sioux Center, IA 51250; fax: (712) 722-4496; E-mail: vpaa@dordt.edu.

UNIVERSITY OF DUBUQUE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Director of External Programs and Assistant to the Dean. The University of Dubuque Theological Seminary, a seminary of the Presbyterian Church (USA), is seeking a director of external programs and assistant to the dean of the seminary to begin June 1, 1998. The director's primary responsibility will be to lead the D.Min. program, but he or she will also oversee the continuing, lay, and distance education programs. Significant successful experience in administration and the church are required. Applicants are expected to have a vibrant commitment to Jesus Christ and an appreciation for the Reformed tradition. Salary is negotiable depending on qualifications and experience. Applicants should send a résumé and three letters of reference to Dean Jeffrey F. Bullock, University of Dubuque Theological Seminary, 2000 University Ave., Dubuque, IA 52001. The University of Dubuque is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer. Women and minorities are encouraged to apply. Deadline for application is April 1, 1998.

AMERICA'S FOREMOST INNER-CITY FREE children's camp. Lifeguards and camp recreational workers needed. Camp Peniel Ministry now leads 1,000 to Christ yearly. Write: Camp Peniel, Box 367, Ironton, MO 63650, or call: (573) 546-3020.

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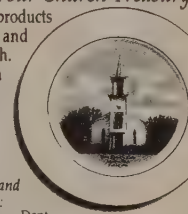
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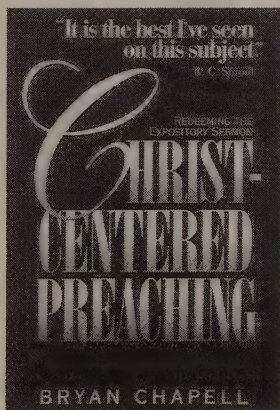
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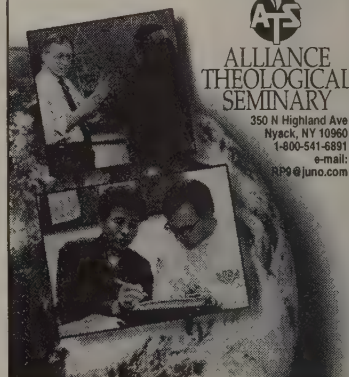
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Is it possible for a small Christian college in Pennsylvania to offer its students a specialized class on filmmaking, held in—where else—Los Angeles, the entertainment capitol of the world? Is it possible for a small mid-western Christian college located in farm country to offer students the opportunity to spend part of their college careers studying public policy in—where else—the nation's capital? Is there any Christian college that has extension campuses in Central America, Russia, England, Los Angeles, the Middle East, and Washington, D.C.?

The answer to all of the above questions is yes, and the answer is yes because of the several specialized academic programs offered by the Washington, D.C.-based Coalition for Christian Colleges and Universities (cccu) and open to all ccu schools. Students at Christian colleges need not choose between the intimacy of a small-college atmosphere and the intensity of specialized academic experiences.

Extension campuses around the world

The ccu is now home to 91 member institutions, their enrollments ranging from about 400 to about 6,000. But there is another way to crunch the numbers. For purposes of offering specialized academic and cultural experiences, the ccu could be viewed as a single "megauniversity" with 1.3 million alumni and a total current enrollment of over 158,000.

The ccu has proved the truth of the maxim "The whole is greater than the sum of its parts." The fact is that few if any of the ccu's 91 member schools could do individually what they have been doing, and will continue to do, together.

Says ccu program manager Margery Bernbaum, "Our institutions recognize that by being a member, they gain what amounts to extension campuses in the U.S. and abroad." Indeed, the programs function like extension campuses. Students get academic credit from their own school, but they study at a remote location.

Says Bernbaum, "I get many, many letters from students who say to us, in essence, 'I learned so much in the classroom, but I didn't really own it until I went on this program.'"

In all, the ccu offers—or will soon be offering—nine specialized study opportunities in the U.S. and abroad.

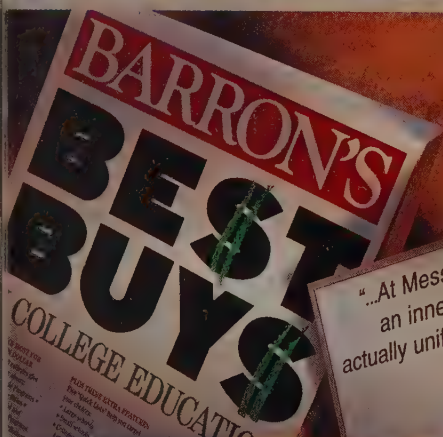
- At the Los Angeles Film Studies Center, students explore the film industry, studying the impact of film on culture from a liberal arts perspective. Through internships, students have the opportunity actually to become a part of the film industry.

- Those who participate in the American Studies Program (Washington, D.C.) also serve in internships while examining a variety of domestic and international policy issues.

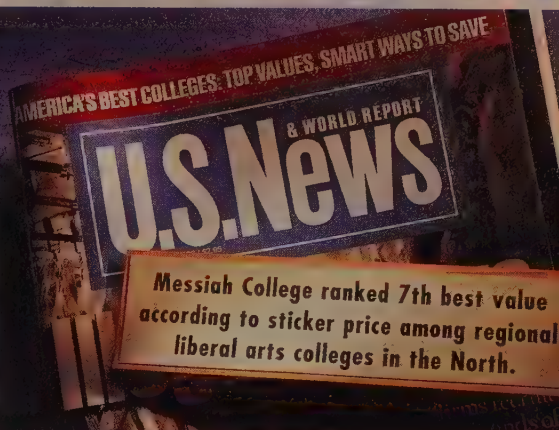
- The Latin American Studies Program, held in San José, Costa Rica, combines the study of Latin American politics, economics, religion, language, and culture with a service project.

- Those who participate in the Middle East Studies Program, held in Cairo, Egypt,

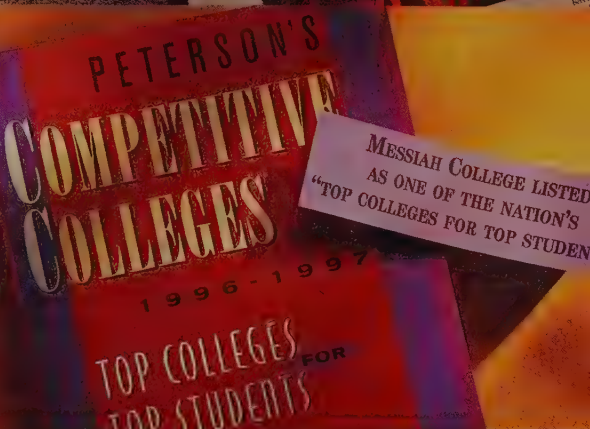
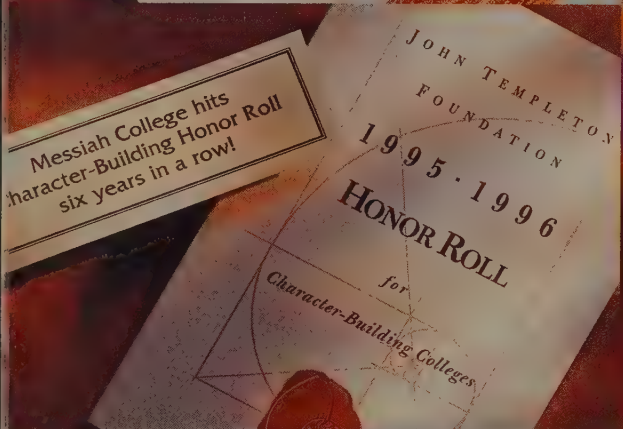
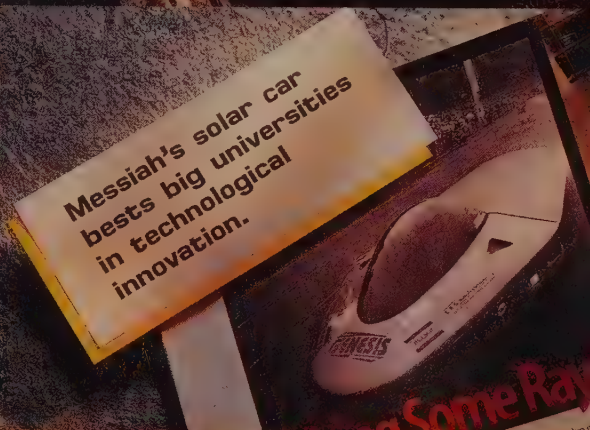
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SPECIAL ADVERTISING SECTION

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(from page 92)

focus on the history, culture, economics, and politics of the Middle East.

- For those who have an interest in Russia, there is the Russian Studies Program, held in Nizhni Novgorod, Russia.
- China? The China Studies Program will be launched in the spring semester of 1999.

• In the fall of this year, the CCCU will inaugurate yet another "extension campus," this one in Oxford, England. The Oxford Honors Program is based on a partnership with the Centre for Medieval & Renaissance Studies, which is affiliated with Keble College of Oxford University. The Oxford program is open to honors students at CCCU institutions. They have the opportunity to design their own programs based on the field of study and special interest. The experience includes opportunities for one-on-one tutorials with Oxford dons. Built into the program is a strong emphasis on the integration of faith and learning.

• In addition to the semester-long study opportunities, the CCCU offers two summer study programs, one in Oxford and one in Washington, D.C. The D.C. program, the Summer Institute of Journalism, gives students the opportunity to combine classroom work with hands-on newsgathering and -writing experience, as well as the opportunity to interact with some of the nation's top news journalists.

Each of the study opportunities offered by the CCCU has a character all its own, yet all share a common purpose. That purpose goes far beyond merely studying the same topics at a different location. Each program is designed to transport students from academia to the real world.

Without downplaying the importance of theory and classroom learning, the programs help students understand that their Christian faith is not just theoretical in nature. Rather, it has immensely practical implications for their lives, and especially for how they will choose and pursue a career in their area of interest. While many students may know this, having the chance to experience it through one of these spe-

(Continued on page 96)

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cialized programs is typically a life-changing experience.

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The cccu considers its American Studies Program its flagship program—it has been around the longest, since 1976. The letters the cccu receives from program participants confirm the fact that it is making a significant different in helping young people mature in their faith. Wrote a Taylor University student, "God has really used this semester powerfully to conform me even more to his image. I feel that I am a more committed, more disciplined, much less parochial Christian disciple for my time with the American Studies Program."

A student from Grand Canyon University wrote, "ASP has offset my misconstrued conceptions about myself and the world around me that would have been detrimental to my long-term effectiveness. Now, instead of having an idealistic frame-

work, I have a more realistic one. Because of this, I am better prepared and excited to meet the stresses of life and the needs of the world around me; I can look into the face of the future and smile."

Such letters typify the experiences students have with ASP, says Jerry S. Herbert, the program's director since 1981.

**The specialized academic
offerings give young
Christian men and women
the chance to test the
waters and to explore
their interests.**

According to Herbert, each semester there are many more applicants than the program can accommodate. That number is limited to 40. "In the mideighties," says Herbert, "we allowed it to get into the 50s, but we found that students began to lose the sense of community they experienced when we kept it to 40." (Continued on page 98)

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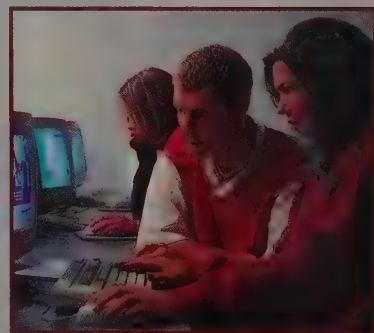
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Making the World Your Campus

(from page 96)

According to Herbert, the purpose of the program has remained consistent from the beginning. That purpose is summarized by the recently adopted slogan: "Connecting Biblical Faith with Public Life and Vocation." Says Herbert, "Students who participate in this program encounter Christian leaders who are witnessing faithfully in areas not traditionally associated with Christian mission—for example, believers who are active in law, politics, and business. The program emphasizes the connection between Christian faith and vocation. We stress that Jesus is Lord both of our private lives and our public lives."

Students inevitably experience in the program a broadening of their concept of what it means to be a Christian. "They get a chance to meet other believers who are well grounded in their faith," says Herbert, "but who come from different backgrounds and who have different political viewpoints." He adds, "The students who do best in this program are the ones who are eager to discover God and who are also eager to learn."

Cultural dynamics and values

According to the cccu's Bernbaum, one important benefit of all of the cccu's special programs is that each offers students an in-depth cross-cultural experience. That is obviously the case when students spend time in Central America or Russia, Europe, China, or the Middle East. But in addition, Bernbaum says, both the nation's capital and the film capital of the world can in a very real sense be considered different cultures, defined in terms of distinctive world-views, customs, and priorities.

Bernbaum observes, "You find in Washington, D.C., a culture where power rules. It's an eye-opening experience for students encountering that culture for the first time. Part of the experience is the irony of seeing so many homeless and powerless people so near to the nation's center of power."

Likewise, the culture in which the

(Continued on page 100)

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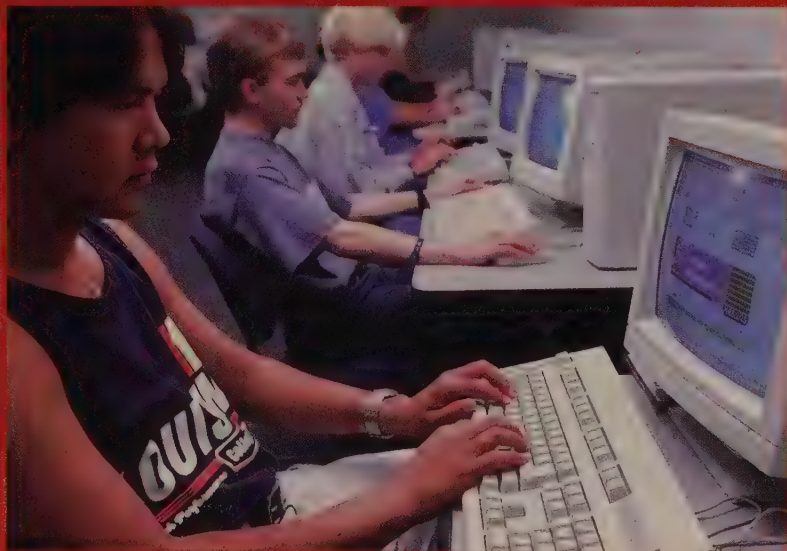
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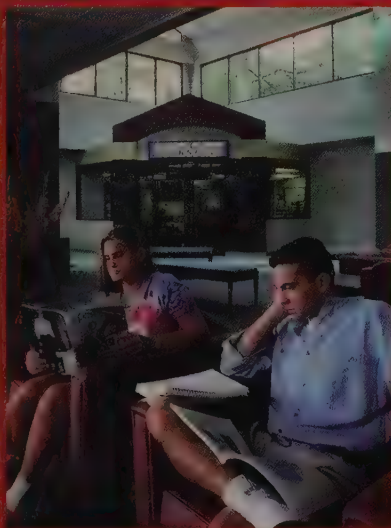
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film industry thrives is a culture all its own, though it is radically different from the culture on the Atlantic coast. Some Christians maintain that Hollywood's values and the values of the faith are incompatible; the CCCU's Los Angeles Film Studies Center program challenges that notion.

The purpose of the program is to enable Christian students from CCCU institutions around the country to become salt and light in the film industry. During their semester in L.A., students live in spacious corporate apartments near Burbank, just minutes away from Warner Brothers, Universal Studios, NBC, and Walt Disney Studios. The film center is equipped with classroom space, a small library, a collection of films on video, and labs for editing and other filmmaking activities.

Based on their opportunities to meet and interact with Christians who are active in the film industry, students come to realize that Christian values and the

entertainment industry are not necessarily incompatible. In addition to course work and the opportunity to learn and practice filmmaking skills, students intern at Hollywood companies, giving them a real-life experience in the industry. Among other things, they have had the opportunity to read scripts and to influence decisions on which ones to buy and which to reject.

As with all the CCCU programs, the L.A. program emphasizes the relationship between faith and learning. Also like the others, it has proved to be a life-changing experience. "In a number of ways," states one student, "this semester has been my trip to Oz. While there are no yellow brick roads in this city, I have found myself on a journey of sorts. Instead of searching for the Wizard, I have been searching for God's plan for my future."

Another writes, "I've learned more being immersed in this environment than I ever could have

(Continued on page 102)

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(from page 100)

by studying it from afar. It can't be imitated, and nothing else compares to it."

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In addition to being an outlet for students who have a specific area of interest, the CCCU's specialized academic offerings give young Christian men and women the chance to test the waters and to explore their interests. Some may find after spending a semester in Washington, D.C., or Los Angeles that they want to move in a different career direction. Though students are limited to a single semester per program, they may participate in more than one program.

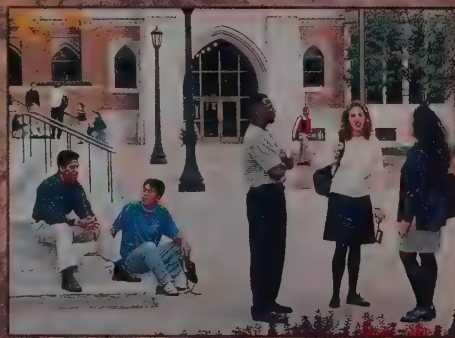
Herbert, Bernbaum, and many others believe that the specialized academic and cultural opportunities offered by these CCCU programs go a long way toward helping students choose a Christian college. Admittedly, the Washington program is

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not a substitute for a specialized program in international law or domestic policy. Neither is the Los Angeles program a substitute for film school. But for the many young Christian men and women who graduate from high school each spring—as well as for their parents—acquiring a solid spiritual and intellectual grounding in the Christian faith remains a high priority.

The CCCU programs enable students to acquire that foundation without having to sacrifice specialized academic training and significant field experiences in their area of interest. They allow students to reap the benefits of a small-community atmosphere without becoming isolated from the world's many problems and exciting opportunities. In short, by giving Christian colleges—no matter how small—extension campuses around the world, the programs offered by the CCCU represent the best of both worlds.

By L. Katherine Robbin, a freelance writer in Philadelphia.

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believers?**

Gallup released a poll not long ago showing that a bare 5 percent of Americans harbor "a great deal of confidence" in Congress—down from 42 percent just 30 years ago. When so many Americans see congressmen as self-seeking junketeers in the pocket of special interests, it's refreshing to know one who breaks the mold.

Frank Wolf (R-Va.) is not much at glad-handing, and he shies away from the limelight. For his serene optimism, critics have labeled him naïve. His travels are not the typical junkets to posh resorts or embassy parties but risky excursions to outposts ravaged by war and famine—especially to places where fellow Christians are persecuted for their faith.

His most recent journey took him to Tibet, where he posed as a tourist, eluded the tour guide by pretending to be ill, and then sneaked out to talk to Tibetans on the street for the real story of Chinese repression. Another expedition took him to Sudan, a nation waging a self-described religious war against its own citizens who are Christians or other non-Muslims through a campaign of torture, starvation, and murder. Sudanese soldiers are literally snatching children from their mothers' arms and selling them into slavery for the price of a few head of cattle. Girls are sold as concubines.

Wolf has journeyed to East Timor to report on massacres conducted by the Indonesian government. He has dodged bombs in Nagorno Karabakh. He has investigated conditions in El Salvador, Bosnia, and Ethiopia. Instead of enjoying the plush accommodations he could command as a government official, Wolf toughs it out with ordinary people for a first-hand sense of their plight.

Before the fall of the Iron Curtain, Wolf tramped throughout Eastern Europe championing for freedom. He was the first American official to bulldog his way into the notorious Perm Camp 35 in the Siberian gulag, where leading dissidents were imprisoned. Upon returning, he publicized the religious and political abuses they reported and arranged for me to join a second group visiting the camp. Due to Wolf's tenacity, the Soviets released many prisoners even before the USSR collapsed.

What makes this unusual politician so different? The secret is his Christian faith. His inspiration is William Wilberforce, the nineteenth-century British politician and passionate evangelical who spent his life crusading against the slave trade.

For his indefatigable efforts, Wolf has won grudging respect even from people on the opposite side of his conservative politics. Liberal columnist Mary McGrory calls him "a watchman on the rampart of world free-

dom." Former Democratic congressman Lionel Van Deerlin describes Wolf as one of "a special breed," who "seem attracted to public office to fulfill more than personal or political ends." Men like Wolf, he adds, "sustain a flicker of hope in the elective process."

Yet the reason we're writing this is not merely to spotlight a courageous Christian, nor to boost confidence in the political system. Rather, it's because Wolf and everything he stands for is about to be tested. And so are we.

Congress will soon be taking up the Freedom from Religious Persecution Act, introduced by Wolf with Sen. Arlen Specter (R-Pa.), which would impose sanctions on nations that persecute people for their religious faith—places like Sudan, Egypt, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Vietnam, and China. The act started out as a motherhood measure: Who could possibly be against protecting people from religious persecution? The bill quickly won widespread support, and congressional leaders promised to bring it to a vote.

But then a horde of lobbyists swarmed to Capitol Hill like bees from a hive, representing industries with big money at stake. Sanctions against Sudan? Why, that country is the world's leading supplier of gum arabic, a key ingredient in soft drinks and candy. How could Americans do without their Coca-Cola and Fanta? And China—that's a market of a billion people, who already do brisk business with Boeing.

Suddenly, members of Congress grew deaf to the horrors and human-rights violations perpetuated by these nations. Congressional leadership fell silent about scheduling a vote. The Clinton administration joined the opposition. The bill itself was watered down until what remains is largely symbolic.

Even so, the act remains a test of our values as a nation: Will we uphold the American commitment to defend inalienable rights, or will we sell out to a cash-register foreign policy? This is a defining moment for Frank Wolf, who stands in the gap on religious freedom, and for us all. What do we really believe as a nation? Are we willing to tolerate slavery? Will we continue giving aid to nations that burn churches, jail pastors, torture religious believers? Will we listen to big business and close our ears to the cries of those who are beaten and bleeding for their religious faith?

Or is there a point at which we draw the line?

If the Freedom from Religious Persecution Act is not passed, we will know that America has lost its capacity for even elementary moral outrage, that we have grown totally self-obsessed, that we are willing to sell our soul to feed our addiction to soft drinks and candy.

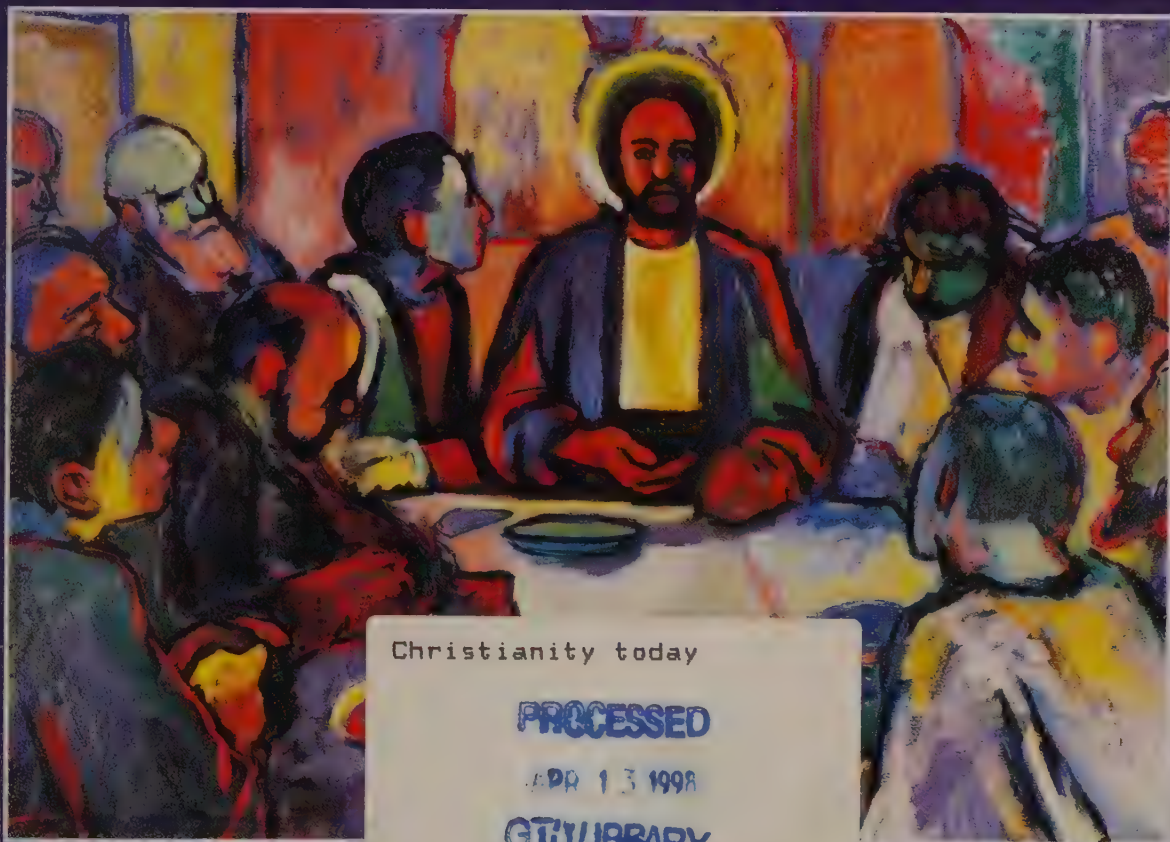
May it not be so.

CT

J. I. Packer, Passionate Puritan • News: Women in Search of Joy

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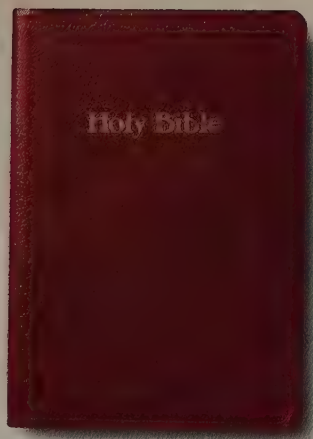
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CHRISTIANITY TODAY®

Volume 42, No. 4

April 6, 1998

A Magazine of Evangelical Conviction



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David Neff,
Executive Editor

Agent Mulder Does Art

INSIDE CT

The peripatetic Karen Mulder (who “curated” the gallery of Passion Week art that begins on page 42) experienced some culture shock as she moved from Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut, to Union University in Jackson, Tennessee, last September. But that was nothing compared to what she felt in 1991 when she moved from L’Abri Fellowship in the Swiss Alps to Southern California. For this native New Yorker, California seemed as strange as Libya, where she visited her parents numerous times while she was in college.

The daughter of an oil company executive, Karen grew up in Venezuela (she is fluent in Spanish) and Australia. Today, she continues to travel and speak all over the world—in China, Australia, England, the Continent. She is heavily involved in planning the arts workshops for “Loose in the Fire,” a two-week interdisciplinary conference to be held July 19 to August 1 in Oxford and Cambridge to commemorate the hundredth anniversary of C. S. Lewis’s birth.

Karen has been a key player in a number of efforts to connect and encourage Christians in the arts. She has been involved with the C. S. Lewis Foundation since 1991, and with Christians in the Visual Arts since 1986. In the early eighties she cofounded Christians in the

Arts Networking (CAN)—an organization that got a great boost in membership thanks to a 1983 article by CT’s administrative editor, Carol Thiessen.

Karen has written about the arts for CT on many occasions and is serving as CT’s arts editor. Readers of arts journals will want to watch for her forthcoming article in *Inklings* on Sister Wendy, the accidental art critic who has re-engaged PBS viewers with painting. What does Karen think of this cultural arbiter in a wimple? Although she doesn’t agree with all of Sister Wendy’s artistic assessments, Karen is glad to see her warming the public’s heart towards art.

Like Sister Wendy, most of Karen’s preparation to teach art history is informal. (During her sojourn at L’Abri, she studied art history intensely.) But more recently, Karen spent two years in a more formal and rigorous setting at Yale’s Institute for Sacred Music and the Arts. There, as the Menil Scholar, she wrote a thesis on a living German stained-glass artist and was given the Aidan Kavanaugh Award for Distinguished Intellectual Achievement.

Now at Union University, Karen (who used to sail) is landlocked but loving it. Along with her specialized classes in art history and photography, she is teaching the art history and music history survey courses that all liberal arts students must take. “It’s my one chance to proselytize for the arts early on,” she says with evangelistic enthusiasm. CT

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



A Finite Elasticity

■ Roger Olson's article "The Future of Evangelical Theology" [Feb. 9] provided a helpful summary of the multifaceted divisions among evangelicals, although I think Tom Oden's chal-

lenge of Olson's traditionalist/reformist paradigm was a needed corrective. Olson was almost successful in writing in a non-pejorative fashion, but his sympathies appeared in general to line up with the reformists' emphases.

Oden's use several times of the term *heresy* reminds us that biblical error should be taken seriously, lest we be guilty of "dances with wolves." There are, indeed, occasions in which the right thing to do is to call someone to recant.

Someone needs to ask the question: at what point does one cease to be an evangelical? The term itself, like other words, has only a finite elasticity.

Prof. Larry Dixon
Columbia International University
Columbia, S.C.

■ I commend Roger Olson for his sincere desire for unity and peace in the evangelical movement, but despair at his statement that "the various positions in these evangelical debates do not themselves call into question our core commitments."

The core commitments of evangelicals have always included belief in God's omniscience, including his comprehensive knowledge of future events; we have always believed that, though it may be correct to say that God in some way responds to events in history, he is in not "in process" so as to be changed by them; we have always affirmed that the revelation of creation is not sufficient for the salvation of the lost and that they must hear the gospel of Christ in order to be saved. These and other core commitments are denied by some or all of those whom Olson terms reformist evangelicals.

I hope all evangelicals will realize that the long agreed-upon foundations of our faith are at stake in these matters and will respond with the uniquely Christian combination of kindness and firmness that is appropriate.

Pastor Ben Gildner
Wyoming Community Church
Wyoming, Minn.

Also, he should resist using such shrill language as "teeming infestation of heresy," "waning theological liberals," "demonic temptation," and "bewitchment." It reveals a temperament at odds with his commending of "charity" and "love and dialogue." And, I think, it betrays a lack of confidence in his own position.

Wes Davis
Lincoln, Del.

■ I will confine my remarks to a few observations concerning the fine section on evangelical theology: (1) There would be no traditionalists without reformers. Lutheranism is traditional. Luther was a reformer; (2) There can be no reformers without traditionalists. I'm not saying there must be a tradition in order to reform it—which is true nonetheless—but that there is a tradition of truth to reform those traditions that have strayed from it, which was established by God himself from the beginning; (3) God does not tell us everything. Our insistence that we know what God has not made clear is what divides us. We must be willing to admit that maybe we just don't know some things we think we know. (4) We all tend to delude ourselves to the effectiveness of our own theological ecclesiology. In a blind confession I requested of several confirmands in my church, only one would admit to faith in Jesus Christ; (5) Of my contact with members of other denominations, the doctrines that I find people know the best are the very ones that divide us. These last two items are pathetic. The only solution that demonstrates the unity between true believers is acknowledging the truth in the tension and how both sides are needed to complete the body of Christ.

Jim Pemberton
Statesville, N.C.

■ I am so thankful for the *presence* of so many evangelicals that I do not worry as I once did about the future of the group. In our growth, we make mistakes and take side trips, but the Holy Spirit is still

working to guide us as we seek to understand the fullness of the inspired Word. In the early forties, I could not find a Bible-believing seminary, but look at the many we have today. When I began teaching Bible and theology, it was difficult to find reliable textbooks. How it has changed. We need to examine ourselves, but we need also to learn from one another as we seek to know God and his Word more fully.

Kenneth E. Jones
Louisville, Ky.

Roger Olson Responds

Oden's and George's responses to my essay seem to me somewhat overblown in terms of defensiveness and at times even border on offensiveness. They certainly do not bode well for the future of mutual respect, dialogue, and understanding among evangelicals who feel called to somewhat differing tasks. There is room within the evangelical theological community for *both* staunch defense of the Great Tradition of the church universal and ongoing examination of its details in light of God's Word.

What I find ironic is that both Oden and George are adherents of theological traditions that began with very controversial reforming achievements. Oden's Methodism was considered fanatical, sectarian, and even heretical (semi-Pelagian) by defenders of tradition during its infancy under the Wesleys in the eighteenth century. Even today some traditionalists reject it as inherently heterodox because of its denial of irresistible grace and affirmation of Christian perfection. George's Baptist tradition was looked upon the same way by almost all other groups of Protestants when it was budding in the seventeenth century and flowering in the eighteenth century. Both Methodist and Baptist traditions are essentially reforms of the Reformation tradition.

To slam the evangelical theological door shut on any ongoing reform today is ironic and inconsistent—especially from within these reforming traditions. While every evangelical ought to respect the great heritage of the universal church—especially the landmarks of early church doctrinal achievements and basic principles of the Protestant Reformation—above all, every evangelical ought to hold firmly to the sole supreme authority of God's Word. I fear we are in danger of falling into the error of two equal sources

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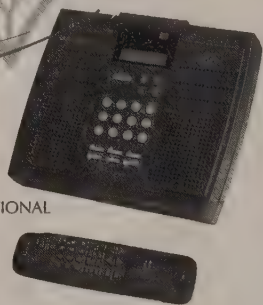
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of absolute authority—Scripture *and* tradition. Questioning the authority of some part of tradition in no way makes one a “freelance religious thinker” disconnected from the life of the church. Instead, it can be the mark of a true servant of the church in helping it rethink its doctrines and reform its life in the light of God’s Word.

*Prof. Roger E. Olson
Bethel College & Seminary
St. Paul, Minn.*

Christians’ Mental Health

► Congratulations on what is perhaps the best CT in recent years! I was particularly satisfied with Dwight Carlson’s article [“Exposing the Myth That Christians Should Not Have Emotional Problems,” Feb. 9]. My wife is a therapist with Meier-New Life Clinic here in Texas, and she and I have found it particularly challenging at times to convince well-meaning Christian people that it is OK to need the help of a Christian mental-health professional. The Carlson article and the Arterburn interview provide an articulate tool for educating church people who are suffering.

*Pastor Charles W. Christian
North Dallas Church of the Nazarene
Dallas, Tex.*

As a pastor and Christian, I could become depressed reading this article. It’s plain to me that sin is the root of emotional disorders. If sin was not the problem and all is OK with the “patient,” why is any kind of therapy necessary at all? Sin is the problem if we define sin biblically. One definition is that sin is “falling short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). Certainly people having emotional problems are falling, to some degree, short of the glory of God, Christian or non-Christian.

A second definition of sin is “Whatsoever is not of faith” (Rom. 14:23). Such was the case of Martin Luther’s depression—“the context of depression was always the same, the loss of faith that God is good and that he is good to me.” God’s remedy for depression or similar emotional problems is not counseling or therapy. It is to “put on the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness” (Isa. 61:3).

I gather from Carlson’s article that Luther confessed during one of his bouts with depression, “Christ was wholly lost.” Therefore, would not Christ be his answer? Why then is either counseling or therapy necessary? Except possibly to point the “patient” to Christ, who is our sufficiency.

*Pastor Van Gale, Sr.
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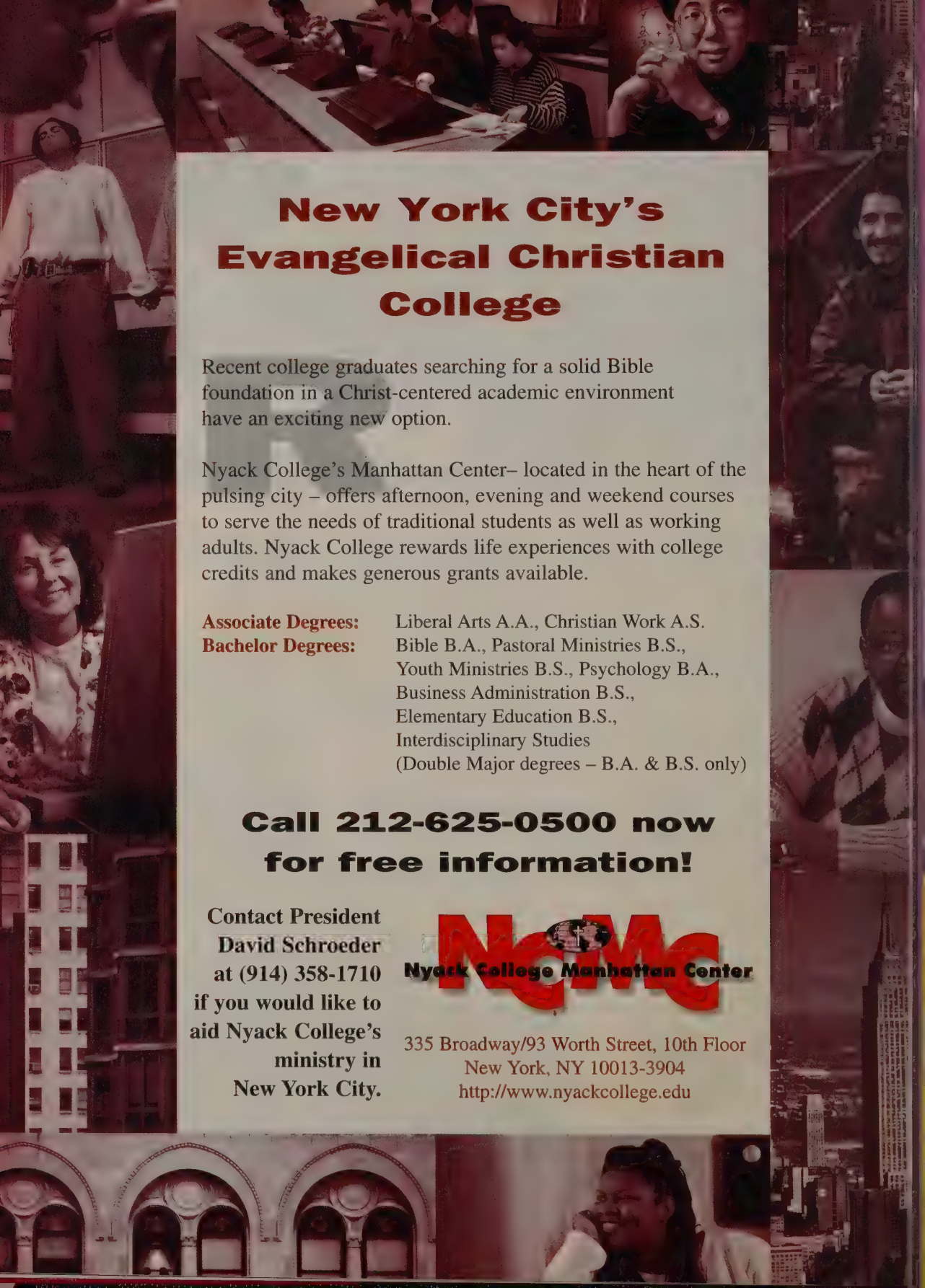
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☐ Telling a Christian with severe depression to "snap out of it" through prayer, Bible reading, or repentance is like telling a Christian with cancer to "get over it." Because we live in a fallen world, people do get emotional problems in the same way they get cancer or heart disease. I agree with MacArthur that our sufficiency is in Christ. Yet as a faithful Wesleyan, I would have to say that our Great Physician is channeled through some "extraordinary means"—that is, a well-grounded therapist and medication. People are channels of grace, and medication can be too if God so chooses.

Bill Ivins
Odessa, Tex.

Carlson has written a fine article. He left out an important piece: the role of the demonic. The Gospels show it, Luke 8 or Mark 5, and there are emotional and psychological overlaps in the passages. The first three centuries of the Christian church affirm the same, as does contemporary experience.

Dean Hochstetler
Nappanee, Ind.

Truth Worse Than Our Fears

☐ L. Gregory Jones has given us a marvelous look at the possibilities of forgiveness in the Christian arena ["How Much Truth Can We Take?" Feb. 9]. I lived in South Africa from 1972-77 and 1985-93. I preached love and forgiveness. I taught Bible college students from every tribe. I saw the anger, fear, hatred, and horrors of apartheid up close and personal. I wept with my black colleagues and often argued with my white friends. I'm certain I could have and should have done much more. For the sake of a work visa I sometimes remained silent. Please forgive me.

I've been in and out of South Africa during the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's work. The truth is actually worse than our worst fears. That forgiveness from victims is being given is testimony to the cry for freedom that lives in every heart. The resistance to forgiveness in some is testimony that we are often bound by our sinful natures. That even one victim can forgive in South Africa's story of hate is proof that God's grace is still greater than all our sin.

Jim Grams
Springfield, Mo.

☐ I attend North Park Seminary and I have heard at least three people talk about the article in the last week up front in class

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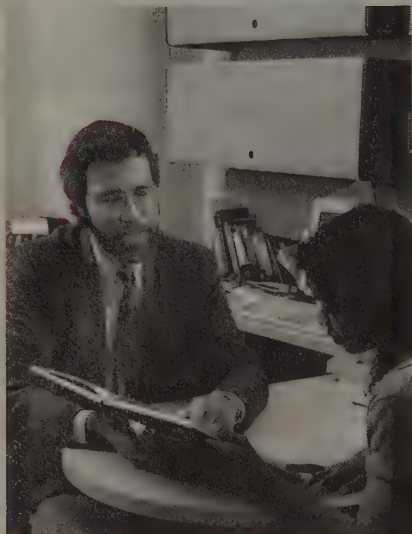
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Bert de Vries

Ph.D. from Brandeis; expert in archaeology

and world history; former director of the American Center of Oriental Research in Amman, Jordan; Albright Fellow of the American Schools of Oriental Research; directed reconstruction at Umm el-Jimal for the Department of Antiquities of Jordan; history professor at Calvin.



Ronald A. Wells

Ph.D. from Boston University; author of *History Through the*

Eyes of Faith: Western Civilization and the Kingdom of God (Harper & Row, 1989); expert in Northern Ireland's history and sectarian conflict; director of the nationally known interdisciplinary Calvin Center for Christian Scholarship; professor of history at Calvin.

and at a conference. It has a prophetic edge and is getting people talking.

Heidi Griep
Chicago, Ill.

The Pensacola Revival

Casual readers of Steve Rabey's informative article on the Brownsville Revival may have mistakenly inferred that the *Pensacola News Journal* actually uncovered some financial irregularities occurring in the revival [News, Feb. 9]. Thankfully, no such irregularities have occurred and the impact and scope of the revival continues to increase, in spite of the charges raised by the *Journal*. (Those seeking a response to the most serious accusations can consult Brownsville's official Web site at brownsville-revival.org.) While we welcome constructive correction and reproof, we cannot be sidetracked by false allegations, and it remains our profound and sacred joy to give our attention instead to help wake up a slumbering church and touch a lost world.

Michael L. Brown, President
Brownsville Revival School of Ministry
Pensacola, Fla.

Prophecy in Advertising

For the last two months you have carried a full-page announcement of "Israel's Jubilee" to be held April 29–May 3, 1998, in Orlando, Florida. The ad states: "In May of 1948, after almost 2000 years of wandering, the modern state of Israel was born. Jesus said the generation that sees this will not pass away before His return..."

Jesus did not say this, and the statement is not found in Scripture. It is amazing to see the amenability of religious teachers in assuming things are true when they are not.

Harry J. Bower
Asheville, N.C.

Jesus' statement about a generation that would "not pass away" can be found in Mark 13:30 and Matthew 24:34. Neither context mentions the re-establishment of the state of Israel, but instead focuses on the desecration of the temple and the intense persecution of God's people.

—Ed

Brief letters are welcome. They may be edited for space and clarity and must include the writer's name and address if intended for publication. Due to the volume of mail, we cannot respond personally to individual letters. Write to Eutychus, CHRISTIANITY TODAY, 465 Gundersen Drive, Carol Stream, IL 60188; fax: 630/260-0114. E-mail: cteddit@aol.com (✉).

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The Lesson of Karla Faye Tucker

Evangelical instincts against her execution were right, but not because she was a Christian.

When Timothy McVeigh was on trial for the Oklahoma City bombing, a Denver radio station set up a checkpoint where people could honk their horns if they thought McVeigh was guilty and ought to be executed. In just a few days, over 24,000 Coloradans honked their judgment that McVeigh should be "fried." The enormity of McVeigh's deed knocked many death-penalty fence sitters off the rail: If ever there was a case in which capital punishment is justified, they thought, this is it.

But then, on the heels of the McVeigh trial, the case of Karla Faye Tucker upset the usual alignments on capital punishment (see p. 19). A Texas woman who killed two people with a pickax, Tucker was later born again and then executed for her crimes. Rich Cizik, policy analyst for the National Association of Evangelicals, said, "It's no secret that evangelicals have been stalwarts behind the death penalty." But Tucker's execution, he said, produced a "moral revulsion" among evangelicals "because she is a woman of such obvious spiritual change." This change led Pat Robertson and other conservative leaders to plead her case. "Any justice system that is worthy of the name must have room for mercy," said Robertson. Executing Tucker "is more an act of vengeance than it is appropriate justice."

Some of the usual death-penalty opponents were skeptical, saying such leaders would not be able to hold to that position for long. "Conservative voters will start to ask," said Samuel Jordan of Amnesty International, "Well, if I think it's OK to commute the death sentence this time, is it just for women that we're doing this, or for male prisoners as well?"

But Pat Nolan, senior vice president of Prison Fellowship Ministries (PFM), predicted "a lot of conversations around the dinner table and hopefully in the pews. . . . I hope this will continue to be discussed and prayed about."

Conversation starter

As we continue this prayerful conversation, here are some things to consider:

The death penalty as it is practiced in this country is unfair and discriminatory. For those of us who support the death penalty as a moral abstraction, here are some troubling facts: On average, only one in a thousand murderers is executed. Race, class, and geography are the best predictors of who will get the death sentence for first-degree murder. If the victims are white and the perpetrators are poor minorities who commit their crimes in one of a handful of mostly southern states, their chances are greatest of receiving the death penalty. Nearly 90 percent of



persons executed are convicted of killing whites, yet people of color are the victims of homicide in a majority of cases. Slightly over half of the executions since 1976 have been in Texas, Virginia, and Florida.

The legal resources available to poor people are woefully inadequate. The American Bar Association (ABA) cites examples of lawyers being assigned to murder cases who had just passed their bar exam or had no previous criminal trial experience, and instances where the defense attorney is paid only \$800 per case with as little as \$500 for expenses. "In case after case," an ABA report concludes, "decisions about who will die and who will live turn not on the nature of the offense the defendant is charged with committing, but rather on the nature of the legal representation the defendant receives." This unconscionable situation was exacerbated by get-tough-on-crime laws passed by Congress in 1996, which curtailed postconviction appeals and withdrew federal funding from organizations that support postconviction proceedings. Such uneven and inequitable application of death-penalty provisions prompted the ABA in February 1997 to call for suspension of the death penalty. And former Justice Lewis Powell, the author of the 1976 Supreme Court ruling reinstating the death penalty, has said he regrets his involvement in that decision more than anything else during his tenure on the Court.

Even worse than inadequate defense is the execution of the falsely convicted. According to a study entitled *In Spirit of Innocence* (1992), at least 23 innocent people have been executed in this century. And since 1972, 69 people wrongly convicted have been released from death row—21 of them since 1993. What has become of the principle

that it is better that a few guilty people go free than that one person be falsely convicted?

The death penalty does not deter. Since the death penalty was reinstated in 1976, the number of executions and the death-row population have grown significantly. Yet the murder rate has remained essentially the same. In fact, a majority of the states that practice capital punishment have higher murder rates than those that don't. And the U.S. murder rate is anywhere from five to twenty times that of other industrialized nations without the death penalty.

The death penalty does not deter, because murder often happens in the heat of the moment. And those who premeditate murder are willing to take the risk they won't get caught.

Society needs to work at the conditions that breed violent crime. Police chiefs, in a 1995 Hart Research poll, ranked the death penalty dead last as an option for deterring violent crimes. Their preferred strategies included reducing drug abuse, providing jobs, simplifying court rules, lengthening prison sentences, and reducing availability of guns (in that order). They know from experience what scholars have learned from statistics: (1) that when crime statistics are controlled for employment, there is little difference between blacks and whites (economic justice is as important as retributive justice); (2) child abuse increases the chance of juvenile delinquency 40 times (we need to get to the would-be criminals before they toughen up).

The death penalty fails to console. Does the death penalty ease the suffering of a murder victim's survivors who suffer from their sense of loss, from self-blame, and (oddly enough) from the criminal justice system? Whereas biblical law treated crime as an offense against a victim, it is now treated more as an offense against the state. And instead of setting things right between offender and victim, our criminal justice system pits the state against the accused. Victims are often helpless observers of a process that does not address their needs at a time when they are most needy.

Indeed, the state can provide some, but not all, of what survivors of violent crime need: a sense of protection against the crime being repeated; places, times, and rituals for lamenting their loss; knowledge that a guilty party has been identified; and a sentence that shows the crime is taken seriously.

Vengeful feelings are natural, but vengeful acts are ultimately counterproductive as they retraumatize the survivor. Nevertheless, survivors should never be pressed to forgive too quickly. They need time and communal support to weave into the story of their lives this horrendous turn of events. Fortunately, organizations like Neighbors Who Care, a PFM subsidiary, have emerged and are turning this need into a ministry of the church. Christian compassion can comfort the afflicted. More executions cannot.

Rebuking the spirit of vendetta

As evangelicals engage in dialogue about the death penalty, we should keep in mind two parallel streams of biblical thought about crime and punishment: One of them focuses on justice, the other on ending violence, while both of them are designed to break the cycle of vengeance.

The justice-oriented stream of thought emphasizes *limiting* vengeance. There, for example, we hear Moses utter the famous "eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth"—a law designed to limit reprisals by keeping them proportional.

Human nature inevitably escalates the measure of our retaliation above our loss in order to show who is boss. As Lamech boasted: "I have slain a man for wounding me, a young man for striking me" (Gen. 4:23). But the law of God always seeks to limit punishment to the proper proportion and the proper agent. Thus Paul recognized a legitimate role for the admittedly oppressive Roman government (Rom. 13:1-5): the magistrate bears the sword as a terror to evildoers.

The law of Moses put the brakes on vengeance, but the other stream of biblical thought calls for its end. God's first, and perhaps most characteristic, response to murder was not law but grace: he placed a protective mark on Cain, protecting him from those who would avenge Abel's blood, and warning others of a dangerous man.

In Leviticus, the Lord commanded: "You shall not take vengeance or bear any grudge against the sons of your own people." Here the Old Testament anticipated Jesus' teaching: "You have heard it said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say to you, Do not resist one who is evil. But if any one strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also." Paul likewise proclaimed that vengeance is reserved for God and that Christians should feed their enemies, overcoming evil with good (Rom. 12:19-21).

Jesus' counsel of nonresistance has as its goal not only crushing the spirit of vendetta, but also reconciliation (a goal embodied in victim-offender reconciliation programs that have proved effective where tried).

Jesus' teaching of nonresistance is difficult to live out on a societal level. Not all evangelicals (indeed, not all evangelicals who edit CHRISTIANITY TODAY) agree on how to apply Jesus' teaching of nonresistance to public policy. But it seems clear that the gospel demands that in ministry, Christians work more for reconciliation than for retribution, and that in public life we work against the spirit of revenge so cruelly displayed by the crowds outside many sites of execution.

When the death penalty becomes a political football, partisan rhetoric tends to stress *justice*—a code word for *payback*—and appeal to our carnal appetite for revenge. Whatever public policy we deem wisest, we must resist that kind of rhetoric. For while murderers clearly *deserve* to lose their lives, Christians know that we all deserve death, and the ethic of Jesus drives us to spend most of our limited energies in the relationally complex and costly task of reconciliation.

Jesus' own life and death show the cost of a ministry of reconciliation. His sacrifice was not only an act of justice, a substitute for the all penalties richly deserved by the sinful world God so loved, but was also an act of reconciliation, absorbing in himself the shock of all the world's vengeance.

However we learn to apply these biblical themes of reconciliation and the abhorrence of vengeance in the public sphere, it seems clear that the death penalty has outlived its usefulness. It has not made the United States a safer country or a more equitable one. The potential of life imprisonment without parole and other protective measures, however, offer better options for the state, which must continue to deal with 20,000 murders each year. 

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FINANCIAL CRISIS

Promise Keepers Staff Lose Jobs

Promise Keepers (PK) on February 18 told its 345 full-time staffers they would no longer be paid after March 31, the result of a financial crisis precipitated by the move from a fee-based income for men's meetings to donor contributions.

However, the 19 PK conferences planned for this year remain scheduled. Last fall, the PK board of directors unanimously supported founder Bill McCartney's call for removing the \$60 admission fee for stadium events. The fees had provided 72 percent of the organization's income.

McCartney issued a challenge on February 19 for churches to support the ministry. "Now, as the fees to all events are removed, it is time for churches to assist us in our mission to men."

Refuting a *Detroit Free Press* report, McCartney told CT that he did not say "it was the will of God" for every church in the country to donate \$1,000 to PK. "I do believe the churches need to recognize that God's hand is on this min-

istry," McCartney told CT. "We're calling the churches to join together. Wherever that happens, God moves." McCartney told CT the news does not sound the death knell for PK. Donations covered the entire \$9 million cost of last October's Stand in the Gap gathering in Washington, D.C. (CT, Nov. 17, 1997, p. 62).

Since January, seven regional pastors' conferences have brought in \$1 million in pledges from more than 1,000 churches. On average, it costs \$1 million to stage one PK stadium event, according to public affairs director Stephen Ruppe. He says PK expected a higher amount in donations to be sent. Ruppe says PK has not filed for bankruptcy. The organization owns its Denver office headquarters, has no outstanding loans, and "is on a normal business cycle with vendors."

PK will restaff as the ministry's income from donations increases, according to Ruppe. A few paid staff have agreed to work as volunteers for an unspecified amount of time.



Bombshell: McCartney told staffers, "I have a broken heart."

Among those rallying to support PK is Campus Crusade for Christ founder Bill Bright, who says he has sent letters to thousands of pastors and laymen asking them to "help our brothers in need" in PK.

"There's been a lot of support for PK," says Paul Nelson, president of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability. "The news of this change will bring out supporters."

PK cut its budget and staff by 20 percent last summer (CT, Sept. 1, 1997, p. 90). In November, McCartney pledged there would be no further reductions. He said at the time, "If one can't get paid, then no one will be paid." □

Series Examines Christian Origins

The PBS documentary series *Frontline* turns its attention to the historical roots of the Christian faith in its lengthy and lavishly produced two-part program "From Jesus to Christ: The First Christians," airing nationwide April 6-7.

Three years in the making, the four-hour documentary brings ancient history to life through its stunning cinematography and creative use of visual materials and texts.

While the series does an excellent job putting Jesus and the early church in historical and social contexts, it does not suggest that Jesus or the faith he founded is in any way supernatural or divine.

New Testament scholar Craig Blomberg of Denver Seminary says the program "does not acknowledge distinctively evangelical perspectives at any point."

Scholars from Yale, Harvard, Duke, Brown, DePaul, Princeton, and Boston universities served as consultants. The Arthur Vining Davis Foundation helped finance the show.

By Steve Rabey.

YOUTH OUTREACH

Cruz Launches Anti-Gang Campaign

Former gang leader Nicky Cruz kicks off a 15-city U.S. tour this month to deliver his testimony of redemption to a new generation.

Dubbed TRUCE—To Reach Urban Children Everywhere—it incorporates television, inner-city multimedia drama, and the rerelease of Cruz's 1968 book *Run Baby Run*, now in 43 languages.

Born to Puerto Rican parents who practiced voodoo, Cruz fled to Brooklyn, New York, where, as a 16-year-old gang leader, he led followers

in beatings, robberies, terrorism, and killings. Then, 40 years ago, street preacher David Wilkerson led him to Christ. Wilkerson's *The Cross and the Switchblade*, a bestselling book and 1971 motion picture, brought Cruz's story to an earlier generation.

Cruz has spent the intervening years talking to youth in stadiums and churches around the globe. At age 59, Cruz, whose ministry is now based in Colorado Springs, holds "invasions" in violence-plagued neighborhoods, inviting gang

members to his rallies where he challenges them to turn from violence to Christ.

Cruz has no formal working relationships with other inner-city Christian ministries to gangs. Eugene Rivers of the National Ten-Point Lead-



Reaching youth: Cruz holds a gun surrendered at an altar call.

ership Foundation supports the work of Cruz but says it would be more effective by including more black leaders in reaching out to gangs.

Still, Cruz says he is reaching a lost generation. "I can smell the guts of the ghetto," he told CT. "These kids are young, hardened criminals who don't respond to parents, teachers, or the jail system," he says. "They receive a glorified message of gang activity every day in rap music, television, and films. They will respond to a message about God if it comes from others who have survived the same living hell."

By Rusty Wright in Washington, D.C.

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Execution protest: Betty Dunn prays outside Huntsville state prison in Texas.

Conservatives Rethink Death Penalty

Karla Faye Tucker had the support of the familiar religious opponents of the death penalty as her lawyers sought to stop her execution by lethal injection.

Pope John Paul II made a plea for clemency to Texas Gov. George W. Bush for the woman who 15 years ago used a pickax to hack two people

of vengeance than it is appropriate justice."

On a three-day drug and alcohol binge, Tucker and her male companion—who died in prison of liver disease in 1993—entered a Houston apartment intending to steal motorcycle parts. The murders resulted instead.

Tucker, 38, became a Christian soon after being imprisoned 14 years ago. On death row she became a bold witness for the Lord. In television interviews, the articulate, attractive, affable, born-again Christian came across as a gentle-spirited woman who had been both transformed and rehabilitated.

Yet, Bush let the execution proceed in Huntsville on February 3. It marked the first execution of a woman in Texas since 1863, and the first anywhere in the nation since 1984. Capital-punishment foes reasoned that if a state put to death someone as personable as Tucker, a psychological barrier against executing women had been broken.

Not all conservatives opposed the execution. Columnist Cal Thomas warned that an exception for Tucker would lead to a spate of jailhouse conversions. "To allow people convicted of past acts to be absolved by future acts would ruin what is left of the criminal-justice system," Thomas wrote. "Would Pat Robertson favor commuting her sentence if she had converted to some other faith?" [CT]



Last days: Tucker in the prison yard.

to death. National Council of Churches national secretary Joan Campbell Brown, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) president Richard Hamm, and United Church of Christ president Paul Sherry also sent a joint letter.

But several conservative Christians who have vigorously defended the death penalty in the past—including Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell—questioned the wisdom of executing Tucker, who became a Christian while in prison.

"She is not the same person who committed those heinous ax murders," said Robertson, who led a crusade for mercy on *The 700 Club*. "She is totally transformed, and I think to execute her is more of an act

REFERENDUM

Maine Repeals Homosexual Rights Law

Backed by the success of a get-out-the-vote effort to defeat a homosexual-rights law in Maine, a rejuvenated Christian Coalition is eyeing new links with churches around the country.

By a 51 percent to 49 percent margin, Maine on February 10 became the first state to repeal a homosexual-rights law, which had been passed by the state legislature last year to ban discrimination in employment, housing, and public accommodation. Christian Co-

alition maintained that the law provided "special rights."

The group helped distribute 240,000 voter guides in churches and mail another 100,000 postcards to registered voters. In the process, the Chesapeake, Virginia-based organization added 77,000 households to its mailing list.

The coalition then announced plans to recruit 100,000 "church liaisons" to help oppose forces such as gambling and pornography. [CT]

News Briefs

◆ **Operation Rescue** National director **Flip Benham** began serving a six-month jail sentence February 18 after being convicted of trespassing at E. C. Glass High School in Lynchburg, Virginia. On November 10, Benham led 150 Liberty University students in distributing anti-abortion literature and Christian tracts. Benham refused to leave after police informed him the demonstration posed a threat to public safety.

◆ **An Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)** disciplinary committee stripped the clergy credentials of Ames, Iowa, pastor Steve Sabin on February 3 after an ecclesiastical trial. The panel determined that Sabin, 38, can no longer lead Lord of Life Lutheran Church, because he is engaged in homosexual activity. ELCA rules allow homosexual clergy to be ordained only if they take a vow of celibacy. Sabin has been pastor of the 150-member congregation since 1985. He and his wife divorced in 1990, and he now lives with a man he met via the Internet. Sabin appealed the ELCA decision on March 4.

◆ **Carmen Pate** has been promoted to president of **Concerned Women for America (CWA)**, the nation's largest women's organization with 600,000 members. The post had been vacant since CWA founder Beverly LaHaye stepped down two years ago. LaHaye, 71, remains board chair of the organization she started in 1979. Pate, 43, joined CWA as vice president in 1996. The two women continue to cohost *Beverly LaHaye Live*, a 30-minute daily radio program.

◆ **Embattled National Baptist Convention USA** president Henry Lyons, 55, was charged February 25 with two counts of grand theft and one count of racketeering. State prosecutors accuse Lyons of diverting hundreds of thousands of church dollars into a secret bank account for personal use. Also charged is convicted embezzler Bernice Edwards, a former denominational employee. Lyons has survived several denominational no-confidence votes in the midst of criminal investigations (CT, Oct. 27, 1997, p. 102). [CT]



Benham



Pate

Restrictions on Religion Get Uneven Enforcement

Recent legislation that limited religious practice in Russia may not be fully enforced because of unresolved constitutional issues. But some local Russian leaders, citing provisions in the new measure, have sought to inhibit minority religious groups.

Official guidelines sent throughout Russia recommend a soft approach in dealing with religious organizations. Some of the clauses of the official advisory stand in sharp contrast to the controversial law passed last fall (CT, Nov. 17, 1997, p. 66).

In the meantime, however, the new law provides a ready means for discrimination against minority religious groups, including most Christian groups that are not Russian Orthodox. According to *World Churches Handbook*, there are about 23 million Russian Orthodox believers among Russia's 147 million people. However, research by Anatoly

Rudenko, head of the Russian Bible Society, projects that at best there are 3.3 million practicing Christians, including Orthodox, Catholics, and Protestants.

CONSTITUTIONAL CONFLICT: The temporary guidelines openly state that the new law contradicts the Russian Constitution by taking away citizens' rights. The new law requires annual re-enrollment of already registered religious entities that have existed in Russia fewer than 15 years. Specifying a time frame violates the federal constitution, which bans retroactive legislation. During the 15-year period, new religious groups operate with limited rights. The temporary guidelines suggest that for reregistration a religious group need only inform local authorities of its intent to continue. But they fail to protect underground churches, most of which have existed for more than 15 years but were never registered during the repressive Soviet era.

It is unclear if the final guidelines on the religion law will reflect the perspective of the temporary guidelines. So far, officials call the temporary guidelines an "internal document" without legal standing.

Also, the law does not provide for legal re-establishment of congregations disbanded by the Soviets following the 1917 Bolshevik revolution.

RESTRICTIONS IMPLEMENTED: Some Russian officials have taken advantage of the ambiguity, demanding that certain religious groups be shut down.

For example, in Jaroslavl, about 150 miles northeast of Moscow, local authorities have repeatedly threatened to close the Christian Center of the New Generation, a Pentecostal group, even though it

build. Other tactics include charging exorbitant permit fees and demanding bribes.

In the past, Moscow itself has been fairly immune from abuses of religious freedom. But current events in the capital point to increased hardship.

Local policy toward religion became clearer after Moscow mayor Yuri Luzhkov in recent months issued a series of decrees. A strong contender for the next presidential election, Luzhkov openly supports a more powerful role for the Moscow patriarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church.

Luzhkov created a hierarchy of religious confessions. Russian Orthodoxy, Muslims, and Jews are considered "highly esteemed." Representatives from these groups make up an official council to decide all religious issues, placing minority groups at a distinct disadvantage. Luzhkov

also gave the Moscow patriarchate preferential treatment by exempting it from paying taxes on any of its buildings and lands.

NEW WARNINGS: Western leaders and Russian activists have not abandoned efforts to ensure full religious freedom in Russia.

In January, a delegation of religious-freedom advocates arrived in Moscow for face-to-face meetings with Russian officials. According to

U.S. Rep. Chris H. Smith (R-N.J.), the delegation made it clear that abuses of religious rights would damage financial and diplomatic relations between Russia and the West.

Soon after, a group of high-ranking Russian officials attended a Heritage Foundation event in Washington, D.C., where they repeated reassurances that they intended to use the regulatory process to avoid implementing unconstitutional provisions in the law.

But Anatoly Pchelintsev, director of the Institute of Religion and Law in Moscow, accuses Russian officials of "saying one thing in America and another in Russia." On Voice of America, Pchelintsev said, "I believe that if we don't defend freedom of religion now in Russia we will not have a democracy." Pchelintsev warned that once the regulations are implemented, there will be "massive violations of human rights and freedom of religion."

There are more than 80 U.S.-based Protestant mission agencies operating in the Russian federation, with more than 1,100 personnel serving in the country.

By Beverly Nickles in Moscow.



Restricted minority: A Baptist church in Komi Republic opens a service with prayer.

conducts its activities in accordance with the new law. Church leaders have been told that, until reregistration, they must cease publishing their newspaper and producing audiotapes. They cannot purchase or distribute religious literature, and they cannot send missionaries.

Established by ten people in 1991, New Generation today has 1,500 members and eight congregations.

In addition to threats, some municipal officials are finding other ways to put pressure on non-Russian Orthodox churches.

In the city of Klin, about 40 miles north of Moscow, evangelical Baptist church pastor Anatoly Sokolov says the government increased his church's annual tax bill threefold. Failure to pay taxes could result in confiscation of church property. According to Sokolov, Orthodox churches are required to pay only 40 percent of their assessed taxes.

Another common method of hindering ministries is to raise the rent beyond a church's ability to pay. Most non-Orthodox congregations meet in rented facilities because construction costs are prohibitive or they have been denied permission to

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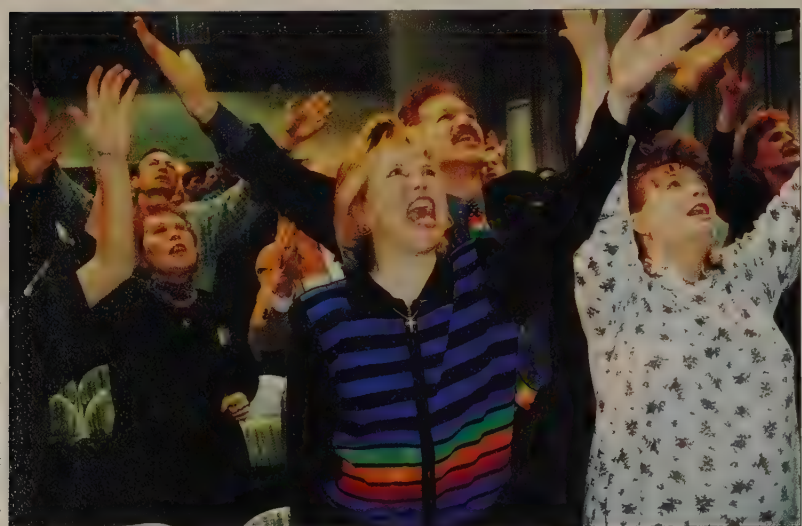
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The Cornfield Revival

For two years, thousands have been jumping for joy.

Steve Gray reached a crisis point in his ministry in March 1996. Although Gray had built up the Smithton Community Church from 13 to 180 people in a dozen years, he wondered whether he had missed a calling higher than being a rural pastor in a community of 532 souls.

Bruised by squabbles within his central Missouri congregation, Gray regretted that lives had not been transformed as he had hoped. Broken and in despair, Gray drove 1,000 miles to Pensacola, Florida, to the Brownsville Assembly of God revival (CT, March 3, 1997, p. 53). But while in Brownsville, contemplating leaving the ministry, Gray says he heard God telling him that revival would come to his own church. "I thought that sounded ridiculous," Gray, 45, told CT. "I was in a shambles myself. How could a broken man have a revival?" He would soon find out.

Two weeks later, just as he returned from Pensacola to a Smithton Community Church Sunday evening service, Gray says he experienced the power of God as never before. He began twirling and jumping, both new sensations. The presence of the Lord spread contagiously throughout the congregation, and continuous praise lasted for 45 minutes. People openly confessed their

sins and repented. Others, "slain in the Spirit," fell to the floor.

In the aftermath, Smithton's church members realized that a watershed event had occurred in the life of their non-denominational church. They agreed to meet nightly. Within three weeks, news of the revival spread, and outsiders began to flock to the revival meetings.

TRANSFORMED TOWN: Two years and hundreds of services later, the church continues to hold revival-oriented meet-



Pastoral team: Steve Gray preaches, plays keyboard, and composes worship songs; Kathy Gray sings and preaches.

ings five times a week: Wednesdays for corporate prayer, Thursdays for leadership training, and Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays for services.

The worship is marked by joyful shouting and high-octane praise choruses. Their jumping shakes the floor.

On average, about 300 visitors from throughout the United States and 250 members attend worship services, which routinely last three hours or more. Nearly all the members—from first graders to retirees—attend every service. Most have a job to do: leading worship, running the sound system, caring for infants, helping direct traffic, ushering, praying, interceding, and catching those who fall down.

Gray grew up in Sedalia, a city of 19,000, seven miles west of Smithton. He and his wife of 23 years, Kathy, spent seven years in a traveling music and evangelistic ministry before a few Smithton residents in 1984 convinced him to reopen the church that had closed four years earlier. The prospect of worshiping in a church sanctuary that smelled like dead mice did not make much sense, but Gray believed the Lord told him to restart the congregation.

HELPING HURTING PASTORS: In an unexpected way, the Smithton revival has given Gray that higher purpose he had been seeking. Gray has found himself becoming a pastor to pastors.

"Many people who come here are pastors who need to be ministered to, who need life to come back into their ministry," he says. "We want to try to help the devastated pastor." The church sometimes helps pay for airline tickets and motel rooms for bonafide pastors who want to visit but who do not have the money.

Near the end of each service, Smithton members pray specifically for pastors. "Hundreds of pastors have come and told me how terrible they've been treated by their congregations," he says. "This is a safe place for people to be restored."

Pastor Kent Kelso of the New Life Christian Church in Stillwater, Oklahoma, is one of Smithton's success stories. Kelso had struggled with many of the same problems that beset Gray, including internal church strife, depression, marital stress, and thoughts of leaving the ministry before he visited. Kelso says, "The sermons and prayers really touched my life. Steve and Kathy are good counselors." In the past year, Kelso's church has been touched by revival, and services are held there five nights a week.

MUSIC MINISTRY: The Smithton revival has stimulated intense spiritual growth in church members. Worship leader Eric Nuzum, 28, drove a forklift for a local factory before becoming associate pastor.

"I didn't want to give up my Friday and

Saturday nights at first," Nuzum says. "But now the joy of the Lord sustains us."

Nuzum and Gray, who has a bachelor's degree in music education, write many of the praise choruses. The fervor has attracted the attention of Integrity Music creative director Don Moen, who visited in February and committed to making an on-site recording. "We want to go where revival is happening, even in unlikely remote places," Moen says. "As with other 'revival' churches, there is a real repentance." Moen notes that the recording of live music from the Pensacola revival was Hosanna! Music's third-biggest seller last year.

CHURCH AS HOME: The small-town environment helps keep people committed to the Lord and to each other.

"We're doing something eternal here," Gray preached at a February service. "The things people are living for are tempo-

In addition to changes in individual lives, Smithton no longer looks like a backwater country church. A huge sound board sits in a high-tech loft. Overheads are computer-generated. Worship leaders wear wireless microphone headsets. An elaborate light-tracking system illuminates the stage. For ten years Gray had no support staff, or even an office telephone. Now there are six full-time workers.

Gray has no plans for upgrading his lifestyle—changes that Brownsville leaders have found to be controversial (CT, Feb. 9, 1998, p. 81). He lives in the same

house he did when he began preaching 14 years ago. And he has not sought a raise since revival began.

Whenever Gray is tempted to think of Smithton's accomplishments, there are town residents who remind him that they do not appreciate the attention, noise, and traffic that revival has brought. He expects services will continue only as long as needy people keep visiting. On the other hand, Gray is open to additional meetings. "The early church in Acts met *every day*," Gray says. "We're not doing that—yet."

By John W. Kennedy in Smithton.

MISSOURI



rary. We don't have time to run out for the latest video."

Indeed, attendees are not watching the clock. Worship, preaching, and prayer each takes at least an hour at services.

Testimonies tell of transformed lives. Terese and Mark Richards of Aberdeen, South Dakota, explained how they had trekked to Smithton in November in a last-ditch effort to save their marriage. "God's building our house, and it won't fall again," a tearful Terese Richards told the crowd.

Kudakwashe Mushaniga wants to take some of the fire back to Zimbabwe after she graduates from the University of Kansas at Lawrence. Every weekend she drives 110 miles to attend services.

Nola Lampe moved to the area from Centralia 85 miles away just to be near the church. She had suffered with fibromyalgia for seven years until a healing during the praise time a year ago. "I was in a wheelchair and I couldn't sleep from fatigue and pain," she says. "Now I can do all the things I used to do. It's been the best year of my life."

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Jordan Emerges As New Hub for Training Pastors

Evangelical school teaches Mideast students.

Imad Shehadeh labored for five years to open a seminary in his adopted homeland of Jordan. As he earned his degree in 1990 from Dallas Theological Seminary, the soft-spoken Shehadeh dreamed of opening a graduate school in Amman, the Jordanian capital, to serve as a base for Christians in a region that is more than 90 percent Muslim.

When he returned to Jordan, few endorsed his vision. Authorities in the Muslim country twice shut down Shehadeh for training without government approval. And many Christian leaders found his original doctrinal statement too restrictive.

But things began to change as Jordan's government worked through democratic reforms that liberalized the country.

Realizing he needed to have the government's support, Shehadeh applied again for permission to open a school. The government's Ministry of Culture not only granted approval for the school to open, but also wrote into the school's constitution an article allowing interfaith dialogue with Muslims.

STRATEGIC LOCATION: Today, Jordan Evangelical Theological Seminary (JETS) is in its third year of legal operation. The evangelical school has unprecedented freedoms in a Muslim country. In some Arabic-speaking countries, Muslims who convert to Christianity are in danger of losing their jobs, families, or lives.

By embracing a broad doctrinal statement, the 43-year-old Shehadeh, a refugee, has gained the support of numerous churches. Jordanian leaders from the country's five main denominations are on the seminary board.

Already the school has 28 resident and visiting faculty—half of them from Jordan. Nearly 150 students from nine Arabic-speaking countries—Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Morocco, Algeria, Egypt, and Sudan—have been accepted to study at the school.

The interdenominational school offers

undergraduate and graduate-level training. JETS does not have the governmental or access restrictions of other Christian schools in the Mideast.

Shehadeh says the Middle East

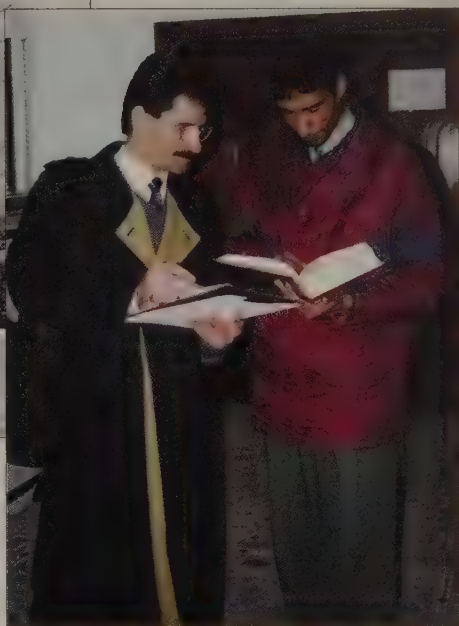
1994 have all been of strategic importance for JETS.

Nowhere is that seen more clearly than in the life of its students. For example, Rumail Yousef, an Iraqi electrician by trade, remained in Iraq while thousands of his countrymen fled after the Gulf War when United Nations sanctions began to cripple the country's economy. In the midst of economic woes, Baghdad's main evangelical church began to grow. From a core of 25 saints, the church now boasts attendance of 800 on Sundays.

Burgeoning growth meant a greater need for trained leadership, so in 1993 the church sent Rumail away to study theology before returning to help pastor the flock. But his visa to Egypt, where he had applied to study in the Presbyterian seminary in Cairo, never came. After a year's wait, he applied to study at the Baptist seminary in Lebanon, but authorities in that country also turned him away. So Rumail applied for admission in the bachelor's program at JETS. He saw no other alternative.



Training ground: Jordan Evangelical Theological Seminary meets in leased facilities and could use more room, but there is a good teacher-student ratio.



KIRK ALBRECHT PHOTOS

is experiencing unprecedented growth in the number of evangelicals. Yet there are not enough leaders to follow up new believers. Often churches are small, and local leadership has little theological training. But JETS is training 45 Iraqi students to return to a country with only a handful of seminary-trained pastors. JETS students are eager learners. Last year, students started three dozen home groups in an effort to gain experience in church planting.

REACHING INDIVIDUALS: Jordan's freedoms, its central location in the Middle East, and its peace with Israel since

"JETS can give me the best training I could get for ministry here in the Middle East, so God opened this door for me," says Rumail, who is being encouraged by professors to stay and finish a master's degree before returning to Baghdad.

Rumail is not alone. Behind impoverished Iraq, the second-highest percentage of JETS students come from war-torn Sudan. For these students, study in Beirut or Cairo is difficult because of political ten-



Shehadeh

sions. The hope is that most will return to minister in their own cultures. Because Jordan has friendly relations with both Sudan and Iraq, students can more easily come for training. JETS's reputation with Jordan's security forces means that students can obtain coveted student residence visas.

EXTENSION PROGRAMS:

The idea of an evangelical seminary in the Muslim-dominated Middle East may seem incongruous. Yet, there are at least 15 evangelical theological education institutes in the region, including seminaries, Bible schools, and extension learning programs.

Jordan is assuming a leadership role. Since 1981, the Program for Theological Education by Extension (PTEE) in Amman has trained more than 1,000 Christians in Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, and Iraq in Bible and theology. Through local churches, PTEE fills a crucial role in reaching potential leaders who cannot study in an institution due to location or cost.

"The issue isn't competition with schools like JETS," says PTEE executive director Richard Hart. "The issue is access. Our courses can help Christians identify gifts in ministry calling, which can lead to further training." PTEE is also less expensive: a class costs \$2, while one course at JETS is 20 times as much.

JETS and PTEE are founding members of a new group called Middle East Association for Theological Education. MEATE is trying to help its members share experiences with one another and the international community. "We're aware of what is happening internationally," says Hart. "Arab theological education can stand on its own—it has something to say to the West."

Jordan's openness has come under King Hussein, who has been in power since 1952. His younger brother—and designated successor—Prince Hassan has pushed Muslim-Christian relations to a new level with the opening of the Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies. The institute has established a working relationship with JETS, and Shehadeh has contributed an article to their journal on the topic "Do Muslims and Christians have the same God?"

CHALLENGES REMAIN: Limited space and finances are a problem for JETS. "We could easily accept a lot more students if we had the space, the faculty, and administrators," Shehadeh says. Last summer, JETS had 130 applicants;

only 11 could be admitted because of limited capacity.

JETS is meeting in rented quarters and needs \$2.5 million to buy land and build new facilities. In February, the Indianapolis-based Overseas Council (OC) announced a \$95,000 gift to JETS.

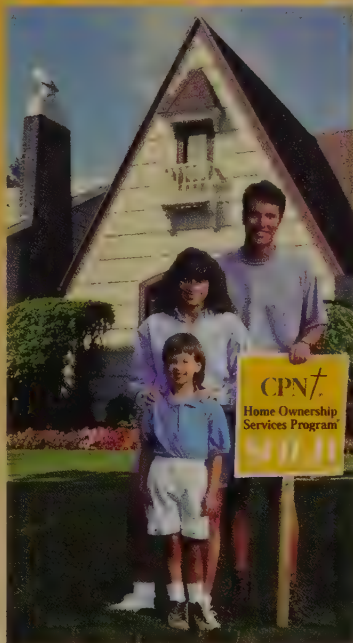
"When the door opened in Russia we were ready," says OC U.S. board chair Norm Miller. "We ought to be thinking about the same type of response in the Middle East."

JETS is young and faces many chal-

lenges. While the local church is encouraging, Arab believers have been unable to assume much financial support. Graduates will soon outnumber pastoral opportunities. Still, with an unreached population in the region of 200 million, the need for what JETS can help fill is waiting to be met.

"The home of the early church is the most needy mission field today," Shehadeh says. "We want to see a strong, vibrant church across the Middle East."

By Kirk Albrecht in Amman, Jordan.



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CHINA

Religion Leaders Cautious After Talks

Following a three-week tour of China, an American delegation of religious leaders, including Don Argue of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE), is hopeful but cautious about religious freedom for Chinese believers.

"The church is growing tremendously in China and the last thing it wants is to be politicized," Argue said at a March press conference. "We had multiple contacts with the unregistered church. They are not afraid."

Chinese Christians who stray outside officially permitted religious activity continue to face the prospect of detention, arrest, and confiscation of property. But the situation for house-church leaders remains fluid, subject to unexpected

twists and turns. In February, Gao Feng, one of the most prominent of China's younger generation of house-church leaders, was reported released from a labor camp, a few months before his two-and-a-half-year sentence was due to be completed.

The February visit by the American delegation of NAE's Argue, Rabbi Arthur Schneier of New York, and Archbishop Theodore McCarrick of Newark, New Jersey, took place while Congress debated legislation to sanction nations that permit religious persecution. During meetings in China, the Americans presented government officials with a list of 30 Christians and Buddhists who reportedly were being detained for their religious



RMS/REUTERS

Cultural exchange: Shanghai mayor XuKuang Di (right) hugs Schneier at a February 19 meeting. Argue (left) and McCarrick also are part of the delegation.

activities. In addition, Argue gave a Chinese-language Bible to Jiang Zemin, China's top leader, who told Argue that 50 years ago he had received medical care from the hands of an American Christian missionary.

The group traveled countrywide and stopped for visits in Tibet and Hong Kong, now under China's rule. An official report from the delegation is pending.

Not all religious-freedom advocates were in favor of the trip. Nina Shea of Freedom

House said in a letter, "I fear that the delegation is touring a religious Potemkin Village, affording Beijing with a propaganda triumph [and] triggering further oppression against Chinese underground religious believers."

Argue told CT, "Our discussions [in China] were very frank and very pointed. This was the beginning of dialogue. We spent a lot of time building relations."

*By Timothy C. Morgan
with additional reports from
Compass Direct news services.*

THEOLOGY

Leaders Aim to Heal Ancient Schism

Leaders from the Oriental Orthodox and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) are crafting a joint statement in order to heal the schism over Christ's natures that occurred after the Council of Chalcedon (451).

The split occurred after disputes over the relationship between the human and divine natures in Jesus Christ. At Chalcedon, theologians from Antioch and Alexandria were engaged in a dispute over Christ; the council adopted a compromise statement offered by Pope Leo, professing that Christ was one person with two natures, human and divine. But the Oriental Orthodox churches believed that Christ was one nature out of two. The ensuing disagreement led the Oriental Orthodox churches—which are not

part of Eastern Orthodoxy—to pull away. While not a direct line, WARC considers itself inheritors of a line of theology from Chalcedon. There are five Oriental Orthodox churches, including Coptic, Syrian, Armenian, Ethiopian, and India's Malankara.

Two years from now, the agreement between Oriental Orthodox and Reformed leaders is expected to be approved at their sixth and final meeting in Scotland.

Both groups agree on these essentials: Christ was both fully divine and fully human, and the Incarnation was fully real. A 1999 meeting, scheduled to occur in Syria, will review issues concerning ministry and the sacraments.

WARC delegate Rebecca Harden Weaver, professor at Union Theological Seminary

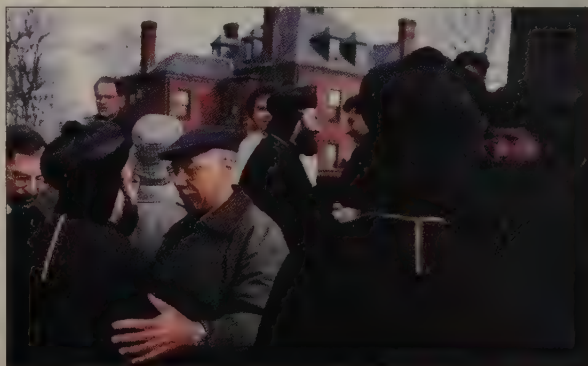
in Richmond, Virginia, says the Christology accord indicates disputes may still be bridged. "Much of the disagreement then was due to cultural differences, language differences, and ecclesiastical politics," she says. "We've discovered that the split between us that has remained for 1,500 years is unnecessary."

Bishop Vicken Aykasian of the Armenian Apostolic Church says, "We've almost

come to the conclusion that there are very few problems between us, and we hope to solve those." Weaver says, "We are getting to know [the Oriental Orthodox] and their ministry apart from the Western traditions of either Catholicism or Protestantism."

Oriental Orthodox leaders have also been in ongoing dialogue with Roman Catholics and Eastern Orthodox.

By Carolyn McCulley.



HENRY B. LEE IV/UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Making up is hard to do: Oriental Orthodox and WARC members meet in Richmond.

'Christian Megaparty' Draws 120,000

Evangelists in Germany used modern music, dance, and drama in Europe's first satellite "Christian megaparty," which drew 120,000 young people to 430 venues across Germany and parts of German-speaking Austria, Poland, Croatia, Luxembourg, and Italy.

With a satellite feed from Nuremberg, the nondenominational "Jesus House" event featured music of the British dancefloor group World Wide Message Tribe and reggae-pop sounds of Caribbean singer Judy Bailey.

"Originally we had hoped for 50 venues all over the country," youth evangelist Roland Werner told CT. "The fact that it became more than 430 really surprised us."

According to Werner, more than 2,000 young people turned in response cards indicating conversion or rededication to Christ.

Christian young adults invited friends to venues at churches, swimming pools, discos, shops, and movie theaters. Local

youth groups organized music and interviews prior to the start of 90-minute transmissions January 30 and 31.

Jesus House cost \$140,000, mostly to cover satellite and technical crew fees. More than 1,400 Christian groups took part in the event, broadcast live over Christian radio and the Internet.

"Such evangelical youth programs offer a great setting to bring friends, who can see for themselves that being a Christian is not boring," says Ditmar Pauck, a Free Evangelical youth pastor who coordinated a satellite reception venue in Bonn.

Lively music and dance served a purpose in Jesus House, asserts Pauck, a drummer. "You have to be direct with youth in terms of their language and culture," he says. "You have to create a setting and work in the message."

About 3 percent of Germany's 82 million people are evangelical Christians.

By Richard Nyberg in Bonn.

News Briefs

◆ Theological leaders from 30 African nations have agreed to reshape seminary education in order better to meet the challenges of living on a continent wracked by civil wars, genocide, political corruption, AIDS, militant Muslims, and poverty. Following a five-day January meeting at Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology, 235 delegates signed the **Nairobi Manifesto**, which both acknowledges past failures and outlines future solutions. The consultation demonstrated a readiness to refocus on equipping Christians for ministry through their local congregations.

◆ The government of **Colombia** has agreed to recognize 16 Protestant denominations. The accord allows evangelicals to minister in hospitals, prisons, and schools on an equal footing with Catholics.

◆ Theologian and mission expert **Lesslie Newbigin**, who spent half a century as a World Council of Churches leader and 35 years as a British missionary to India, died January 30 at age 88 in Birmingham, England. Newbigin had a large following among evangelical theologians and missiologists (CT, Dec. 9, 1996, p. 24).

◆ **Portuguese lawmakers** voted 116 to 107 on February 4 to permit abortions up to the tenth week of pregnancy. Abortions in the predominantly Catholic country had previously been allowed only for certain medical reasons.

◆ Pastors belonging to the **Bahamas Christian Council** cite divine intervention when a Norwegian Cruise Line vessel with 900 homosexual passengers was unable to dock in Nassau in February. High winds and waves prevented the chartered ship from landing—after pastors had prayed and held a demonstration in Nassau. Earlier, the government of the Cayman Islands refused to allow the ship to dock there.

◆ **Noor Alam**, 58-year-old pastor of United Presbyterian Church in Shaikhupura, **Pakistan**, was stabbed to death at his home in Sultanpura on January 28, according to Compass Direct news service. His widow filed murder charges against a local Muslim leader. A Muslim mob had ransacked and demolished Alam's church while it was being built.

◆ The Billy Graham Center, a division of Wheaton (Ill.) College, has assumed administrative responsibility for **Evangelical and Missions Information Service** staff and operations, including the organization's two major publications, *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* and *Pulse*, a missions newsletter.

◆ The Cary, North Carolina-based **Trans World Radio** (TWR) and the Lincoln, Nebraska-based **Back to the Bible** (BTB) broadcast have signed a "strategic agreement" to produce, finance, and transmit three 15-minute weekly programs geared for women and youth in the Middle East. Broadcasts will start in the fall from a 600,000-watt transmitter in Cyprus. TWR and BTB have committed to raising \$150,000 for the project. [CT]



Anti-abortion demonstration: Pro-lifers protest outside Parliament in Lisbon February 4 against changing one of Europe's strictest abortion laws. The balloon declares, "Let us live!"



Newbigin

ARCHAEOLOGY

Temple Mount on Shaky Ground?

The Temple Mount in Jerusalem, site of Jewish temples in biblical times and the Dome of the Rock and the Al Aqsa mosque today, may be in danger of collapse.

Archaeologist Shimon Gibson of the London-based Palestine Exploration Fund says the network of 49 cisterns under the 11-acre platform has been neglected for decades and may be responsible for cracks that have appeared in walls of the compound.

Gibson believes water may be settling into cracks and deteriorating the limestone. However, his concerns are not shared by most archaeologists or Muslim authorities. Gibson believes a collapse might occur

during the Muslim season of Ramadan, when the Haram al Sharif, as it is known to Muslims, is filled with thousands of worshippers every Friday.

Zionists have long awaited the destruction of the Muslim Dome of the Rock, which they believe might foreshadow rebuilding the temple.

Thomas Ice, executive director of the Pre-Trib Research Center in Washington, D.C., and coauthor of the new book *Fast Facts on Bible Prophecy* (Harvest House), says reconstruction of the temple is "politically impossible" today. "But it was politically impossible for the Jews to return to their land, and it happened."

By Gordon Govier.

Educators Move Beyond Civil Rights to Reconciliation

Racial minorities in America have fought hard to win civil rights, yet the goal of racial reconciliation still seems far off, say Christian leaders.

Chris Rice, president of Reconcilers Fellowship, says on-campus Christians find themselves dealing not as intensively with the familiar issues of the civil-rights struggle, such as voting rights, housing, and employment, but rather with multiculturalism, an academic perspective that is often at odds with orthodox Christianity.

Rice says Christians need to think beyond the past methods of social ministry and seek "new concepts and paradigms." He says, "My hope is that we will see a weaving together of reconciliation-minded leaders on the college campus who will commit to each other to making racial healing and justice a major focus of

their campuses over the next 20 years."

For three days in January, nearly 300 campus leaders from 50 schools gathered to plant seeds for new models of student ministry and reconciliation at a Reconcilers Fellowship meeting in Jackson, Mississippi. Their goal was to make an "honest search for answers."

"The conference was a major source of encouragement and help," says Samuel Barkat, vice president for multiethnic ministry at InterVarsity Christian Fellowship. "Instead of producing guilt, the conference stressed hope and possibilities." Barkat says participants were urged to think biblically about ethnic reconciliation and to embark on a reconciliation journey.

The event became all the more poignant when national reconciliation leader Spencer Perkins collapsed of a diabetic seizure. He recovered in time to deliver

the event's closing address, only to die suddenly after heart failure three days later (CT, March 2, 1998, p. 73).

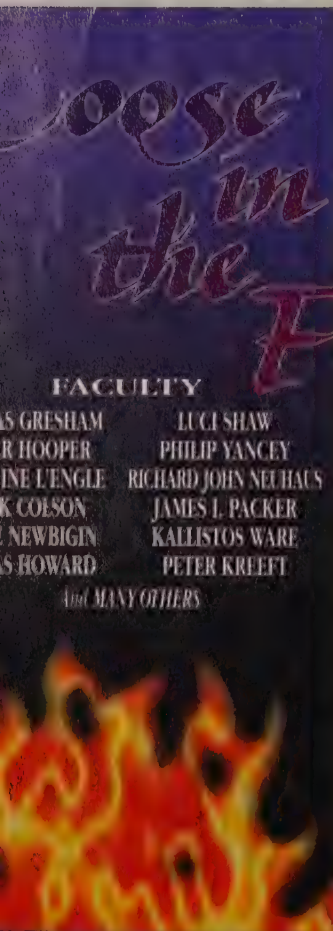
Lisa Sung, InterVarsity regional theological coordinator, says, "Spencer's life was extended before our eyes so that we absolutely could not miss this wake-up call."

Andy Crouch, campus minister with InterVarsity at Harvard University, says talks by Rice and Perkins instilled in him how far most ministries have to go in incorporating racial healing and justice.

"I came away from the conference dreaming of the day when InterVarsity will not have 'directors of black, Asian, and Hispanic student ministries,'" Crouch told CT. "We will be so thoroughly multicultural; that whites will not be seen as *normal* and others *exceptional*. Instead, we'll all be partners together."

The Coalition for Christian Colleges and Universities, InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, the National Black Evangelical Association, and two local colleges—the predominantly white Belhaven College and predominantly black Tougaloo College—cosponsored the conference.

By Joe Maxwell in Jackson.



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CHRISTIANITY TODAY

WENDY MURRAY ZORA

Last year my son Jon had to wrestle two weight classes beyond his actual weight. Still, he won more matches than he lost, but when he took to the mat during one particular match, my heart sank. PeeWee Herman versus the Incredible Hulk came to mind. The buzzer sounded, and my son's opponent quickly flattened him. Yet somehow, before the interminable minute expired, Jon gathered his strength, wrestled himself from his opponent's grip, and stood up.

The second period looked like the first, with the added dimension of my son having swollen eye sockets and mat burns. He flailed under the weight of his antagonist, squirming as his dwindling strength allowed, until he dislodged his foe's grip, grunted and heaved, and stood up again.

By round three the other guy looked as dazed as Jon did as they lumbered to the starting position for the third time. My son was flattened yet again, and I wouldn't have blamed him for giving up. But seizing a second wind, Jon wiggled out of the near-pin and, unbelievably, stood up again. Then, as quickly as he had been felled earlier, he flipped his opponent and had *him* flat on the mat. The crowd exploded, hoping for the upset pin, but the buzzer rang. The referee lifted the arm of my son's oppo-

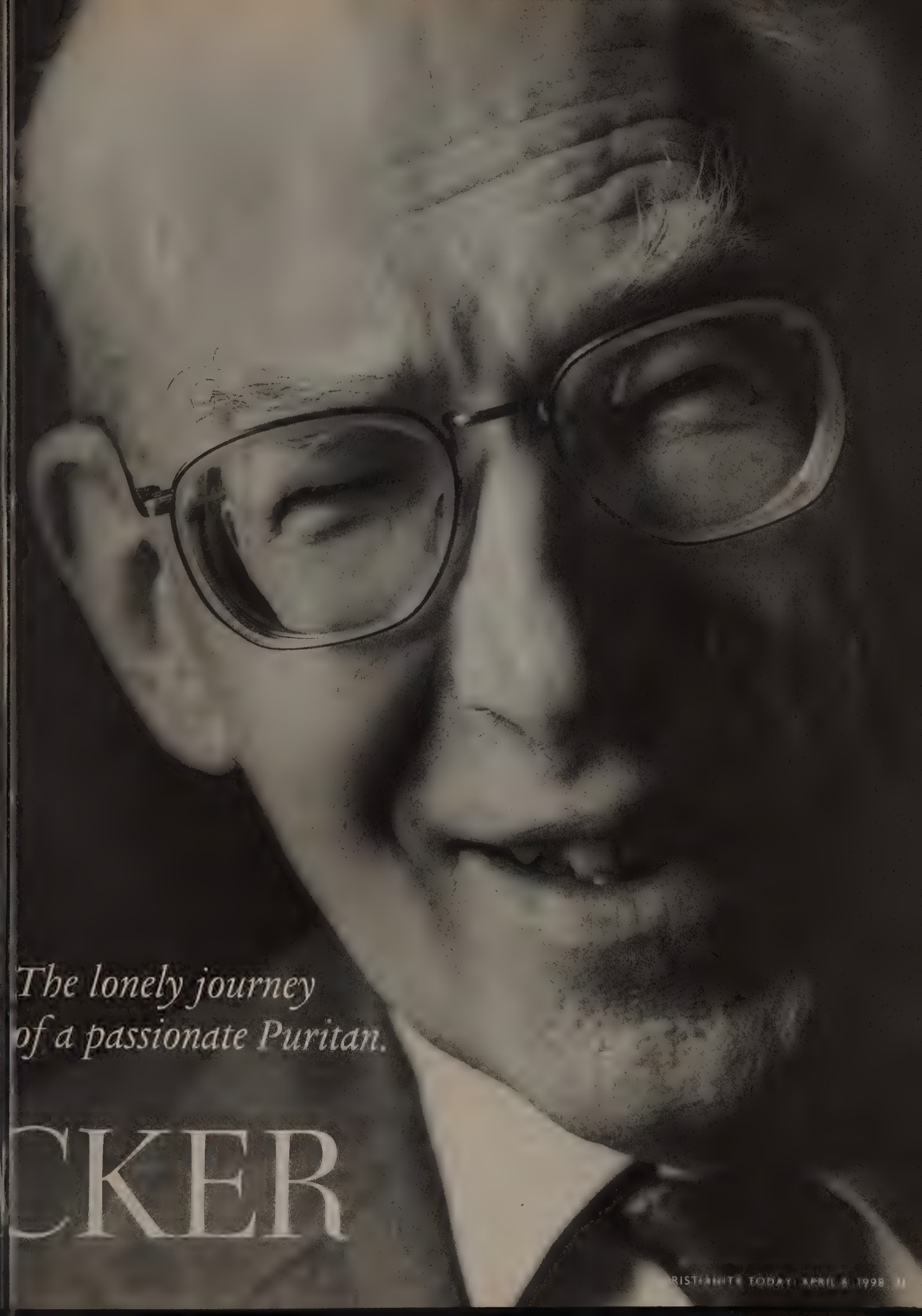
nent, but everyone there recognized that something greater than a victory for one and a loss for another had transpired on that mat.

My son's match kept coming to mind as I read Alister McGrath's recently published *J. I. Packer: A Biography* (Baker). In the author's meticulous documentation of James Innell Packer's role in the shaping of contemporary evangelicalism, I saw how tall this solitary man from Britain really stands, given how many times he was leveled, sometimes brutally, but kept standing up.

McGrath well positions Packer in British and North American church history, providing the blow-by-blow scenario of Packer's academic ascendance. Whether it is Packer's discovery of the contemporary relevance of the Puritans, or his decision to seek ordination in the Church of England, or his forging two key Christian think tanks in Britain, or his role as the "reforming principal" at Tyndale Hall in Bristol and his efforts at encouraging a renaissance in evangelical scholarship, or his emigration to Canada to teach at Regent College—by the end of the book the reader will apprehend the significance of this great man's contribution to the contemporary evangelical world.

PHOTO BY STEVE LOWMEYER

KNOWING PACKER



*The lonely journey
of a passionate Puritan.*

CKER

McGrath helps us appreciate his extraordinary mind and tenacity but only hints at the man behind the mind. In J. I. Packer a razor sharp intellect, a passionate heart, and devoted soul come together in startling unity.

Once when I announced to my sons that "Dr. Packer" would be joining us for dinner, one responded, "He's the one with the dent in his head, right?" They didn't think of him as the author of *Knowing God* or the one who has written more books than some people read in a lifetime. They remember the dent, freely showcased by Packer himself at our dinner table during a meal we had shared earlier. My boys sat riveted as he told the tale of his being chased at age seven, out of the schoolyard into the street, making—as he says it—"a violent collision with a truck, a bread van," adding, "I lost a bit of my head as a result."

J. I. Packer is a *force*, which McGrath adeptly captures in his book, but he is also a "pious Puritan" (as one friend calls him), a praying Christian, a pastor/teacher, husband and father, and to many, a friend. McGrath's narrative enables us to appreciate his unique place in contemporary evangelicalism, to which I add here my own understanding of the "man behind the mind."

Finding truth

It seemed as if the odds were against him from the get-go. Packer's modest upbringing in a working-class family living in a rented house did not polish him for the intellectual circles he would eventually inhabit. His father held a job at the Great Western Railway, which tendered "security but no money." Beyond that, his father, according to Packer, had been somewhat "unfitted for major responsibility"—which kept his career track with the railway in the realm of the "trivial"—"dealing with complaints about lost luggage" and the like. He had a mental collapse at the age of 52 when his responsibilities increased during the war. This meant that, at times, he could be a remote and bewildering presence in the home, though he recovered and became as "cheerful as before."

Being nearly killed by the truck introduced a new set of battles for the bookish boy from Gloucestershire. "From then on until I went to university," he recalls, "I used to move around wearing on my head an aluminum plate with a rubber pad attached around the edge. It made me more of a speckled bird than I was before."

He didn't like being a "speckled bird." He wanted to be a "star cricketer." But the dent and the metal plate dashed those aspirations. So he set his hopes on the less sublime, anticipating that, for his eleventh birthday, he would receive what British boys typically received on eleventh birthdays—a new bike.

His parents gave him a typewriter.

That set his course and, to some extent, his temperament. His "eggheaded" (his term) temperament coupled with the crushed head, the metal plate, and subsequent dashed hopes, left him lonely and melancholy and displeased with his "curious features" ("I don't know anyone who has a face like mine," he says). He became the easy target for the schoolyard bullies—"if they wanted someone to bully, it was very often me." He was always willing to lend homework help when needed though, even to the bullies: "If they wanted somebody to help them with their homework, again, it was very often me." He always

felt on "the edge of things." "There was a solitariness about my young years," he recalls.

His surprise at the typewriter instead of the bike soon "gave way to delight," McGrath notes, as he hunted-and-pecked himself into a new and satisfying world of storywriting. This summoned and sharpened his linear thinking patterns and analytical skills, which, he says, are God-given: "God gave me a mind that always looks for the logical structure of what's being said."

But there is a downside to this kind of brilliance: "You get some shocks when you do that."

One such "shock" occurred during the frequent chess matches he shared with the son of a Unitarian minister. Between games, his opponent tried to sell Packer the "Unitarian bill of goods." But the presentation of Unitarian beliefs did not hold together for the linear, logical Packer, then age 15.

"Unitarianism affirms the ethic of Jesus as the most wonderful thing since ice cream and negates the divinity of Jesus as superstition," he says. "It seemed clear to me to ask—even when I didn't know much about the contents of the Bible—if these chaps believe so much of the New Testament, why don't they believe more? If they deny something so central as the divinity of Jesus, which is clearly there, why don't they believe less? How does this position hold together?" "Not by logic," he concluded, "but by willpower."

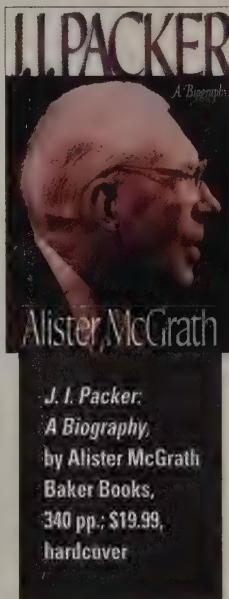
This realization had the unexpected result of forcing him to think seriously about the Christian faith. He had grown up a churchgoer, a "habit" instilled by his parents. But many Anglicans, as he knew them in his day, "didn't know what they believed and didn't think it mattered," he says. So he had never given any thought to "questions of truth" about the Christian faith—that is, until the Unitarian evangelist prompted his thinking. "My mind had been grabbed by the question—What is true Christianity?"

He undertook a vigorous study of the Scriptures and other Christian writers (including C. S. Lewis), which eventually won his intellectual assent to the veracity of the historic faith. Around the same time, a friend of his had gotten "soundly converted" at university and, feeling an urgency to secure Packer's salvation, he commended InterVarsity people to him, urging Packer to seek them out once he got to Oxford for his studies. Packer's "nose for reality—*real* reality, not virtual reality"—compelled him to follow his friend's advice. When he entered Corpus Christi College at Oxford in the fall of 1944, he sought out the IV people, wanting to "get in with the *real* Christians."

This, in turn, induced another shock.

Packer attended his first evangelistic preaching service of the Oxford Inter-Collegiate Christian Union (OICCU, or CU), and as he listened to the message, a "shocking realization" hit him in the form of a mental picture. He saw himself standing outside looking into a home where a party was in progress. In a spiritual sense, he understood that "they were inside and I was outside." He recognized that one *gets in* by means of a "personal transaction with the living Lord, the Lord Jesus," and that he had "never actually made that transaction."

The "pointed, perfectly ordinary, pietistic evangelistic sermon" ended with an appeal to receive the Lord Jesus as Savior. Packer recalls, "We all sang 'Just As I Am'—there's no more ordinary way of being converted than to receive the Lord while



singing 'Just As I Am'—and that was it. When I went out of the church I knew I was a Christian." (He abandoned Saturday night gigs playing "sloppy clarinet" for the Oxford Bandits jazz combo in deference to attending CU Bible studies.)

Six weeks later he heard Basil Atkinson teach from Revelation and was astonished by the reverence with which the teacher handled the biblical text—a departure from the liberal view of Scripture he had been "stuffed up with" in the Anglicanism of his childhood. These two contradictory notions collided in that moment, he says, and his "skepticism collapsed."

"I can still remember the feeling of surprise—and gladness—as I left the meeting because I knew that *I knew* that the Bible is the Word of God."

But the new convert soon confronted another contradiction in his faith experience.

Finding the Puritans

"I was an oddity," Packer says.

"I was bad at relationships, an outsider, shy, and an intellectual—I wasn't a sportsman" (the dent in his head saw to that). "Battling his way, as adolescents do," writes McGrath, the young Packer struggled with "manifold urges and surges of discontent and frustration" (Read: emotional disequilibrium, a desire for companionship, sexual longings, loneliness). On top of that, there was the added inconvenience of his operating on a higher intellectual plane than just about everybody he met, which obliged him to battle a degree of pride.

All of this had the cumulative effect of an ever-increasing sense of isolation. "That, with my linear habit of mind, made me an 18-year-old oddball. I was emotionally locked up."

"Let go and let God!" the evangelical ethos of the time proclaimed, which only further confounded the struggling new Christian. This was the voice of the Keswick holiness teaching that prevailed in British evangelicalism at the time. The "expository novelties," McGrath notes, espoused by the Keswick school "promised deeper spiritual enrichment," "full deliverance from sin," and a "closer relationship with Jesus Christ than anything that they yet experienced." In fact, the teaching went, any believer who wasn't experiencing all of this "had not totally surrendered to Christ."

The contradiction tormented Packer. On the one hand, he knew that he had fully surrendered his life to the living Lord. Yet on the other hand, he was not experiencing the "deliverance from sin" and the "victorious life" that holiness teaching perpetuated.

That's when, by "a happy accident," he found the Puritans. Gaining a reputation for bookishness in CU circles, Packer had been asked to oversee the library of the OICCU shortly after his conversion. "Just out of nosiness" ("I'm a nosy person"), he started sniffing through the books. He found an edition of John Owen's *On the Mortification of Sin in Believers*—pages still



HE HEARD NO HEAVENLY
VOICES CALLING HIM TO YOUTH
MINISTRY, THOUGH HE
DUTIFULLY ACCOMPANIED THE
BOYS BRIGADE TO CAMP
("I WON'T PRETEND I ENJOYED IT").

uncut—and started reading: "By faith fill thy soul with a due consideration of that provision which is laid up in Jesus Christ; for this end and purpose that all thy lusts, this very lust wherewith thou art entangled, may be mortified by faith. Ponder on this, that though thou art no way able, in or by thyself, to get the conquest of the distemper; though thou art even weary

of contending and art utterly ready to faint; yet that there is enough in Jesus Christ to yield thee relief."

Owen became "a lifeline" to him, addressing, engaging, and resolving the issue of regenerate believers wrestling with sin. Writings of other Puritans he subsequently perused had a similar eye-opening, life-giving effect. "When I read, for instance, the second part of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, what impressed me was the way in which Mr. Greatheart, the pastor who is escorting Christiana and her family to the Celestial City, picks up, as he goes along, a string of emotional cripples—Mr. Ready-to-Halt, Mr. Feeble-Mind, and Mr. Despondency.

"The Puritans answered those questions that perplexed me," he says. And more than that, they introduced him to the "whole range" of Christian truth, wrestling with aspects of the Christian life in a rational, yet spiritually enlivened and theologically grounded way. "From the Puritans," he says, "I acquired what I didn't have from the start—that is, a sense of the importance and primacy of truth. Which means theology."

Making inroads

The Puritans inspired Packer to want to share the blessing both with the theologically floundering evangelical minority in Britain and with the theologically murky Church of England. To the evangelicals (a "small, largely ignored minority"), the Puritans' "emphasis on God-centeredness, personal discipline, humility and the primacy of the mind," writes McGrath, offered an antidote to the "pietistic goofiness" (as Packer calls it) that held sway out of the Keswick tradition. To the Anglicans (who composed the majority of British citizens, only 5 percent of whom were active "churchgoers"), the Puritans offered a theological corrective: "I knew that I had a theology that would

stand and that I could deploy. One had to challenge the liberal and vague notions [of Anglicanism] to get them out of the way and clear the way for truth."

Packer's decision (in 1947) to seek ordination in the Church of England was part of this mandate (though, McGrath notes, the decision was akin to "Daniel volunteering to enter the lions' den"), as was his decision to pursue further theological training. He had taught for one academic year at Oak Hill College (1948-49), which made him aware (1) that his gifts and disposition would be best deployed in an academic setting, and (2) there was a serious lack of evangelicals with doctorates in Britain (only one other evangelical that he knew of held a doctorate at the time).

As part of this mission, in the midst of preparing for ordination and pursuing his doctoral research, and with the Puritans ever on his mind, Packer launched the Puritan Studies Conferences in 1950: an annual two-day gathering for discussing papers dealing with Puritan ideas. "The Conferences proceeded on the assumption that the Puritans were to be studied as potential guides for the modern church," McGrath writes, in order to introduce to a new generation of theological students "a powerful and persuasive vision of the Christian life, in which theology, biblical exposition, spirituality and preaching were shown to be mutually indispensable."

The then well-known and revered evangelical preacher Martyn Lloyd-Jones threw his weight behind the conferences, enthusiastically endorsing and chairing them, which served as a catalyst in their subsequent success. In effect, McGrath notes, "the Conference acted as the nucleus of a new and emerging constituency within British evangelicalism" with the added benefit of keeping Packer in close proximity with his non-Anglican free-church brethren.

He was ordained in December 1952, having navigated the ordination process (despite the examining chaplain's complaint that his theology was equivalent to "intellectual bulldozing") and assumed his first pastoral role as curate (assistant pastor) at Saint John's in Harborne. He heard no heavenly voices calling him to youth ministry, though he dutifully accompanied the Boys Brigade to camp ("I won't pretend I enjoyed it") and faithfully visited "the fish lady"—known for the bag of fish she carried—enduring her tea: "She kept a pot of tea on the hob so that by afternoon it was scummy and tasted horrible, but this was the Birmingham way of living with tea."

But "the best of all I did," Packer recalls, "was the weekly doctrine class. All the youngish people wanted to learn about their faith, and I introduced them to their heritage. They loved it. I gave them something they discovered they wanted."

Longings fulfilled

On the academic and ministerial fronts he had been making strides toward his goals. On the personal front he remained awkward, shy, and longing for companionship. However, shortly before his ordination, the providential double booking of a friend was to turn the tide in this aspect of Packer's life. The friend asked Packer to cover for him at one of the speaking engagements, and Packer agreed, despite still feeling somewhat out of his comfort zone in public situations.

His feeling of awkwardness was exacerbated when everyone in attendance, at the end of the evening, left him standing alone at the speaker's table while they mingled casually with one another.

Everyone, that is, except a young nursing student who redressed this "terrible rudeness." "I was affronted by the fact that everybody else around me was ignoring the speaker," says

Kit, Packer's wife of 43 years. "We Welsh people generally try to make strangers at ease."

Kit left her comfort zone, too, to welcome the visiting speaker who stood awkwardly before her and who, she recounts, spoke "remarkably like my minister, Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones."

That first meeting with Kit Mullett had J. I. Packer tossing sleepless in his bed. "I couldn't get her out of my mind," he says. He was sure that when he got up to read Proverbs 31 that sleepless night (the account of the godly woman), the writer had Kit in mind. ("She seemed to be there.")

Kit possessed all those qualities that he, in his bookish way, seemed to lack. She was practical, relational, lively, independent. He liked the "individuality" he saw in her on their first walk in "the wood" when she took her shoes off.

She's Welsh; he's English. (She highlights that point.) When they take walks together, she meanders (still sometimes barefoot), carrying binoculars, watching the chickadees, and tracing the flight of the bald eagle; he bolts, wanting to get there and back again. (He keeps his shoes on.)

She moves comfortably into "the debating mode" (Packer notes: "She's not sure she can see coherence in my position on women in ministry"). He demurs: "I'm an analyst. I'm not a debater."

"When he took an interest, I was surprised," Kit recalls. "I still am, actually."

They courted for 18 months "under the eye of my vicar" and paid for their own wedding in July of 1954—the week after he turned in his 500-page dissertation on Richard Baxter.

So his longings for companionship were filled to overflowing in his new bride, and Packer grew more sure of his mission and mandate. He left his pastoral duties at Saint John's and assumed the position of assistant lecturer (soon to become senior tutor) at Tyndale Hall in Bristol (1955).

Lifter of drooping heads

In Britain at this time, a young American crusade evangelist named Billy Graham brought his crusades (1954 and 1955) and ignited evangelical fires. Christian unions were popping up in the universities at a rate heretofore unseen. This surge in popular evangelical enthusiasms unsettled the Anglican establishment. Canon H. K. Luce, headmaster of Durham School, wrote an article in which he posed the question (cited by McGrath): "Is it not time that our religious leaders made it plain that while they respect, or even admire, Dr. Graham's sincerity and personal power, they cannot regard fundamentalism as likely to issue in anything but disillusionment and disaster for educated men and women in this twentieth century?"

Packer answered that question. He took pen in hand and offered "the definitive evangelical response" in his first book, *Fundamentalism and the Word of God* (1958). In the book, Packer demonstrated cogently and rationally that authentic evangelicalism, contrary to Luce's remarks, carried all the intellectual rigor that the liberals presumed to be their domain, while simultaneously turning their flawed argumentation back upon them. As Valentine Cunningham put it in his review of McGrath's book in *The Pelican Record*: "It felt good to have Packer on one's side, this gangly bespectacled exegete with the Gloucestershire burr in his voice, a sort of John Arlott of biblical commentary, running up to bowl his devastating slow left-arm deliveries."

Says Packer: "The response was simply to outflank the criticisms by showing that they applied to the critics much more than they applied to those at whom they were first directed."

Robert Horn, former editor of the *Evangelical Times*, said

that the book lifted the “drooping heads” of a whole generation of young people. He “made doctrine exciting,” as one observer noted, showing the skeptics that Scripture could be trusted after all and reassuring the pietists that “reason” could be their friend. The book established Packer as the voice for a credible, intellectually rigorous yet soundly orthodox evangelicalism.

Making strides in his mission, he undertook another project similar to his Puritan Conferences. Just as these (thriving by now) offered a venue for Puritan thought to infiltrate British evangelicalism, his next brainchild, Latimer House (launched in 1961), was Packer’s means to create a venue for Anglican *evangelicals* to assert their voices within their denomination.

Packer wanted to revive “authentic Anglicanism”—a heritage, he says, that had been “in eclipse” since 1944. “The shapers of Anglicanism were evangelicals—Cranmer, the Puritans, the Clapham sect, Wilberforce,” he says. “I wanted to re-establish it in its own heritage.” So in 1961 Packer left Bristol to become librarian (later warden) at Latimer House.

On the home front, the Packers had settled into family life with their three children, Naomi, Ruth, and Martin. “Kit wanted and got animals,” Packer notes, including (at one point or another) hamsters, rabbits, white mice, cats, and dogs—most notably Rocky the “black nondescript” who, prior to his homegoing last year, penned the yearly Packer Christmas newsletter.

Packer enjoyed his young children, though Kit recalls that at times—especially when he was writing a book—“he wasn’t always with us.” Packer left home management in the capable hands of his wife, though, he says, “I invested more of myself in parenting than my father invested in me.”

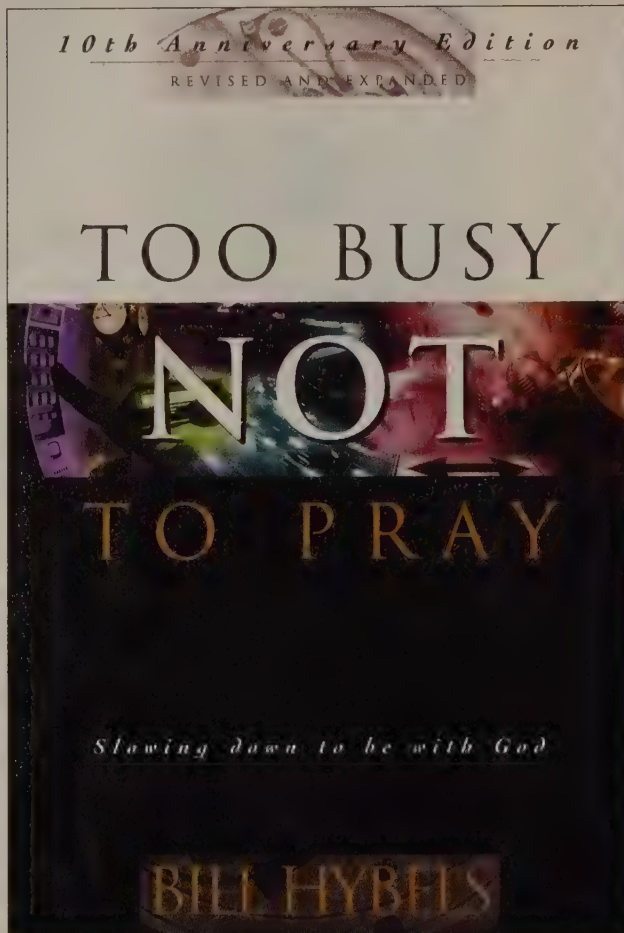
On other fronts, however, Packer was soon to enter a season of testing and heartache. With the ascendancy of the World Council of Churches in the sixties, denominational allegiance to the Church of England became suspect. Some feared that the WCC would become “a ‘superchurch’ run from Geneva,” as Packer puts it, and began advocating “jumping ship” from the denomination to form a separate evangelical alliance. Packer’s friend and Puritan Conference partner, Martyn Lloyd-Jones, became the most vociferous spokesman for this position. At a

“IT FELT GOOD TO HAVE PACKER ON ONE’S SIDE,
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—Valentine Cunningham

gathering of the Second National Assembly of Evangelicals (October 1966), organized by the Evangelical Alliance, Lloyd-Jones “issued what was widely understood to be a passionate call for evangelicals within the mainstream churches to ‘come out’ and, in effect, form a denomination of their own,” McGrath writes. John Stott, who was chairing the session, feared that the message might spark a mass exodus on the part of the younger, impressionable evangelical leaders in attendance. So he “broke the ordinary rules of procedure,” says Packer, and “spoke ‘off the cuff.’” Stott intervened to affirm that evangelicals could and should remain within their denominations in order to help bring about renewal from within. (“It started a great row that didn’t die down,” Packer says.)

STEVE SONHEIM



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This unexpected turn resulted in a rift within British evangelicalism over whether evangelicals should remain within the Church of England. So the gathering that was supposed to “serve the purpose to advance the cause of unity and viable strategies for keeping evangelicalism alive in Britain” had the opposite effect.

Trouble three times over

Packer told me once: “Like a good pietist I’ve always wanted peace, and like Richard Baxter I’ve been involved with trouble, trouble, trouble all the way.” This was never more true than the season he entered in the early seventies, what I would call the opening bell of J. I. Packer’s extraordinary match. Several forces converged that set the conditions wherein Packer found himself, at some points, scrambling to save his academic career, and at other points, groping for his place in the British evangelical arena.

By the late sixties, the unity between Anglican evangelicals and the free-church brethren was disintegrating; a “charismatic tidal wave” (as Packer calls it) deluged the British evangelical scene and had begun to erode some of the theological underpinnings Packer had labored to establish; and Packer himself was itching for new challenges, sensing that Latimer House, now well established and thriving, no longer demanded his leadership.

The first round, to continue the wrestling metaphor, commenced with Packer’s formal “disfellowshipping” by Martyn Lloyd-Jones in 1970. The two had not seen eye-to-eye on the role of evangelicals within Anglicanism, and Lloyd-Jones had hoped that Packer would eventually see things his way. (Packer had been his “blue-eyed boy,” says Kit. Once, when she went to Lloyd-Jones for a pastoral visit, her concerns were subsumed by his urging her to persuade Jim to come over to his side.)

The break occurred as a result of a book Packer had written with other Anglicans, two of whom were Anglo-Catholics, in the effort to overturn the “Methodist union scheme” (a movement to unite the denomination with the Methodists). From Lloyd-Jones’s perspective, Packer had gone too far in collaborating with the Anglo-Catholics, though Packer maintains that Lloyd-Jones “read into [the book] a good deal that it hadn’t said.”

Lloyd-Jones also abruptly ended what had become two decades of flourishing Puritan Conferences. Packer, in turn, was unceremoniously sacked by other com-

mittees and boards, including the editorial board of *The Evangelical Magazine*. McGrath writes that a "leading independent evangelical went so far as to advance the view that Packer could 'no longer be regarded as an evangelical.'"

Lloyd-Jones, Packer reflects, was "the greatest man I ever knew." But he was also inviting evangelicals "on a road that led to nowhere." ("Great men can make great mistakes.") Packer was committed to going the long haul within the denomination. "Whatever anything else Jim was, he was an Anglican," says Kit. "He would never desert the Church of England." Despite his personal affection for Lloyd-Jones, Packer never felt that "the free-church men could ever grab the tiller" in his quest "to renew the church in reformed Christianity."

"I DON'T THINK I EVER
LAPSED INTO BITTERNESS,
BUT IT HAD ON OCCASION MADE ME
WONDER WHAT GOOD I AM,
ESPECIALLY, TO THE CHRISTIAN WORLD
IN THE SHORT TERM."

Still another crisis loomed, sounding the buzzer for round two. Theological schools in Britain faced a steady decrease of candidates for ordination, and Packer, having left Latimer House to assume the role of principal of Tyndale Hall in Bristol in 1970, had undertaken an aggressive plan to increase student membership and assemble a sterling faculty there (hence his recognition as the "reforming principal").

To maintain viability, proposals to merge some colleges were introduced. Tyndale, Packer's college, remained under a threatening cloud. "Theological colleges across England, irrespective of their theological tradition, found themselves plunged into fierce and bitter battles for survival," writes McGrath.

John Stott and others, wanting to ensure the survival of *evangelical* colleges, submitted (September 1970) an unofficial report proposing the consolidation of the three Bristol colleges: Tyndale, Clifton, and Dalton House (a women's college). The commission overseeing the mergers countered (October) with a dif-

ferent recommendation: All schools in Bristol would be shut down, with Clifton merging with Wycliffe Hall in Oxford and Packer's Tyndale with Saint John's in Nottingham.

This was a devastating blow to Packer. He had worked hard and paid a high price for forging a new vision for theological training within Anglicanism and had only just begun to turn the tide at Tyndale. He recognized that if this merger with Saint John's proceeded (which neither school relished), his vision and leadership would be disenfranchised, since Saint John's stood as the stronger, more self-sufficient of the two schools.

Following Packer's lead, Tyndale responded (January 1971) that a move to Nottingham was unworkable. The commission, in turn, countered—fine—Tyndale would be closed.

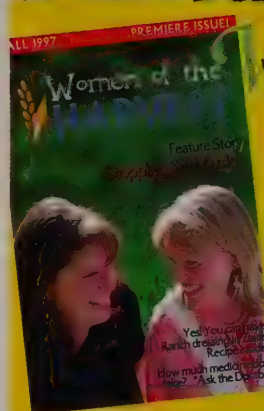
Shock gave way to disbelief, which gave way to outrage. Packer found himself in the middle of a firestorm trying to save his college, and by now, the students themselves had entered the fray trying to overturn the decision. The General Synod of the Church of England debated the issue and ultimately (February) offered Tyndale a reprieve: "In the opinion of the House of Bishops, the continuation of training for ordinands at Bristol is only possible if Tyndale Hall, Clifton and Dalton . . . agree to amalgamate on the Clifton site."

Hence, Trinity College was born and an evangelical presence in Bristol was saved. But Packer's troubles weren't over. The leadership question for the newly formed school had to be addressed, and a triumvirate arrangement was considered the most desirable, with one member from each college assuming a leadership position. Packer was recommended (for obvious reasons) to represent Tyndale in the triumvirate.

But things got more complicated. In the planning sessions between the potential leaders, Packer unintentionally alienated the Clifton leadership, who felt Packer was dictating the terms of the triumvirate. He wasn't. They probably took offense at Packer's linear "habit of mind" and subsequent style of communication. (Once he starts a thought he simply cannot stop until the thought has been carried through to its logical conclusion. There's no interrupting him.)

Fearing a Tyndale takeover, they

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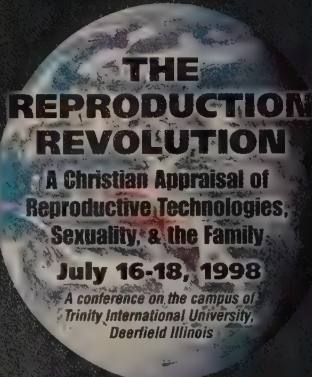
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stalled further negotiations, derailing the merger. In the end, Packer was vindicated by the bishop, who intervened and saved the merger, but the new arrangement carried the proviso that J. I. Packer *not* be given any significant leadership role. So rather than serving as dean of studies (part of the triumvirate), Packer was offered the position of "associate principal."

Edged out

Gerald Bray, in his review of McGrath's book in *Churchman*, commends McGrath for correctly "expos[ing] the moral void at the heart of so much Anglican Evangelicalism." He adds: "Packer, as theologian, was a threat to people like that. The only surprise is that they were prepared to tolerate him at all."

Bray highlights the fact that ten years later, after Packer and his friend and colleague Alec Motyer (who filled the Tyndale triumvirate slot) had left, "Trinity sank to a depth which even the men of Clifton may not have envisaged."

"There are many who remember the Packer-Motyer years as the golden age of Bristol."

So it wasn't all bad news for Packer. As "associate principal," he took advantage of increased opportunities for travel and writing. *Knowing God* was published in 1973, winning Packer immediate international acclaim, particularly in North America. This, in turn, resulted in his being asked to participate in controversies here. One such conflict that erupted in the U.S. was a foment dubbed "the battle for the Bible," for which Packer was invited to offer input as an objective outsider (for once).

He participated in summit meetings and, later, helped draft key expositions for the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy (ICBI), which he also helped found in 1977. Packer assisted American evangelicals in navigating this delicate debate, leading them to middle ground whereby they could fully embrace "inerrancy" (though Packer prefers the positive terms "totally true/totally trustworthy") without sacrificing common sense and adopting the ultraliteralistic approach advocated by some (like the suggestion that there may have been six, not three, denials of Peter, in the attempt to reconcile inconsistencies in the gospel accounts).

So doors were opening for him across "the puddle." Back in England, however, he was becoming gradually more marginalized. The Church of England's Doctrine Committee (of which Packer was a mem-

ber) published a statement that treated the orthodox Christian understanding of the person and work of Christ as "an option." This enraged the "ordinary Anglicans" who wondered how a theological stance could be hijacked by so few, and it exacerbated the criticism by non-Anglican evangelicals who felt Packer had surrendered too much by staying with the denomination. Packer, for his part, felt that "the dice were loaded" against them since, as McGrath notes, the evangelicals were "hopelessly outnumbered" on the committee.

On another front, his friend and fellow Anglican evangelical, John Stott, was charting a different course for British evangelicalism than that which Packer had envisioned. Stott orchestrated central conferences for leaders to come together for fellowship and refreshment, with the hope that the inspiration would "trickle down" into the churches. Packer felt that igniting evangelistic fervor in the context of these conferences would diminish the urgency in local congregations. It seemed to be merely a matter of differing emphases, but the overall effect of this, along with these other difficulties, left Packer feeling "the odd man out."

"In the 1970s," he reflects, "I hadn't got any kind of leadership role or direct hearing for the things I wanted to say among evangelicals any more than I did in my Anglican circles. I don't think I ever lapsed into bitterness, but it had on occasion made me wonder what good I am, really, to the Christian world in the short term."

A new turn

Round three.

"Packer left this universe in 1979 for a new life at Regent College, Vancouver," Bray writes in his review, "and Dr. McGrath presents this as a wider opportunity given to him to develop his preaching and teaching ministry." A notion, Bray continues, that is "the exact opposite of the one generally held by Dr. Packer's admirers in England."

"What we were looking for was a new Charles Hodge, or even just a new Louis Berkhof, but what we got was *Knowing God*," he says. "It has to be recorded that this has been the expectation of the English friends and admirers, and that so far we have felt let down."

Not all Brits concur with Bray's assessment, which McGrath's book attests. And feeling "let down" would hardly describe the sentiment of J. I. Packer's friends and admirers in North America. He thrived at

Regent ("without any sort of negative vibes"), and Regent has flourished because of his being there. "In the mid-1970s, Regent was a tiny institution, using borrowed rooms; by the end of the 1980s, Regent was the largest graduate institution of theological education in the region," writes McGrath.

Regent placed Packer in a position to assert a voice in just about every theological discussion that has emerged in contemporary North American evangelicalism—from the role of women, to the function of the Holy Spirit, to the destiny of those who die without Christ. The most recent of these has been his critical role in Evangelicals and Catholics Together (ECT; see CT, Dec. 8, 1997, p. 34).

Packer has helped navigate both sides of this initiative onto common theological ground without diminishing points of disagreement. He coined the phrase "the convergence of the saints" in another context, but ECT could be one such impulse whereby differing sides stand together in areas of agreement, in order to serve a larger purpose (the tack he took with the Anglo-Catholics in overturning the "Methodist scheme").

It should be noted that he has also been disfellowshipped by some American evangelicals for his participation in ECT—despite his obvious and vigorous commitment to Reformed theology and unwillingness to give any ground on critical theological points.

Despite the differences, however, he has played a key role in facilitating the sense of unity and cooperation that has prevailed in ECT (his off-the-cuff after-hours comment to Catholic theologian Richard John Neuhaus that the papacy is "a grotesque institution" notwithstanding).

In the meantime, he continues to generate an unrelenting arsenal of books, pamphlets, and articles—writing a book a year since coming to Regent ("In 1995 three Packer books were published together and I got up to speed"). His books have sold almost 3 million copies (*Knowing God*, a million and a half in and of itself), and he has earned the status of being the best-selling author in British Columbia.

McGrath appropriately places Packer where he belongs in contemporary evangelicalism, and today's readers should be all the more energized that it has come to pass while J. I. Packer still walks among us.

McGrath summarizes Packer's fourfold approach to evangelical theologizing: "the importance of history" (à la the Puritans); "the primacy of theology" (maintaining

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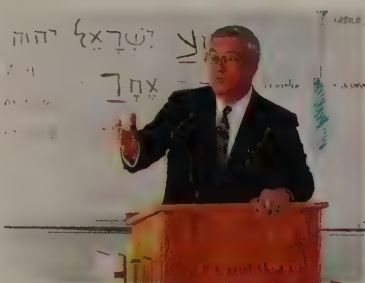
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that "bad theology hurts people"); "the coherence of theology" (a "heartfelt knowledge of divine things"); and "collaboration without compromise" (or, "convergence of the saints"). Whatever else, theology for Packer is "not merely wrestling with *texts*, nor yet with *ideas*, but with the *living God*."

McGrath concludes: "Any who seek to theologize within great-tradition Christianity . . . will find in Packer a congenial travelling companion who will encourage, nourish, and challenge us as we prepare to enter the new millennium."

At my dinner table not too long ago, Packer couldn't stay his tears when Handel's "For Unto Us a Child Is Born," from *Messiah*, played in the background. That is because, as Kit says it, "his devotion to the Lord is the reason for everything he's done. His writing, his preaching, his lecturing, his *living* are all centered on the Lord."

And his love for the church is why Packer prefers the verb form of theology. He told me once that classical jazz is like the church. I thought he might have meant the "charismatic" church, but he

meant the church in its truest Reformed sense—a lively, masterful interplay and synergy of members, orchestrated by the Holy Spirit for creating the music of heaven.

When the painful rifts have occurred over the years, he has grieved less for his personal losses and more because, as Kit puts it, "the church is hurt and the Lord is hurt." That is why, ten years after their estrangement in 1970, Packer wrote his friend and colleague Martyn Lloyd-Jones asking to visit him on his forthcoming trip to England. Lloyd-Jones, who had been ill, encouraged him to come.

"I never saw him," Packer says. "He died before I could get there. It didn't make a great deal of difference," he says. "There's always heaven."

Yes, heaven. His thoughts are that high and wide, though his feet are firmly planted here so long as he can continue to have a part in expanding the soul of Christ's bride. "I want to see a focused vision of spiritual maturity—the expansion of the soul is the best phrase I can use for it. That is, a renewed sense of the

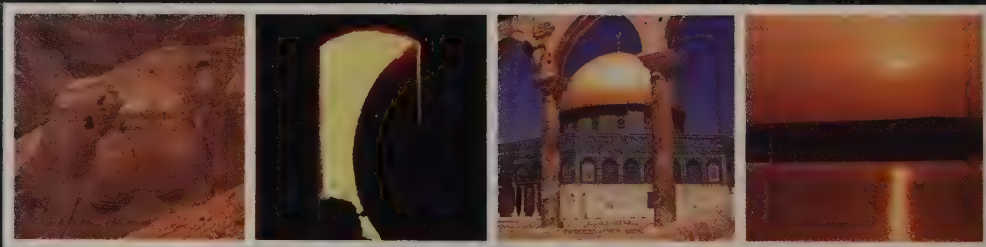
momentousness of being alive, the sheer bigness and awesomeness of being a human being alive in God's world with light, with grace, with wisdom, with responsibility, with biblical truth.

"I judge rightly or wrongly," he says, "that as a generation, most of us are pygmies as compared with the great-souled Christians of earlier days, the Athanasiuses, the Luthers, the Anselms—Whitefield, Wesley, and Edwards. They were, by the grace of God, bigger people than most of us are."

Valentine Cunningham in his review writes, "Packer stands for an arresting and influential blend of spirituality and theological hard-headedness." The operative word there is "stands." Like my son who gutted his way through an uneven match, achieving something greater than a victory, so the testimony of J. I. Packer transcends the sum total of blows leveled against him. The boy who decades ago nearly died being chased into the street, and who came back later to help bullies with their homework, today seems bigger than most of us. 

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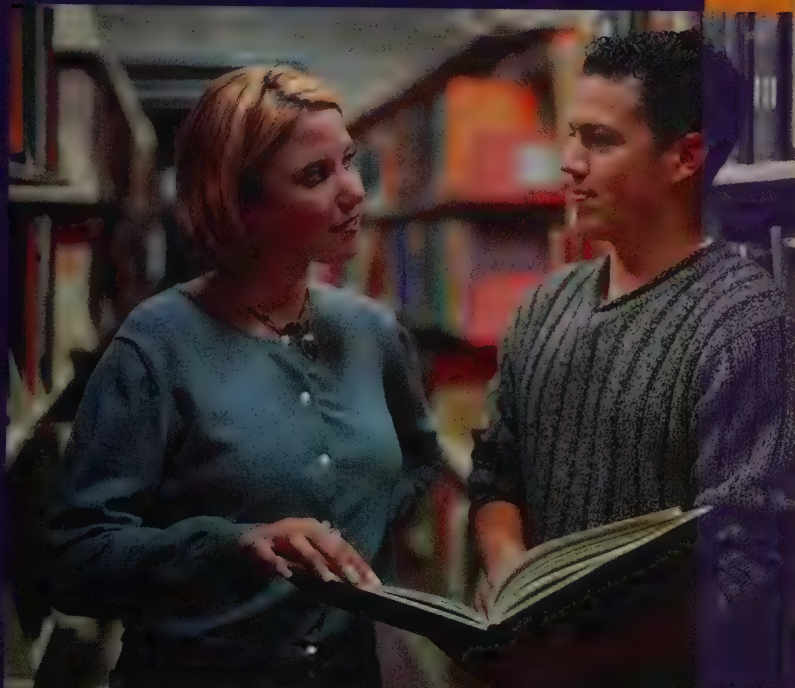
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KAREN L. MULDER

Each year during the liturgical celebration of the Passion, Christians relive the events of Christ's last week on earth before his resurrection. To highlight this season, we showcase the work of seven contemporary artists who consider the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus anew with a variety of approaches.

Using a vibrant palette, Tanja Butler communicates the spiritual transaction underlying Jesus' humble act of footwashing and, shown on the cover, Jesus' last meal. The mundane is illumined with joy. In contrast, the subdued tones and foggy atmosphere of her *Road to Emmaus* (p. 47) create a gentle mood, suggestive of

Were You There?



CHRIST WASHING
THE DISCIPLES' FEET

Tanja Butler

Christ's everlasting patience as he waits for us to recognize him. Butler is a full-time printmaker and painter in rural upstate New York, a stepmother to nine children, and a lifelong Christian whose earliest childhood memories recall images from her parents' illustrated Bible.

Edgar Boevé's *Last Supper* is startling not only because the artist imagines the disciples around a table on equal terms with the Savior, but because the painting is rendered on a real table top. Boevé taught for decades at Calvin College, where in the 1960s he developed one of the first evangelical art departments and contemporary Christian art galleries.

Wayne Forte's crowing rooster is the traditional Christian symbol for Peter's betrayal of Jesus. Forte's shrilly rendered cock, six feet high in bold, thick lines,



LAST SUPPER
Edgar Boevé



AND PETER WEPT
Wayne Forte

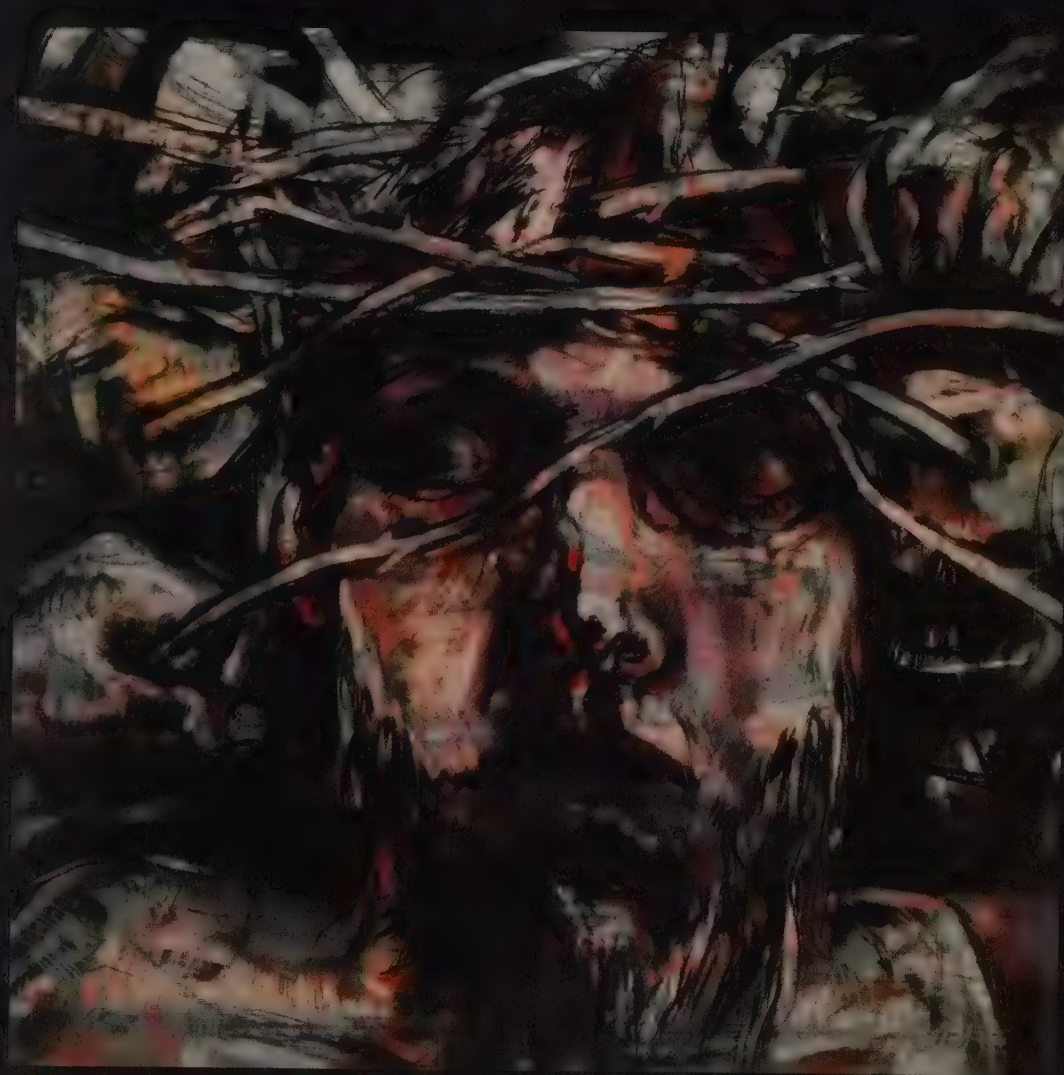
reminds us of our continual propensity to fall short of the mark, as did Peter. Forte, a successful California artist from the Philippines, will soon relocate to Brazil.

Bruce Herman's haunting works boldly portray the face of Christ under the burden of his sufferings. As they are partly inspired by self-portraits, they intimate that the Lord is sympathetic to our personal sufferings. *The Crowning* and *The Flogging* (shown on the table of contents) are from the book *Golgotha*, published by Gordon College, where Herman is professor and chair of a burgeoning art department.

Black Sun Crucifixion echoes the distortion and pain found in the *Isenheim Altarpiece*, Matthias Grunewald's sixteenth-century painting for a congregation of patients with skin lesions. Catling sees that fallen humanity is constantly dealing with its self-inflicted disfigurement and victimization—and that Christ's acceptance of this agonizing part of the human experience reveals his true, tough love for us. A well-known



BLACK SUN
CRUCIFIXION
William Catling



THE CROWNING
Bruce Herman



LET THERE BE LIGHT
James Disney



ROAD TO EMMAUS

Tanja Butler

sculptor and art professor, Catling lives near Los Angeles.

James Disney's ethereal Christ is otherworldly—neither totally solid, nor spiritually wispy—but his resurrected presence recolors the landscape, cutting through darkness with a golden light. Disney, a full-time Lutheran pastor and self-taught painter, “plucks faces” from his church’s pictorial directory to depict Christ, emulating Renaissance painters who intentionally portrayed Jesus as an ordinary person to invite the viewers’ empathy towards him.

William Weber, an art teacher from Illinois, leaves us with the ineffable peace of Jesus in a figure reminiscent of a timeless icon out of past history, but his Christ is also a modern and expressionistically drawn figure. In this way, the artist affirms the fact that Jesus Christ is as timeless as his peace is everlasting. **CI**

Karen L. Mulder is assistant professor of art and art history at Union University and cofounder of Christians in the Arts Networking, Inc. To contact these artists, e-mail kimulder@buster.uu.edu or write K. L. Mulder, Union University, Jackson, TN 38305.

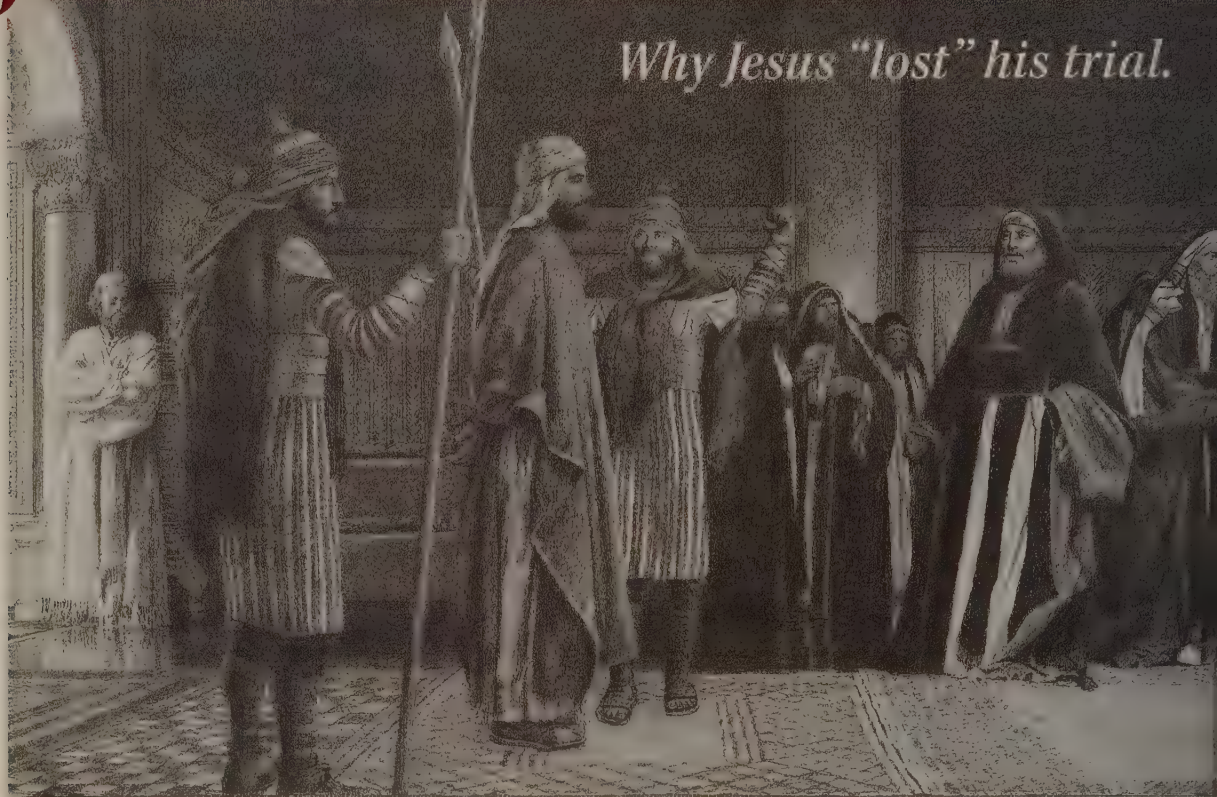
“MY PEACE I LEAVE WITH YOU”

William J. Weber



JESUS V. SANHEDRIN

Why Jesus "lost" his trial.



DARRELL L. BOCK

In recent years, Americans have been bombarded by one sensational criminal trial after another—each one, it seemed, the “trial of the century.” Ironically, this exposure may have given us new eyes for appreciating the details of what Christians believe to be the trial of all time: *Jesus bar Joseph v. Sanhedrin*.

How would today’s legal analysts characterize this 2,000-year-old trial of a carpenter’s son from the backwaters of Galilee? What would they single out as the highlights, the crucial turning points? How would they understand the charge brought against Jesus?

executed. Then they would zero in on a series of tactical blunders the defendant makes that ultimately cost him his life.

We know that Jesus, after having been betrayed by one of his own followers, was hustled under tight guard to stand before the Sanhedrin, an assembly of Jewish religious leaders whose chief priest at the time was Caiaphas. Fearing the worst, his disciples fled. Peter, however, ventured as far as the building where Jesus was taken for examination. While sitting around a fire with some soldiers in an outside courtyard, Peter feigned ignorance of the controversial teacher being interrogated inside. He knew all too well why his master had been arrested and did not wish to share the same fate.

Because Israel at this time was a puppet Jewish state under the jurisdiction of the Roman Empire, the Sanhedrin did not possess the legal power to sentence a person to death. Only the Roman magistrates could do this. So the

assembled Jewish leaders on this Thursday night looked to find some basis for bringing Jesus before the governor—and they tried to do so swiftly since Pilate would be in Jerusalem only for the week of the Passover festival that was just beginning.

To appreciate the importance of this hearing, we must recall the controversy that had attached itself to Jesus’ ministry over the preceding three years. Not only had his miracles and his claims to authority made the religious officials in Jerusalem nervous; Jesus’ approach to Sabbath practice, healings, exorcisms, and sinners ended up challenging the existing religious structure of Judaism.

In short, Jesus was a reformer of Judaism, calling the nation of Israel to repentance. John the Baptist had done this before him, but there was a major difference: John prepared the way for the era of decisive reform, only calling for a heart ready to respond to the changes God might bring; Jesus claimed

UNWELCOME REFORMER

Using the last chapters of the Gospel of Mark as their legal brief, the analysts would probably begin with the end—with the blunt fact that the defendant loses the case and gets



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to bring that reform. If Jesus were left to lead the people in his unique way, Judaism would never be the same. An official examination before the religious leaders, it is now clear, was inevitable.

UNFAIR HEARING?

It is often suggested that the Jews broke their own legal rules

to bring Jesus before the Romans. Often those making this point have used it not to question the breaking of the rules but to show that Mark did not accurately understand Jewish history and blundered in writing his account of Jesus. Or worse yet, Mark and the early Christian community were skewing the facts—creating an anti-Semitic fiction—to slander the Jews by making them, and not the Roman Gentiles, responsible for Jesus' death.

The fact is that these rules, while not written down until about A.D. 170 in the Mishnah, did record an older oral tradition. One section of the Mishnah,

titled "Sanhedrin," describes the legal process required in a Jewish trial where the defendant faces possible death. It states that the high priest should not participate in the questioning, the verdict cannot be given on the same day as the trial, blasphemy requires God's name be explicitly pronounced, and someone is required to speak on behalf of the defendant.

None of these things is in the record of Jesus' examination. But recent research—including my own—shows that the Jewish leadership very likely did not view this hearing as a formal trial but more as something comparable to a grand jury inquiry. Since they would not be able to make the decision to put Jesus to death, Jewish rules concerning a capital trial did not apply to this case. All they were considering was whether Jesus could be brought before the Romans as a political subversive. Could he be viewed as such a public threat that Rome would wish to remove him?

A PUBLIC THREAT

In an effort to find if Jesus could be tried for a political crime, the questioners began by reviewing Jesus' statements about the temple. Already in Jesus' day the temple had become the center of a "church-state" compromise in which the Romans treated the temple with an exceptional respect. History had taught them that anything less could lead to public chaos or worse.

The ancient Jewish historian Josephus notes several disturbances in Jerusalem during this era that had inflamed the Jewish crowds. One occurred shortly after Jesus' death when a Roman soldier "mooned" the Jewish crowd from a temple portico during a festival, creating a public riot that left the streets strewn with bodies. And both Jews and Romans were ever conscious of the Maccabean revolts, which began in 167 B.C. when a Gentile ruler marched into the temple and sacrificed a pig. The act,

representing the enforced Hellenization of Palestinian Jewish culture, so inflamed the Jews that they waged a three-year war to free themselves from Syrian rule.

Even the Roman governor Pilate, who would sentence Jesus to death after he had been handed over to him by the high priest, had brought trouble upon himself by placing banners with eagles on them in Jerusalem to indicate Jewish subservience to Rome. Josephus writes that "when the Jews again petitioned him [to remove the standards], he gave a prearranged signal to his soldiers to surround them, and threatened to punish them with immediate death if they did not end their riot and return to their own homes. But they threw themselves on the ground and bared their throats, declaring that they would gladly welcome death rather than dare to transgress the wisdom of their laws." Pilate, astounded at the firmness of their guarding of the laws, immediately transferred the images from Jerusalem to Caesarea.

In the light of this history, Jesus' remarks about the temple and his actions would have been considered nothing less than explosive, and it is little surprise that the Sanhedrin focused on this potent issue. Yet Mark 14:53-60 tells us the presentation of witnesses got nowhere with this issue: "Some stood up and gave false testimony against him, saying, 'We heard him say, "I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another, not made with hands."' But even on this point their testimony did not agree." The Sanhedrin needed to find another avenue of challenge.

THE FATAL MISSTATEMENT

At this point Caiaphas moved the inquiry toward another potential political charge. Urging Jesus to defend himself, Caiaphas asked, "Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?"

Three points in his question are important. First, the term *Messiah* refers to the promised King of Israel, making the query a *political* and not just a religious one. Claiming to be Messiah was not necessarily blasphemous; in itself it was not a claim to divinity. But a positive answer to the high priest's question would mean that the leaders could take Jesus to Pilate and claim that the teacher claimed to be a king who would deliver Israel from her Gentile enemies. The hope for such a king was found in the Hebrew Scrip-

tures, was feared by King Herod at the time of Jesus' birth, and was reflected in recent Jewish works, such as Psalms of Solomon 17-18.

Second, the term *Son of the Blessed One* did not mean all that it does to Christians today. It was a regal title held by God's anointed (2 Sam. 7:14; Ps. 2).

And third, the Jewish practice of showing reverence for the name of God by not pronouncing it can be seen in the way Caiaphas calls God "the Blessed One." This detail indicates the authenticity of Mark's account.

Jesus' reply gave the leaders far more than they dared hope for. And it was on this point that today's legal analysts would agree Jesus got himself into trouble—of all the questions he had refused to answer, he should have taken the Fifth on this one. Jesus replies simply, "I am," and then goes on to raise the stakes of his claim—"and 'you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power,' and 'coming with the clouds of heaven.'"

Combining allusions to Daniel 7:13-14 and Psalm 110:1, he evokes images of a figure who is given authority to vindicate God's people. The phrases *seated at the right hand of the Power* and *coming with the clouds of heaven* make it clear that Messiah was not *all* that Jesus claimed to be. To come in the clouds was a figure of speech reserved for deity (Num. 10:34; Ps. 104:3; Isa. 19:1).

Though Jesus shared the sense of reverence for God's name by referring to him as *the Power*, his claim was that he would be placed at God's right hand, serving as the one who represents and vindicates God's people. This was more than saying he represented God's presence to the people as the priest does when he goes into the earthly Holy of Holies. Jesus was claiming his own presence, and authority came directly from above.

Mark records that, at this, Caiaphas "tore his clothes and said, 'Why do we still need witnesses? You have heard his blasphemy! What is your decision?' All of them condemned him as deserving death."

Anyone who understands how the Jews felt about the holiness and uniqueness of God's presence would appreciate how unusual (and offensive) Jesus' claim sounded. Neither is it incidental that the New Testament later used the phrase "at the right hand" 14 times to proclaim Jesus' authority as the promised one of God. (A few Jewish works did contem-

plate the possibility of a great luminary such as Moses or Enoch going into God's presence to aid in his work, but such claims were highly controversial.)

For the Sanhedrin, this Galilean teacher was no great luminary. Jesus simply and confidently proclaimed that this position at God's right hand would be his and that God would justify his claim to that position. In fact, he said that he would one day judge the very leaders examining him. The real trial one day would be his.

THE LAST WORD

Jesus' answer sets the stage for a story that today would lead the evening news of all three major networks. Speaking over a video clip of the high priest ripping his robe, the analysts would explain how Jesus not only had affirmed he was Messiah—getting himself into political trouble by threatening the existing government leadership—but also had made a second tactical blunder through raising the religious ire of the Sanhedrin by blaspheming their God. This, along with his denying the judicial authority of the Sanhedrin, gave the counsel even more reason to dislike him and push for a death sentence under the Romans.

At this point, Jesus is taken before Pilate. The political charge works and stirs the emotions of the crowd in urging Pilate to release the insurrectionist Barabbas instead of Jesus. Jesus is sentenced and crucified—a figure no more important to world history, so far as anyone can tell, than Barabbas or the other troublemakers who keep reproducing themselves in Palestine.

The legal analysts would describe Jesus' fate as the result of his poor defense strategy. And they would be right, except for one overlooked possibility: that Jesus had spoken the truth about being Messiah, the kind that would judge from the right hand of the Father. Three short days later that truth set Jesus free; God literally raised Jesus from the dead. What had been a very bad Friday suddenly looked like Good Friday. Or as one exceptional legal analyst by the name of Paul saw it, Jesus "was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead" (Rom. 1:4). What better defense could there be? 

Darrell L. Bock is research professor of New Testament at Dallas Theological Seminary and associate pastor at Trinity Fellowship Church. He lives with his family in Dallas, Texas.

GRAVE MATTERS

*Take away the
Resurrection
and the center
of Christianity
collapses.*

N. T. WRIGHT

CLEMENCE BUTTS

On Palm Sunday 1996 the London *Sunday Times* ran a feature about the tomb of Jesus, suggesting that a new discovery threatened the basis of Christianity. Two BBC producers went looking for fresh material for an Easter Sunday program. They wanted to stimulate discussion on the nature of the Resurrection. Supposing, they asked, someone actually found the bones of Jesus lying around in Palestine: What would that do to Christian faith?

So they looked for ossuaries—bone boxes. They found one inscribed “Jesus, son of Joseph” (actually, they found more than one, but they only followed up one). It had been found in a family tomb; and in the same family tomb were other boxes, labeled Joseph, Mary, another Mary, a Matthew, and someone called Judah, described as “the son of Jesus.” The boxes were empty: vandals had apparently got there first, possibly in antiquity. Now, journalists are good at putting two and two together and making seventeen. Could this be Jesus’ tomb? Would it cast doubt on the very foundations of Christianity?

The first thing to say is that, even if nobody had ever said Jesus of Nazareth had been raised to life, the probability is still enormously high that this would not have been the tomb of the Jesus, Mary, and Joseph we know from the Gospels. “Mary” is by far the most common female name in the period; “Joseph” and “Jesus” are two of the most common male names, with Judah—or Judas—not far behind.

Discovering a tomb with these names in one family is rather like an archaeologist two thousand years hence finding an English tomb with parents called Philip and Elizabeth and children called Charles and Anne, and claiming that this must be the British royal family. The Israeli archaeologists, none of them interested in defending Christianity, were the first to pooh-pooh the idea of this being the tomb of Jesus of Nazareth.

Second, if it had been the tomb of Jesus and his family, there are serious oddities. Why is it in Jerusalem, when the family lived in Nazareth where, presumably, Joseph had died

some time before Jesus' public ministry? Why is there no mention of James, Jesus' most famous brother, or of James and Simon (as listed in Mark 6:3, along with some unnamed sisters)? And why is there a *son* of Jesus? There is no evidence whatever that Jesus had children, whether in or out of wedlock; his family—that is, his brothers and nephews—were well known in the early church. Sixty years after Jesus' death, his grandnephews were accused by the Roman emperor Domitian of being part of a would-be royal family. If Jesus had had a son, people would have known. It would have mattered.

But the most serious problem is yet to come, and this points forward to the real message of Easter: Bone boxes—ossuaries—were used in the *second* stage of a two-stage burial process. Many first-century Jews were buried this way. First they were laid on a slab, wrapped in cloth with spices. The tomb was a cave, not a hole in the ground. It would have a movable stone door; the family and friends would in due course lay other bodies on other shelves in the same cave. Then, a year or more later, when all the flesh had decomposed, relatives or friends would return to collect the bones and place them in an ossuary, a box roughly two feet by one foot by one foot, which would then be stored away either in recesses within the same cave or somewhere else. In other words, the burial of Jesus as recorded in the Gospels was only the first stage of an intended *two-stage* burial.

So, did anyone ever think of going back to the tomb to collect Jesus' bones and put them in an ossuary? No, they didn't! The whole early church knew that Jesus' body wasn't in the tomb. They believed that God had raised Jesus to life again, transforming his body in the process. This wasn't a resurrection, a journey back into the present life; it was a resurrection, a going on through death and out the other side into a new mode of physicality, the beginning of God's new creation.

If the disciples had believed that what they called the "resurrection" was just a "spiritual" event, leaving the body in the tomb, someone sooner or later would have had to go back to collect Jesus' bones and store them properly. The tomb was designed, like most such tombs of the period, as a family tomb. As additional family members died, the relatives would in due course have come again with their bodies, to lay them elsewhere in the tomb. The ledge where Jesus had been laid would be needed again. But of course, if anyone had at any stage gone back to tidy up Jesus' bones and put them in an ossuary, that would indeed have destroyed Christianity before it had even properly begun. Even those contemporary scholars who deny that Jesus was raised bodily from the dead are clear that all the early Christians thought he had been, and that they made it the basis of their whole lives.

So the question of the ossuaries, when we explore it thoroughly, provides paradoxically a sort of negative evidence in favor of Jesus' resurrection. Not only is the tomb the journalists highlighted not Jesus' tomb. By drawing attention to the two-stage burial process, they have reminded us of how impossible it is to imagine Christianity getting off the ground at all if the second stage of the burial process had ever been carried out. Make no bones about it. In their eagerness to find news, the journalists have accidentally highlighted the good news.

WHAT EASTER FAITH MEANS

Someone on a radio show in Holy Week, after the original *Sunday Times* article, declared that it didn't matter if Jesus' bones were still lying around Palestine somewhere. "I expect to go to heaven when I die," he said, "and I won't be taking my bones with me; so I don't see why Jesus shouldn't have done the same."

I suspect that this idea, or something like it, is quite widespread, and it's worth pointing out the mistake. Belief in Jesus' resurrection is *not* the belief that Jesus has simply "gone to heaven" after his death, as though Jesus were like a great saint or martyr whom God has received into his presence with honor. Jews believed that about all sorts of people; it wouldn't have been new; it wouldn't have been *news*.

Easter faith always was the belief that Jesus went through death into a new sort of bodily existence in which his original body was transformed into a body with new characteristics and properties. When Paul, the first Christian to write about the resurrection, draws conclusions from Jesus' resurrection about our future resurrection, he says that those who are still alive at the end of time will have their bodies *changed*. He talks about seeds and plants, about acorns and oaks. Our bodies won't be abandoned; they will be transformed.



The message of the Resurrection

So what was the Resurrection all about, as far as the early Christians were concerned? And what on earth—and I mean *on earth*—does it mean for the world and the church at the end of the twentieth century?

The early Christians very quickly came to understand what had happened to Jesus in terms of the old Jewish, biblical belief that the living God was one day going to solve the problem of Israel's exile and oppression. By doing so, God was going to solve the problem of evil and injustice in the whole world. That is what it means to say that the Resurrection took place "according to the scriptures": it was the fulfillment of prophetic promises and long-cherished hopes. Putting it succinctly, the Resurrection demonstrated that the Cross was a victory, not a defeat.

As Paul says, if Christ is not raised, your faith is futile, and you are still in your sins (1 Cor. 15:17). But if Christ has been raised, then this shows that on the cross he defeated death, and hence sin, and hence all evil and injustice, once and for all. Easter is the unveiling of God's answer to the problems of the world.

The early Christian belief in the resurrection of Jesus was a belief about something that actually happened within this real world, not simply a belief about a transcendent dimension, a spiritual or otherworldly reality that leaves this world behind. Likewise, the continuing message of the Resurrection is precisely *not* that "there is a life after death." There *is* life after death, and all God's people will inherit it; but the point is that it won't be what most modern Westerners think of as "life after death." It will involve God's people being given new bodies, like Jesus' body, to share in the new heavens *and new earth* that God will make.

WHY EASTER MATTERS

The message of the Resurrection is that this present world matters; that the problems and pains of this present world matter; that the living God has made a decisive bridgehead into this present world with his healing and all-conquering love; and that, in the name of this strong love, all the evils, all the injustices, and all the pains of the present world must now be addressed with the news that healing, justice, and love have won the day. That's why we pray: "Thy kingdom come, *on earth as it is in heaven*." Make no bones about it: Easter Day was the first great answer to that prayer.

If Easter faith is simply about believing that God has a nice comfortable afterlife for some or all of us, then Christianity becomes a mere pie-in-the-sky religion instead of a kingdom-on-earth-as-it-is-in-heaven religion. If Easter faith is simply about believing that Jesus is risen in some "spiritual" sense, leaving his body in the tomb, then Christianity turns into a let-the-world-stew-in-its-own-juice religion, instead of a kingdom-on-earth-as-it-is-in-heaven religion. If Easter faith is only about me, and perhaps you, finding a new dimension to our own personal spiritual lives in the here and now, then Christianity becomes simply a warmth-in-the-heart religion instead of a kingdom-on-earth-as-it-is-in-heaven religion. It becomes focused on me and my survival, my sense of God, my spirituality, rather than outwards on God and on God's world that still needs the kingdom message so badly.

But if Jesus Christ is truly risen from the dead, Christianity

tion is that this present world matters.

becomes what the New Testament insists that it is: good news for the whole world, news that warms our hearts *precisely because it isn't just about warming hearts*. The living God has in principle dealt with evil once and for all, and is now at work, by his own Spirit, to do for us and the whole world what he did for Jesus on that first Easter Day.

That is why we who celebrate Easter do so with material things: water in baptism and bread and wine at the Lord's Supper. Easter is about the living God claiming the world of space, time, and matter as his own. That is why Christians celebrate it with candles and flowers and incense and processions and banners and, above all, music: the world of creation has been reclaimed by the living and healing God. That is why we who celebrate Easter after a Lenten fast do so not with a guilty sense of going back to things that are tainted with sin, but with the joyful sense of celebrating the goodness of God's good creation in all its rich variety.

HOW WE CELEBRATE EASTER

The celebration of Easter calls us, one and all, to delight in God's way of holiness: not a negative, gloomy holiness, but a positive giving of ourselves to God in the knowledge that his way is the way of true delight, of true fulfillment. And that is why the celebration of Easter, in a world, a country, and a region where injustice, violence, degradation, and all manner of wickedness are still endemic, makes the most powerful symbolic statement that we are not prepared to tolerate such things—that God is not prepared to tolerate such things—and

that we will work, and plan, and pray, and vote with all the energy of God to implement the victory of Jesus over them all. True Easter faith, true Easter celebration, and true Easter holiness must issue in true Easter agendas.

Recall the old jibe of Karl Marx and others, that Christianity lulls people into being content with their lot or content to look on other people's misery and injustice because it speaks only about a spiritualized heaven in the future and a spiritual experience here and now. That jibe is a fair critique of a watered-down Christianity that tries to say that Jesus' body, like John Brown's, stayed amoudering in the grave while his soul went marching on. But it misses entirely the point of the true Christian belief in the Resurrection.

Notice how, in the Gospels, all the first witnesses of the Resurrection *run*. Half the references in the Gospels to people running occur in the Resurrection stories: the women *run* from the tomb, Peter and John *run to* the tomb, the disciples in Emmaus hurry back to Jerusalem. Where is that energy in the church today, a God-given energy that can't wait to get the good news out and to implement it in the world? If it is lacking, could it have something to do with the fact that far too many Christians have been lulled into thinking that God isn't really concerned with this world, so that the Resurrection of Jesus is not about something happening within this world, so that the only thing that matters is my private otherworldly salvation?

The bodily resurrection of Jesus isn't a take-it-or-leave-it thing, as though some Christians are welcome to believe it and others are welcome not to believe it. Take it away, and the whole picture is totally different. Take it away, and Karl Marx was probably right to accuse Christianity of ignoring the problems of the material world. Take it away, and Sigmund Freud was probably right to say that Christianity is a wish-fulfillment religion.

Take it away, and Friedrich Nietzsche was probably right to say that Christianity is a religion for wimps. Put it back, and you have a faith that can take on the postmodern world that looks to Marx, Freud, and Nietzsche as its prophets; you can beat them at their own game with the Easter news that the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength.

Those who celebrate the mighty resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, therefore, have an awesome and nonnegotiable responsibility. When we say "Alleluia! Christ is risen," we are saying that Jesus is Lord of the world, and that the present would-be lords of the world are not. When we sing, in the old hymn, that "Judah's Lion burst his chains and crushed the serpent's head," are we ready to put that victory into practice? Are we ready to speak up for, and to take action on behalf of, those even in our own local community, let alone farther afield, who are quietly being crushed by uncaring and unjust systems? Are we ready to speak up for the truth of the gospel over the dinner table and in the coffee bar, and in the council chamber?

Let's make no bones about it: If Easter isn't good news, then there is no good news. But if it is—if it is true that Jesus Christ is risen indeed—then Easter Day, and the Easter message, is the true sun which, when it rises, puts all other suns to shame. **CT**

N. T. Wright is dean of Lichfield Cathedral, Staffordshire, England, and author of For All God's Worth: True Worship and the Calling of the Church (Eerdmans, 1997), from which this article is excerpted; used by permission of the publisher.

Good News for Women?

*Inspired by Promise Keepers,
upbeat events for women are flourishing
while avoiding divisive issues.*

MARY CAGNEY

Patsy Clairmont walks on stage with a long string of rubber bands. Holding the elastic array at arm's length, she cries out, "Warning, warning, hormonal woman ahead."

"Often, my emotions cause me to have stretch marks," explains Clairmont, the bestselling author of *God Uses Cracked Pots* (Focus on the Family, 1991). "They pull me this way and that way." The audience of 5,000 laughing women roars in approval.

It's the women's turn. In scenes reminiscent of the Promise Keepers (PK) men's movement, women are coming together across the United States. Last year, about 197,000 women attended 15 conferences organized by Women of Faith. This year, Women of Faith's leadership is projecting double that total for 29 conferences under the theme Bring Back the Joy.

Other groups have taken advantage of the surging



attendance at women's conferences. Aspiring Women, Focus on the Family (Renewing the Heart), and Time Out have scheduled events for women throughout 1998. In all, about 600,000 women are expected to attend these gatherings in 1998, compared to the 683,000 men who attended PK stadium events in 1997 (not counting Stand in the Gap, PK's October gathering on the Mall in Washington, D.C.). Typically, the women's events start on Friday and run all day Saturday, with admission fees ranging from \$25 to \$60.

Although they were inspired by Promise Keepers, these women's conferences have different goals and a different ethos. For PK, men are encouraged to "stand in the gap" with God for the benefit of home, country, and church. They do this by pledging to keep seven promises that apply biblical principles of righteousness, especially with regard to their commitments to their wives and children.

In contrast, a primary goal of many of the women's conferences is to give women a time out from their harried schedules and to extend comfort and companionship. Clairmont, who for years agonized over agoraphobia, a chronic fear of public spaces, says, "I think the main struggle of women today is loneliness." She says contemporary life's frenzied pace presents women with emotional challenges that few have faced before. "I use rubber bands to show how women's emotions work. I've learned not to mind an emotional day."

FILLING A NICHE: The burgeoning women's conferences are taking place in the context of millions of PK-influenced husbands and fathers taking a greater interest in home life.

Women of Faith and Aspiring Women, two of the largest conference series, were started by men inspired by PK weekends, which are a combination of revival meeting and spiritual pep rally.

Mike Hyatt, founding partner of Aspiring Women conferences, attended a PK meeting in 1993. "I went to a PK meeting and thought, *Why isn't there something like this for women?*" says Hyatt, a Christian publishing veteran, currently associate publisher of Thomas Nel-

son in Nashville. New Life Clinics cofounder Stephen Arterburn says of the Women of Faith conferences, "I really believe that the idea was a gift from God." Initially, Arterburn met with Lisa Harper, director of Renewing the Heart conferences, to learn how they organized their meetings.

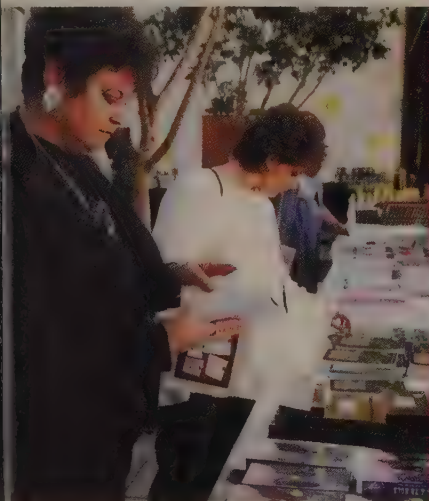
Arterburn says, "The clinics always did conferences dealing with problems, and the response was underwhelming." He says they revised the conference focus "to see how many more people we could reach by celebrating what is good about life." Women of Faith recruited top female Christian speakers and musicians. They put a spotlight on encouragement, sharing sorrows and joys from their own lives. The changes struck a chord. In 1996, 38,000 flocked to its Joyful Journey conferences, and in 1997, 197,000 women attended.

Unlike PK, the women's conferences rarely focus on confession, repentance, and recommitment. "I felt women had had enough guilt and needed more encouragement," says Aspiring Women's Hyatt. "Women tend to be hyper-responsible in our society and culture. The message needs to be different for women." From Hyatt's perspective, the principal needs of women include overcoming a poor self-image, coping with marital problems, and guidance in financial matters.

Aspiring Women and Women of Faith, both for-profit organizations, have partnered with some of the evangelical movement's largest organizations.

At the conferences, products and services are available through display booths. Hyatt is up-front about whom Aspiring Women is trying to reach, saying, "We're going after the type of person [who] goes into a Christian bookstore." At Women of Faith events, New Life and their Remuda clinics (which specialize in eating disorders) are on hand to provide information about their counseling services. Much of the merchandise available at a local Christian bookstore is on hand, including women's study Bibles, apparel, and magazines (including CT's sister publication TODAY'S CHRISTIAN WOMAN, which has a partnership agreement with

Author/interior designer Terry Willits (far left) speaks at the Aspiring Women meeting in Dallas. Women nationwide will gather for fellowship and laughter at dozens of conferences in 1998.



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Women of Faith). And many of the speakers hold book signings.

THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS: Despite the influence of Promise Keepers, the focus of these women's conferences has much in common with secular self-improvement and motivational seminars: Disorders are the order of the day, and victimhood almost always precedes victory. Most speakers describe the defining moment in their own lives as an experience of intense adversity testing their Christian faith.

The life story of Sheila Walsh, a Women of Faith speaker, is one example. In the early 1990s, Walsh, then cohost of Pat Robertson's *700 Club*, was one of the country's most familiar and beloved Christian celebrities. But in 1992 she stepped down from the program and later received inpatient treatment at a psychiatric hospital. Since then, she has been divorced, remarried, and now has a one-year-old child. Walsh, author of *Honestly*, says of her spiritual journey, "I felt that I buried my face in the mane of the Lion of Judah."

Walsh says the Women of Faith movement is "like a community of broken people." She adds, "The purpose of opening a wound is for healing, but you need to open a wound first. It's only through facing what's true that people can be healed." Since her recovery, Walsh has found herself in demand as a conference speaker.

"A lot of the Joyful Journey experience reminds me of the story of *The Wizard of Oz*," says Walsh. "The lion found courage, but he couldn't have done so by himself, not one of them could have. It was because they went together that they could do it."

Another major ingredient in the new movement asks women to move beyond overcoming past adversity to grasping future opportunity. Thelma Wells, author of *Bumblebees Fly Anyway* (Kendall-Hunt, 1997), tells of her struggles with racism, physical assaults, and emotional abuse. Wells, an African American, says she wears a bumblebee brooch on her shoulder as a constant reminder that the bumblebee flies in spite of its shape. She says

Mentoring and Modeling Great Aspirations

"You older women of Christ, there is a generation of women out there longing to walk beside you," Southern Baptist author and speaker Esther Burroughs said at the inaugural Aspiring Women conference in February. "Mentoring is not about cloning, but about helping women become like Jesus."

Burroughs, 61, defines mentoring as "sharing the seeds of God's impact in your life journey" with younger women.

Women mentoring one another is becoming a significant ministry goal among the leaders of the women's spiritual-development conferences.

In February, about 2,000 women gathered at Calvary Church in Dallas for the first Aspiring Women conference. Organizers billed the conference as "an opportunity for you and your friends to get away from the demands of home, family, and work to a place where you can sit at the feet of Jesus."

Burroughs and others are concerned about the separation of families and the lack of contact between generations. "We no longer have the luxury of being raised by an extended family," Burroughs writes in *A Garden Path to Mentoring: Planting Your Life in Another and Releasing the Fragrance of Christ* (New Hope, 1997).

Burroughs told CT she believes that "the Lord is looking for women to get out of the church" and into the world for ministry. She hopes to encourage women to "become all that God wants them to be."

Generation X is looking for "an authentic, live, show-me, love-me, walk-with-me, and guide-me person," according to Burroughs. Some women in their twenties who visit church have no clue where or how to buy a Bible. But they want to know because they see peers underlining or highlighting words of Scripture.

"The women of the nineties are saying, we want mentors," says *Aspire* magazine editor Jeanette Thomason. "I think this partly explains the rise of the [women's] conferences. Women are seeking relationships with other women to find their own way as Christians."



Seed planter: Burroughs.

By Mary Cagney in Dallas.

Christian women should "defy the odds" just as bumblebees do. Wells develops several themes in her messages, including "the power of choice" and "in Christ you can be the best you can be."

Also, Wells points women toward Scripture. She recalls an e-mail message from a woman who complained of verbal abuse by her pastor. The woman found the strength to confront the minister in part because of her study of Psalm 27.

Despite much emphasis on women's problems, conference leaders use humor to lighten the mood of the meetings. Speeches are peppered with references to mammograms and estrogen pills. Barbara Johnson, who has sold more than 2 million books, says she offers comments "about dieting, middle age, motherhood, husbands, wrinkles, love—all those hot spots in a woman's life that would kill us if we let them get us down."

Laughter and joy are the main courses in a menu spiced with what Eastern College scholar Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen calls "gynecological humor." "I suspect they're trying to send a message to men: Girls just want to have fun," says Van Leeuwen.

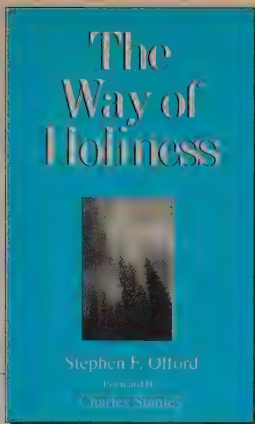
Women come away from conferences feeling replenished and hopeful. Walsh found a note on her seat at a San Antonio conference from a woman whose husband has been abusive, saying, "Thank you for the hope I got last night."

The conferences also are designed to envelop the women attendees with a sense of intimacy and community. "When they see 20,000 other women, they realize emotionally that they are not alone," Renewing the Heart's Harper says.

One byproduct of the conferences has been a renewed interest in mentoring programs for women (See "Mentoring and Modeling Great Aspirations," left). "We have an eight-week training course for mentors, and I can hardly keep mentors trained to meet the need," says Patti Pierce, president of Women at the Well of Menlo Park, California. "There's not a lot of nurturing in relationships anymore. We have to create them."

THE DEATH OF SISTERHOOD: As American social structures have changed, women have found themselves without the traditional networks for nurture and support that had been available to women of past generations.

Pat Clary, president and founder of Pasadena, California-based Women's Ministries Institute, which has developed women's studies programs for Christian schools, says today's Christian women experience more isolation and loneliness.



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"They're removed from their family," Clary says. "They can't get to know their neighbors. It's difficult to establish relationships if they're in a fast-paced life-style." Harper says, "It's not like 50 years ago when they could go and chat with a neighbor over a cup of coffee. Not connecting is an urgent issue for them."

A woman's place at home, at work, or at church continues to evolve. As women juggle their roles of mother, wife, and employee, more are confused and disoriented. In 1993, researcher Miriam Neff surveyed 1,000 evangelical women and found that fewer than four in ten full-time working women with children felt affirmed by their pastor or by church members for their decision to work.

"The church is meeting the needs of women in more traditional roles," says Women at the Well's Pierce. "Women who are trying to balance marriage, family, and work have very little time to go to the traditional program in the church."

Christian women in the work force today do not have as much time to attend church as their counterparts a generation or two ago. Some congregations now have evening Bible studies for women and have adjusted. But weekend gatherings such as the Joyful Journey conferences provide a welcome break from everyday chores, combined with spiritual nourishment.

AVOIDING AGENDAS? Few issues are as hotly debated by evangelicals as the issue of wifely submission to husbands and its implications for women in leadership positions. However, the Joyful Journey and Aspiring Women conferences do not take an explicit stand on whether the Bible prohibits women in church leadership.

Women of Faith's Arterburn says, "We don't have a political or spiritual agenda. Women who come respond to the truth presented with grace. As a result, women are more motivated to grow in their relationship with the Lord."

Researcher Neff says, "Women are in very different places on these issues. If they talked more about these issues they would attract a lot of criticism, and there wouldn't be as big a group gathering." Yet, Concerned Women for America (CWA), the nation's largest women's organization, which frequently takes stands on public-policy issues, remains supportive of the women's conferences. "It appears that these conferences are endorsing traditional family values, and CWA applauds their efforts," says Carmen Pate, president of the organization.

However, Christians for Biblical Equality founder Catherine Kroeger believes

that women's conferences should do more. "Domestic violence is the premier health problem for women," Kroeger says. "I'm concerned that when we have a humorous problem in our midst, we are denying it." For Ruth Haley Barton, author of *Equal to the Task: Men and Women in Partnership* (InterVarsity Press, 1998), greater attention should be placed on practical concerns, such as developing better communication skills. "There are whole new sets of skills and disciplines that we need to work with," she says. "Men and women have different communication styles. How might we transform our world if men and women deeply honored each other as equal reflections of God's image?"

WHERE'S THE ACTIVISM? The new women's movement stands in contrast to historic women's movements. Christian women led the way in fighting slavery and championing temperance and women's suffrage. "Any big movement of people can have social and political effects, whether intended or not," says Miriam Adeney, a professor at Seattle Pacific University and at Regent College in Vancouver, British Columbia. "I wonder, however, if these conferences are really facing the hard issues of corporate community life," she says. "Is there anything comparable to the realism of Christian women that spawned the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) a century and a half ago?"

The WCTU, led by Frances Willard, had 2 million members worldwide a century ago. Willard made a decision to focus on political means, such as women's right to vote, in order to achieve anti-alcohol goals. She persuaded many Christian women to support women's suffrage as a "weapon of protection to her home and tempted loved ones from the tyranny of drink." WCTU also helped start kindergartens, enact child labor laws, and establish the first daycare centers for the children of working women in the 1870s.

In the fight against slavery, Christian women formed the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society in 1833. They made worship services with hymns and prayers an important feature of their work. Members spoke to more than 40,000 people.

Researchers are studying the shift in political and social activism among evangelical women during the past 100 years. Historian Margaret Bendroth, director of the Women and Twentieth Century Protestantism project financed by Pew Charitable Trusts, says that because there are "more options open to women today," few

of them may "want to run a missionary society." The women's conferences could potentially be harnessed for tremendous social change. The litany for the opening ceremony of the World Conference of Women in 1895 challenged Christian women to honor their forerunners. "For the women who have gone before us . . . for their vision of the wrong of all distinction because of color, creed, or sex, their righteous anger against all oppression of the weak and exploitation of the helpless. . . . We praise thee, O God."

LASTING IMPACT: What will be the lasting impact of these women's conferences? Some leaders believe the women's conferences could have an enduring role not only in meeting specific needs of women, but also in energizing and equipping women for ministry.

Last year, Karen Paparelli, a wife and mother of three young children, attended a women's conference, which she calls "the catalyst that set me sailing." Within weeks of the conference, she says, "God pulled me out of the church and put me into the world." She organized the local March for Jesus event and has been writing a newspaper column from a Christian perspective.

"Women's ministries can really be dynamic for evangelizing and nurturing younger women," says H. B. London, vice president of pastoral ministries for Focus on the Family. "It has the potential of being a great area of evangelism for the local church."

Campus Crusade for Christ, through its organization Women Today International, is equipping women who attend the Women of Faith conferences to evangelize their neighborhoods.

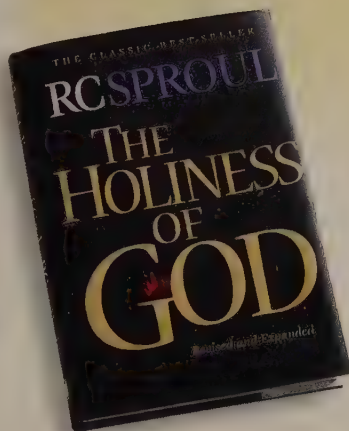
After the conference, a Women Today International staff member is linked with a women's ministry leader to help her train women in evangelism. Time Out conferences are in the process of creating a four-week curriculum for churches to use in discipling women who make a first-time commitment to the Lord at their conferences. Of the new women's conferences, only Time Out has plans to offer leadership training to Christian women.

Perhaps the greatest potential of the conferences will be in encouraging and strengthening women in their personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Debbie Nixon of San Diego learned she had breast cancer just before she went to a women's gathering in Anaheim, California, last September. The conference, Nixon says, "reminded me of God and that I wasn't alone going through this. That was what I needed to hear." 

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So I'm Sorry Already

On the old *Bob Newhart Show*, the one that cast Bob as a psychiatrist, one regular character carried meekness to a fault. He was a failure as a door-to-door salesman because he feared knocking on people's doors might disturb them. So he'd wait on the doorstep, hoping they'd happen to open the door.

One day this fretful character bustled into Bob's office muttering, "I'm sorry I'm late."

"You're not late," said Bob.

"Well then, I'm sorry I'm early," he replied.

"You're not early, either," Bob told him.

"I'm sorry," he sighed.

I was reminded of this apologetic character by the recurrent waves of apology sweeping over the country: whites apologizing to blacks, Catholics apologizing to Jews, Promise Keepers apologizing to everybody. In some cases there are good reasons for apologizing, and it's a necessary first step. But what's the second step? You can't go on being sorry forever, unless you want to wind up on a psychiatrist's couch. What's supposed to happen after repentance?

Of course, the prior question is whether we're dealing with true repentance at all; in some cases, the popular device of formal apology might only be a token paid to blunt criticism. It sounds like, "I'm sorry," but it means, "I said I was sorry." Thus at one end of the apology spectrum are those who intend to do nothing more than say the magic words. It's a get-out-of-jail-free card—sometimes literally. Men of public stature caught using funds or women in questionable ways often use this ploy.

Then there's the apology that takes a diplomatic tone, where one group makes a formal statement to another regarding wrongs in history. I imagine that these statements are made when the apologizers feel crushed by the guilt of yesteryear and search

for a way to alleviate it. I suspect it doesn't work; such an apology can't alleviate guilt, because the apologiz-

ers are not the ones who did the wrong. De-

parted ancestors can't participate in the repentance or the forgiveness; the past is stubbornly unchangeable. It constitutes a psychodrama in which players have assumed roles they are unable to discharge.

Thus historical apologies deliver a measure of frustration. Additionally, they can derail genuine progress. The passage of time has already accom-

plished some healing, as demonstrated by the appearance of a desire to make apology. Treating past division as if it were still in full force uproots naturally growing unity, insidiously suggesting that it's always us-versus-them, forever and ever, amen.

The recent events most resembling biblical repentance are the waves of revival at churches and colleges, and at the Promise Keepers rallies. Hundreds of thousands of men weeping for their sins is a bracing image, yet I wonder if our PK brothers will ever be allowed to say anything beyond "I'm sorry." Systematic denigration of men has left them with little other role.

So what do you say after you say "I'm sorry"? You get on with your life and make changes. As Bob Beckel, cohost of CNN's *Crossfire Sunday*, asked feminist Eleanor Smeal, "If 10,000 of them become better husbands, better providers . . . what's wrong with that?" The Hebrew word for repentance, *shub*, means turning your life around 180 degrees. After apology comes change.

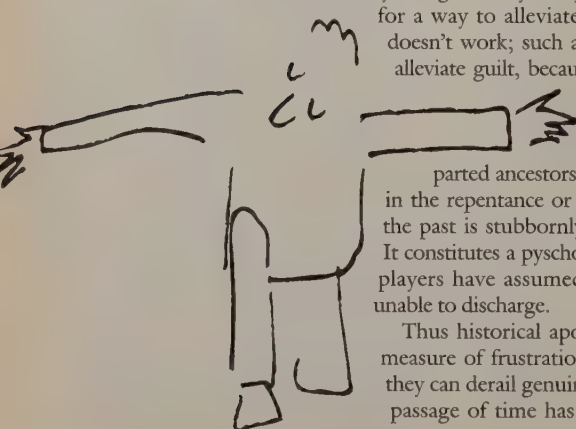
I once heard an overenthusiastic retreat leader proclaim, "Repentance means we turn around 360 degrees!" Of course, in some cases, we do; then we repent again. Even the publican in the temple, heart-felt as his repentance was, may not have walked out the door and into a pristine life. He may have only partly understood the changes God was requiring of him; he may have even failed, initially, at those he did attempt.

The shocking news of the gospel is that we can always be forgiven. God desires "I'm sorry" more than "I did it," contrition more than confession. We cart the broken heap of self into the repair shop and beg for mercy and strength, knowing this is what he loves. "A broken and a contrite heart . . . you will not despise" (Ps. 51:17, NIV).

Broken and contrite hearts have been showing up in odd places lately, not necessarily where the faith journey is complete. Author and *Salon* digizine columnist Anne Lamott holds the usual raft of liberal opinions, yet she is vocally sold out to Jesus, grateful to the church that welcomed her when she was unwed, pregnant, and recovering from substance abuse. Her faith mystifies her family, friends, and even herself. She writes of looking at an image of Christ crucified: "I believe in it, and it's so nuts. How did some fabulously cerebral and black-humored cynic like myself come . . . to believe as much as I believe in gravity or the size of space that Jesus paid a debt he didn't owe because we had a debt we couldn't pay?"

"I'm sorry." It's a good place for understanding to start.

**What do
you say
after you say
"I'm sorry"?**



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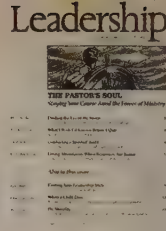
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HIGHLIGHTS: LEADERSHIP

Naked Preachers Are Distracting

It's hip to "tell all" nowadays. But is it wise? Not really, argues William H. Willimon in this article reprinted from LEADERSHIP, a sister publication of CHRISTIANITY TODAY. While the essay addresses mainly preachers, it also makes good eavesdropping for those who listen to sermons. Willimon is dean of the chapel and professor of Christian ministry at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina.

**Authenticity
is more than
a matter
of being who
I am; it is a
matter of being
who God calls
me to be.**



I take as my text a statement by the great theologian Oscar Wilde: "About the worst advice you can give anybody is, 'Be yourself.'" For clergy, that aphorism may be especially true.

Recently I heard a church-growth consultant urge pastors to "be authentic." He noted that boomers, busters, and GenX-ers all like preachers who "share themselves," who peel off the clerical masks and share their humanity. "If you've had a tough week, tell them," he advised. "If you have trouble believing a certain piece of Scripture, tell them."

Authenticity is a great virtue. The insincere ministerial demeanor is a true turnoff for many. The congregation rightly expects us not to talk the talk unless we walk the walk. And perhaps there was a time when we preachers needed to demonstrate to the congregation that, despite the M.Div., the backward collar, or the red rose on the lapel, we were, after all, just poor struggling sinners like them.

I wonder, though, if that day has passed. Lately, there have been so many opportunities for the laity to utter the truism "Well, we must remember that pastors are only human" that I see little need for us intentionally to share ourselves, expose ourselves, strip down, open up, or let it all hang out in the name of "authenticity." Show me a layperson who needs us to expend time in Sunday worship convincing folks that we preachers are, after all, only human, and I'll show you a layperson who has been neglecting the gossip section of the local newspaper.

Have you ever *decided* to act authentically? That's as dumb as deciding to act humbly. You either are or you aren't. To intentionally pepper my sermon with doses of predetermined authenticity is to be, well, inauthentic.

An elderly woman complained to me that she could tell when her pastor had not had time to prepare a sermon, because he would begin crying at the weakest point in the sermon. "Crying?" I asked.

"Yeah, crying," she said. "He says something like, 'When I think of what Jesus did for us I just, well, I . . . I . . . forgive me, I'm just overcome with gratitude.'"

He usually is overcome with gratitude about once every month, usually related to his fishing schedule."

We need more of that? I'm all for pastoral honesty, to let the people know we stand among them as a redeemed sinner who struggles. But the sermon may not be the best place for such sharing. There, we have our hands full proclaiming the gospel, pointing to Christ, telling *the* story; there may not be much time to waste pointing to ourselves, sharing our story. John Wesley loved to counter his preachers' tales of how well they had done in the pulpit by asking them, "But did you offer Christ?"

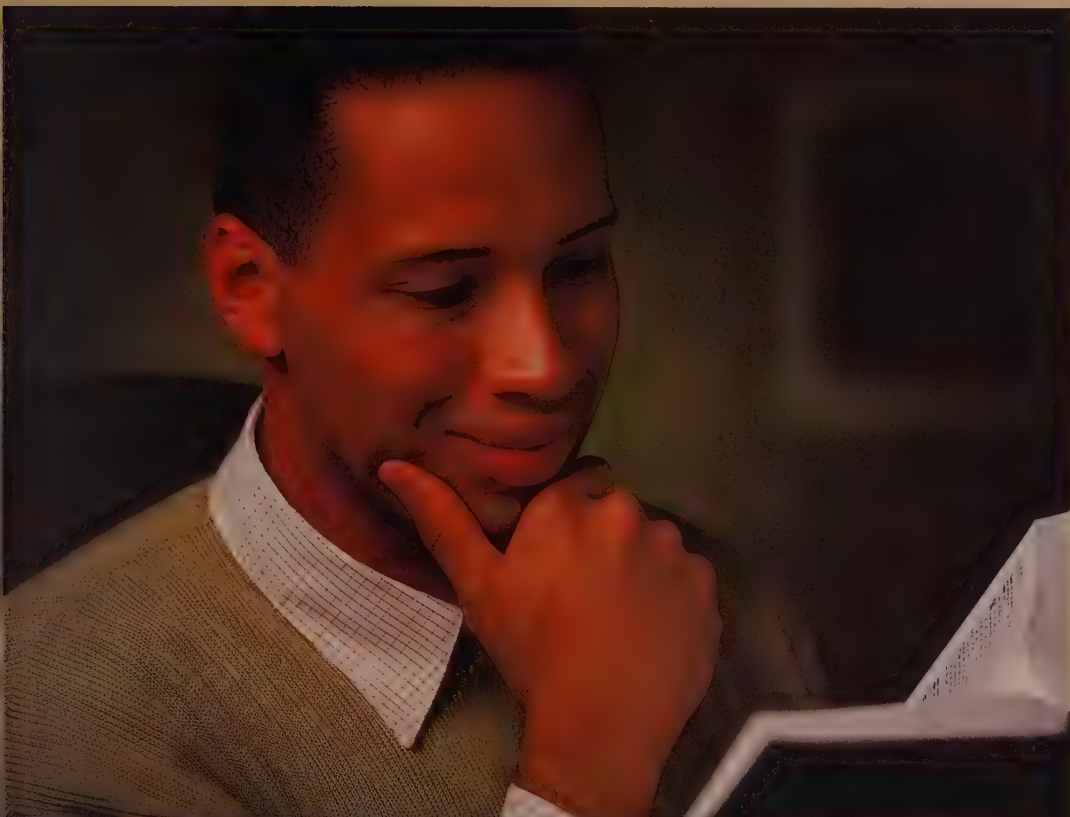
I must never become confused into thinking that people are in church because of me. True, we preach through our personality. When a colleague and I edited an encyclopedia of preaching, we noted that the most-quoted phrase was Phillips Brooks's classic definition of preaching as "truth communicated through personality." We have got the personality thing down fairly well. It's the *truth* thing that may be in peril.

Some time ago, when we preachers were first being urged to "share your story" and to lay ourselves bare before the people, I heard a sermon that began, "Prayer is a problem for me." From there the preacher went on about his doubts and dilemmas with prayer. I thought it refreshingly honest.

On the way home from church, my wife said, "I suppose there was a time when a congregation would be shocked, or at least titillated, by having a pastor admit that he was inept at prayer. Nowadays, it might be more exciting to hear a pastor stand and say, 'I may have problems with prayer, but thank God we Christians have resources greater than my limited experience.' Then he could have quoted Paul or Teresa of Avila or someone who knew more than he did."

In a society where the emotional striptease is the standard stuff of daytime television, in a culture where we are encouraged relentlessly to scan our egos as if there is no help for us other than that which is self-derived, do we preachers need to be "authentic"? Authenticity is more than a matter of being who I am; it is a matter of being who God calls me to be. For preachers, authenticity means being true, not just to our feelings, but true to our vocation, true to God's call. We serve God's people by laying aside ourselves and taking up the cross and preaching Christ and him crucified, whether we feel like it next Sunday or not. **CT**

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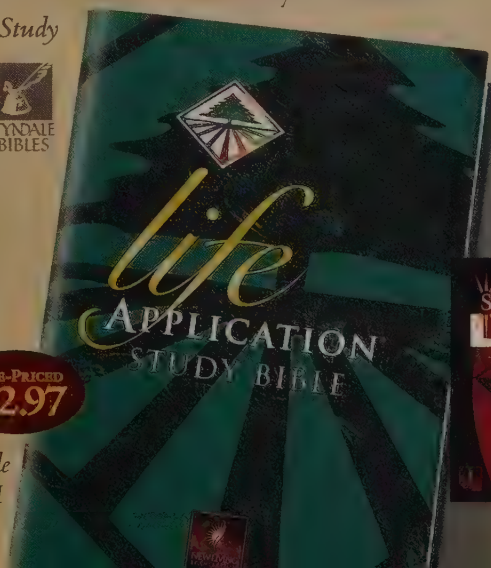
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Hollywood's Renegade Apostle

Randall Balmer

Several years ago an editor for the *Des Moines Register* asked me to review Martin Scorsese's film *The Last Temptation of Christ*, then the target of vigorous boycotts by conservative Christians. As I stood in a long queue outside the theater in midtown Manhattan, I witnessed all manner of demonstrations and endured numerous insults from the "good Christian folks" who did not want me to see the movie. As an evangelical Christian, I can attest that nothing I saw inside the theater frightened me nearly so much as what I had seen outside.

The Last Temptation of Christ eventually collapsed beneath the weight of its own pretensions (not to mention the abysmal, clench-jawed performance of Willem Dafoe in the title role), but the Religious Right has continued its desultory assault on Hollywood. And why not? The motion picture industry presents a broad target, from the mindless patter of *Saturday Night Fever* and *Spice World* to the ritual violence of Arnold Schwarzenegger, Sylvester Stallone, and Chuck Norris. Religious conservatives have become adept at sniffing out assaults on "traditional family values," even in the house of Disney.

Occasionally, however, filmmakers get it right, producing motion pictures that are morally uplifting and even theologically astute. Two recent examples are *The Spitfire Grill*, released in 1996, and *The Apostle*, just released by October Films.

The Spitfire Grill, which won an award from the Sundance Film Festival, is the story of Perchance "Percy" Talbott, recently released from the penitentiary after serving time for manslaughter, who seeks to build a new life in Gilead, Maine. Predictably, Percy's presence arouses the suspicions of townspeople, and viewers should pay special attention to the biblical character and place names. The story is rich in symbolism and sacramental theology—the hand of anointing, a loaf of bread, a jug of apple jack, the raging waters of the local river—and it offers a clear and unambiguous parable of grace and redemption.

The Apostle, written, produced, and directed by Robert Duvall, who also stars in the title role, lacks the symbolic richness and the theological sophistication of *The Spitfire Grill*, but it is an authentic portrayal of a Pentecostal-holiness preacher, Euliss (Sonny) Dewey—authentic, but not typical. When Sonny discovers his wife's infidelity and learns that she has also seized

control of his congregation and limited access to their children, he erupts in a jealous rage against the boyfriend. "I think he might be on the road to glory this time," Sonny says to a friend as he skips town.

Sonny adopts a new identity and, in time-honored evangelical fashion, begins his own church in the relative obscurity of Bayou Boutte, Louisiana. He lures Brother Blackwell, an African-American preacher played superbly by John Beasley, out of retirement, and refurbishes an old bus, which he uses to carry folks to the church building he has fixed up on the edge of town. "I tell you what," Brother Blackwell says when Sonny first approaches him about his proposed venture, "I'm going to keep my eye on you. And the Lord keep his eye on both of us. And we all three keep an eye out for the Devil."

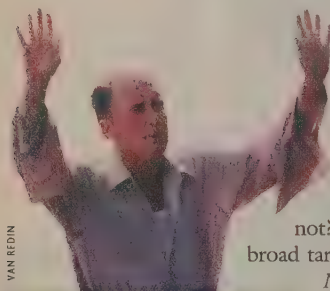
The refurbished bus and church building serve as metaphors for conversion, and there are conversions aplenty in *The Apostle*. God still fashions a silk purse out of a sow's ear; witness the life of Sonny Dewey himself, who has adopted the moniker "the Apostle E. F." for his career in Louisiana. "My knees are worn out," Sonny's estranged wife declares at one point. The movie leaves little doubt that, despite his flaws, Sonny is a man of faith and a man of prayer, and both are put to the test when local rednecks, who object to the interracial character of the congregation, threaten to destroy the church.

Janet Maslin of the *New York Times* describes *The Apostle* as a "rare display of spiritual light on screen" and "a film that can create a full, fiery, warts-and-all portrait of Sonny without reducing him to any kind of stereotype." The worship scenes alone make the movie worthwhile—the singing, the testimonies, the preaching, the conversions—which Duvall directs sparingly, even lovingly. There is a sweetness to this portrayal of holiness faith in the South.

Duvall, reared a Methodist, spent 13 years and \$5 million of his own money getting this picture produced. Duvall's tenacity and his theological sensitivity by now should have attracted the attention of those who crusaded against *The Last Temptation of Christ*—and the evangelical community at large.

Unless films like *The Apostle* succeed, other worthy motion pictures stand little chance of being produced. That leaves us only with the drivel of violence and sex and vacuousness that Hollywood regularly purveys. I would hope that the mailing-list muscle that conservative Christians regularly flex as an opposition force could be exercised here for more positive ends. **CI**

Randall Balmer is American religion professor at Columbia University.



VAN REDIN

Unless films like
The Apostle
succeed,
other worthy
motion pictures
stand little
chance of being
produced.

**For Fidelity: How Intimacy
and Commitment Enrich Our Lives**

By Catherine M. Wallace

BOOKS

A Literary God

The novelist as lapsed Calvinist.

*God and the
American Writer*



Alfred Kazin

God and the American Writer, by Alfred Kazin
(Alfred A. Knopf, 259 pp.; \$25, hardcover).
Reviewed by David Lyle Jeffrey.

Among the intellectual leaders of American society a deeply personal belief in God is tolerated as harmlessly personal, like a taste in food or a loyalty to the Red Sox. Religion even among the faithful, like American literature today, has left cosmology to the physicists. Nobody argues about God today. It is enough for the complacent that Americans go to church and synagogue in record numbers.

With these acerbic words, Alfred Kazin identifies a contemporary spiritual vacuity that troubles him even more than the ranting showmanship of "a politicized, intolerant, and paranoid religion," with its "aims to coerce the rest of us." But it is more the spiritual aridity of American religion today, religion that doesn't matter enough, than an academic interest in literary history of the United States that prompts *God and the American Writer*.

Alfred Kazin is now 82 years of age. With a distinguished teaching career at a number of colleges and universities (including Harvard) and, since *On Native Grounds* (1942), more than 20 volumes of superior

criticism, literary history, and personal reflection to his credit, he is deservedly regarded as a doyen to American literary criticism. In *God and the American Writer*, much that has occupied him throughout his career is brought together in a kind of grand summation. Hawthorne, Emerson, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Melville, Whitman, Lincoln, Dickinson, William James, Twain, T. S. Eliot, Frost, and Faulkner each receives a full chapter, but the text is interwoven throughout with a great many more authors of merit, from Thoreau to Toni Morrison. In all of these writers it is not their profession of belief—or unbelief—that obtains Kazin's attention. It is rather their imaginative characterizing of the role of religion in American culture.

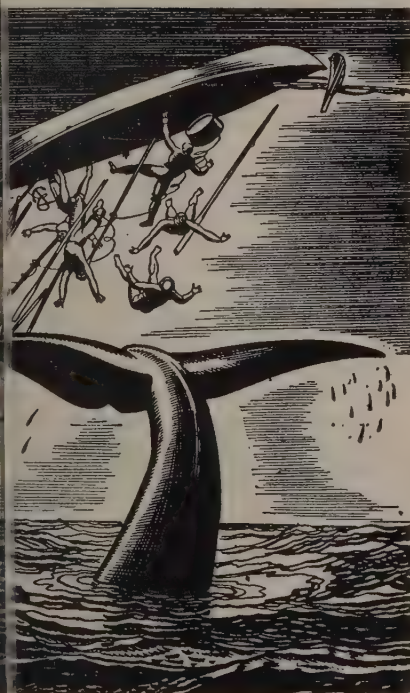
American religion has always seemed a conundrum to those on the outside looking in. On the one hand, there is the famous insistence of the First Amendment prohibiting the "establishment of religion." On the other hand, there is the fact that from the televangelists to presidential reflections on "the State of the Union," no modern country seems more publicly religious. Religion appears to be as politicized in the United States as in many Renaissance nation-states, yet no general denominational coherence commands or unifies this interest. Margaret Atwood's specter of a horrendous dystopia of the Religious Right in her novel *The Handmaid's Tale* insightfully characterizes an oppressive regime as pseudobiblical but effectively antifaith, overtly annihilating Southern Baptists, Quakers, Jews, believing Catholics, and evangelical African Americans. Kazin never mentions Atwood, but his dragons and hers bear a close resemblance to one another.

The evolution of Puritan hyper-Calvinism in America, intensifying the characteristic Protestant tendency to incremental fragmentation or to materialist and self-actualizing secularism, has in practice made "the self-sufficiency of the individual the key to all things identifiably American." As a generalization, this is hard to refute. If lapsed Catholics tend, at least in literature, to fuzzy left-liberal politics or extremes of carnal dissolution, lapsed Calvinists, at least among American writers, tend more alarmingly to self-deification and raw appetitiveness for material success.

Emerson, whose doctrine begins with unshakable confidence in "the infinitude of the private mind," illustrates one post-Calvinist track. He ends in adulation of Napoleon as "a man not embarrassed by any scruples; compact, instant, selfish, prudent, and of a perception which did not suffer itself to be balked or misled by any pretenses of others"—fit for a captain of industry. Democracy was largely an abstraction for the ex-theologian Emerson. As a public lecturer he notably scorned to take a question from his audiences. In matters of religious reflection he relegated Jesus to a pretext for recognizing God in himself: "Obey thyself" became his maxim, while to imitate Jesus, he thought, was to engage in servile redundancy. Accordingly, as Kazin has it, "he became a prophet not of God in every American heart but of rugged individualism. Any American can become just about anything he likes."

Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* contains over one thousand references to the Bible, but Melville, too, was in rebellion against Calvinism, specifically the

ROCKWELL KENT



Dutch Reformed Church of his parents. Like many a lapsed Calvinist, Melville was morbidly apprehensive that the grace and election he had forfeited might prove real after all. Unliberated by his negative choice, he lived his life in a spiritual no man's land. When in his famous quarrel with God he construes his adversary as alter ego and rival, for Kazin his "radical individualism was [squarely] in the American vein and spoke for more writers than he would ever know." Like Mark Twain, Melville was "a Calvinist whose theology survived his faith"; like Faulkner, he was "a Calvinist without religion." What all of them carry away from the ruins of their religion is a deep uncertainty that man's destiny is really in his own hands and a powerful anger that it cannot convincingly be made to seem so.

Walt Whitman, raised among Quakers, seems to Kazin another post-Calvinist, though his track leads not so frequently to the boardroom as to more private places. Whitman is perhaps the consummate American individualist, "worshipping the power of sex," while in matters religious he "never had as much interest in 'God' as he did in replacing conventional religion with himself as all-seeing poet." It is no shy fellow who becomes prophet to his own Advent, and who can say in triumphant self-assurance, "The priest departs; the divine literatus comes" (*Democratic Vistas*).

Whitman's most adoring nineteenth-century biographer, Richard M. Bucke, was a Canadian. Bucke believed *Leaves of Grass* to herald a new religious era: "What the Vedas were to Brahmanism, the Law and the Prophets to Judaism, the Avesta and Zend to Zoroastrianism, the Kings to Confucianism and Taoism, the Pitakas to Buddhism, the Quran to Mohammedanism, will *Leaves of Grass* be to the future of American civilization." Alas, implies the weary Kazin, Bucke may have been too prescient. Even in England, adherents to Whitman's cult met weekly to read his poems aloud—he had become not only a legend in his own time but founder of a kind of "church."

Kazin finds hypocrisy and self-serving almost everywhere in "American Religion"; he adopts no such triumphalist Emersonian sympathies as does Harold Bloom (in his 1992 book of that title). Yet he struggles to be fair. It does not please him that Jefferson owned slaves and "thought little of the blacks as a race," or that T. S. Eliot was an anti-Semite, but he is at pains to enter these matters into the record even as he

states his admiration for much of what each man wrote. His unalloyed concern, however, is that their contradiction of professed faith should be so characteristic of a larger literary culture.

Happily, Kazin takes time to praise exceptions. Harriet Beecher Stowe, whose *Uncle Tom's Cabin* has been derided by twentieth-century critics, he cites as a writer far more consistent than her critics. The idea for her book came to her while sitting in church, but it was conceived as a protest *against* the church, whose sophistical evasions in the matter of slavery remain an ugly embarrassment to this day. Nor is she a singular sign of contradiction: in the middle of the Civil War, Episcopalian diarist George Templeton Strong excoriated the silent complicity of his own denomination:

The church in which I was brought up, which I have maintained so long to be the highest and noblest of organizations, refuses to say one word for the country at this crisis. Her priests call on Almighty God every day, in the most solemn offices at her liturgy, to deliver His people from "false doctrine, heresy and schism," from "sedition, privy conspiracy and rebellion." Now at last, when they and their people are confronted by the most wicked of rebellions and the most wicked schisms on the vilest of grounds, the constitutional right to breed black babies for sale, when rebellion and schism are arrayed against the church and against society in the unloveliest form they can possibly assume—the church is afraid to speak. How would she get on were there a large, highly respectable minority sympathizing with adultery, or homicide, or larceny?

Well, we are beginning to realize that Strong's question is no longer rhetorical, and that the answer often given is unflattering to many churches.

Uncle Tom's Cabin, the largest-selling American book in the nineteenth century after the Bible itself (and almost as popular in Great Britain and Canada), had in fact a direct effect upon the Emancipation Act, as Lincoln himself attested, by mobilizing ordinary Christians to reject what their denominational officials tolerated. Bearing in itself "the truth of Scripture," *Uncle Tom's Cabin* became what Kazin is pleased to call "New England's lost holiness." While some might think that remark too broad, it is consistent with late reevaluations of the importance of Beecher Stowe's protest as a more authentic representation of nineteenth-century American Chris-

tianity than most (cf. Manfred Siebald). Also, it echoes reevaluation of the positive role of evangelical Christianity in the African-American community itself. Kazin cites Toni Morrison (*Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*), who credits the love preached by Christianity with "having saved the slave so far as anything could." But have the mainstream churches, as churches, grown more toward this type of "basic Christianity" or toward versions of the gospel according to Emerson? The story is complex.

Kazin's own stance is secular: "living side by side with religion as part of our inheritance in America, our sense that life is never simply circumstantial does not mean that we have to believe." Yet he admires writers who have creditable belief (such as the Catholics Walker Percy and Flannery O'Connor) and is even more generous toward churches repentant of past transgressions (e.g., on slavery). Though himself a Jew, he praises the Southern Baptists in particular—"Unlike a lot of other white churches, the Southerners did not deal in pale, abstract words heard only on a Sunday"—and he celebrates the spiritual realism of many African-American churches.

His judgment is that the American writer is now, unfortunately, typically uninterested in religion of any stripe, authentic or inauthentic. What persists of the legacy of a decayed Calvinism is only a radical individualism devoid of self-transcending belief. Alas, he notes, "Where genuine belief is lacking, 'religion' as a social experience fills the bill." But such religion can do little to inspire, positively or negatively, great literature. In an America that, "despite its high rate of church observance, is a particularly secular culture," language itself suffers. Kazin finds "the mechanistic and even commercial vocabulary in which, more than ever, Americans talk and write," disturbing proof of the decay of salt and light, or its displacement by an "endless whimpering of 'feeling religious' without inner content."

One might easily think that Kazin goes too far, that the reality cannot be so dark as the picture he paints. And, to be sure, there are accents of an aged and disappointed partisan in this book: he repeats himself occasionally, and his penchant for aphorism and impatience for compromise leads him to overstatement. Hart Crane was surely in no plausible sense "last of the true believers," and one wishes Kazin's anthology of American writers might have included Wendell Berry, Richard Wilbur, Chaim Potok, and Howard Nemerov

among others, as well as more place for O'Connor and Percy. But Kazin's articulate anguish warrants careful thought. Can we deny him entirely when he concludes:

Starting from embattled lonely beginnings, each church in America was separate from and doctrinally hostile to others. The individual on his way to becoming a writer was all too conscious that it was his ancestral sect, his

early training, his own holiness in the eyes of his church that he brought to his writing. He became its apostle without having forever to believe in it, in anything—except the unlimited freedom that is the usual American faith.

It would be hard to find a more accurate—or more properly troubling—precis of American religious history as it bears upon American literature. **C**

Real Sex

Making the case for fidelity.

For Fidelity: How Intimacy and Commitment Enrich Our Lives, by Catherine M. Wallace (Alfred A. Knopf, 172 pp.; \$22, hardcover). Reviewed by John Wilson.

The uncanny timing of the movie *Wag the Dog*, which was released just before the Monica Lewinsky scandal broke, occasioned a good deal of comment. (The *New Yorker* summarizes the film thus: "President, in closing weeks of reelection campaign, succumbs to zipper problem; spin doctor, to divert attention, simulates war with Albania.") There must also have been some discreet celebration in the halls of Alfred A. Knopf at the timing of *For Fidelity: How Intimacy and Commitment Enrich Our Lives*, published at the end of February. If you are dissatisfied with editorials and columns and other vehicles for hit-and-run punditry, you will find in Wallace's book a thoughtful and thought-provoking argument for sexual fidelity.

A onetime professor of English at Northwestern University with a specialty in literary theory, Wallace—as the flap copy informs us—"set aside her scholarly career . . . to stay home full-time with newborn twins and a two-year-old, all three of whom are now in high school." In addition to full-time child-rearing, she has obviously continued to read omnivorously; her case for fidelity draws on sources as various as the poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge and the philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre, as well as on her own experience as a young girl, a teenager, and a wife and mother, all set in the context of her strong Christian faith.

It is a shame, then, that very early on, Wallace makes a move that immediately narrows her audience. In the first chapter,

right after she affirms that "sexual fidelity is a practice intrinsic to the happiness of a happy marriage," Wallace pauses and addresses the reader thus:

Before we go any further, however, let me answer a question that I suppose is on every reader's mind by this point. What about gays and lesbians? Specifically, what about gays or lesbians, sexual fidelity, and marriage? Do I use the term "marriage" in some exclusive sense?

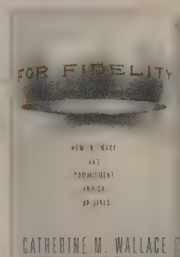
Actually that question wasn't in my mind, at least, until Wallace raised it. She goes on to say that no, she doesn't use the term "marriage" in "some exclusive sense" (by "exclusive," she means the sense in

which the term has always been used), and yes, her argument for fidelity applies equally to homosexuals. The way she characterizes those who disagree with her—those who believe that homosexual unions are clearly condemned by Scripture—is highly tendentious and seems calculated to drive such readers away.

Similarly, in a later chapter, Wallace's facile dismissal of Catholicism ("I left the Roman Catholic church after a copy of Ehrlich and Ehrlich, *Population, Resources, Environment: Issues in Human Ecology* made its way from hand to hand in my undergraduate Jesuit college") seems designed both to discourage Catholics from reading further and, more important, to curry favor with the same audience who would applaud her view of homosexuality.

These gestures are at odds with Wallace's routine mode of operation, which is anything but facile. Indeed, it would be a pity if readers who disagree with Wallace about homosexuality simply stopped reading her book—just as it would if gay and lesbian readers refused to attend to Wallace's case for fidelity.

It is rare indeed to find a book about sexuality that is neither sleazy nor clinical, neither saccharine nor joyless. And a *Christian* sex book, too, that you wouldn't be embarrassed to be caught with. *For Fidelity* is such a book: worth reading, worth arguing about, worth reading again—even if it is warmly endorsed by the Right Reverend John Shelby Spong. **C**



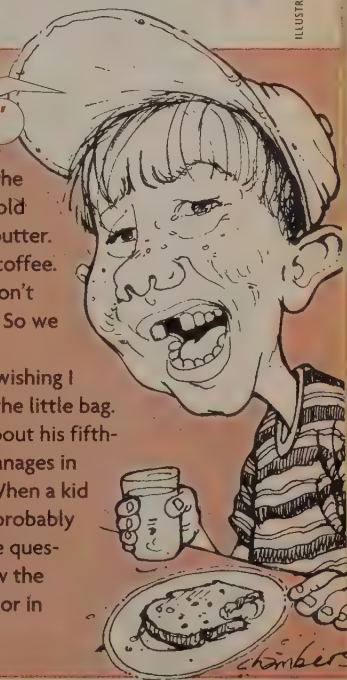
EXCERPT

"Does Daddy use condoms?"

I stopped grinding coffee beans and looked across the dark, November-morning kitchen at my eight-year-old son, who had set aside his raisin toast with peanut butter. The kitchen smelled of cinnamon and peanuts and coffee.

"Mark says—Mark says the teacher says if you don't use condoms then you could both get sick and die. So we want to know. Does he? Every time?"

I looked down from that level, blue-eyed gaze, wishing I could eat coffee beans like peanuts, straight from the little bag. Apparently Mark had been talking to his brother about his fifth-grade "sex ed" course, sharing his fears about orphanages in their endless brotherly small talk after lights out. When a kid has totally uncool parents, when his parents were probably nerds when they were kids, a kid needs to ask these questions. A kid can't count on parents like that to know the important stuff—not even when Daddy is a professor in the medical school downtown.



REFLECTIONS

Classic and contemporary excerpts

It Was Called Resurrection

Whatever it was that occurred after Jesus' crucifixion, one thing is absolutely clear: It was called "resurrection." Of that there can be no doubt. All who were met by it called it the same thing. However unclear many things may be about alleged meetings with Jesus after his death, there was a consensus in the community that whatever it was that people were experiencing, the correct term for it was resurrection.

This meant that they had experienced and tasted the first fruits of the expected event at the end time of judgment and redemption.

—Thomas C. Oden in

Agenda for Theology After Modernity . . . What?

Aslan's Resurrection

"Oh, you're real, you're real! Oh, Aslan!" cried Lucy and both girls flung themselves upon him and covered him with kisses.

"But what does it all mean?" asked Susan when they were somewhat calmer.

"It means," said Aslan, "that though the Witch knew the Deep Magic, there is a magic deeper still which she did not know. Her knowledge goes back only to the dawn of Time. But if she could have looked a little further back, into the stillness and the darkness before Time dawned, she would have read there a different incantation. She would have known that when a willing victim who

had committed no treachery was killed in a traitor's stead, the Table would crack and Death itself would start working backwards.

—C. S. Lewis in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*

The Only Road to Easter

Lord, I believe, but help thou my unbelief, because I still do not want to die. I believe Jesus has power to raise the dead, only I do not want him practicing on me. I want a God who will cut my losses and cushion my failures, a God who will grant me a life free from pain. I want a God who will rescue me from death, who will delete it from the human experience and find another way to operate.

What I, what all of us, have instead is a God who resurrects us from the dead,

Easter Wings

Lord, Who createdst man in wealth and store,
Though foolishly he lost the same
Decaying more and more
Till he became
Most poor:
With Thee
O let me rise
As larks, harmoniously,
And sing this day Thy victories:
Then shall the fall further the flight in me.

My tender age in sorrow did begin;
And still with sicknesses and shame

Thou didst so punish sin,

That I became

Most thin.

With Thee

Let me combine

And feel this day Thy victory;

For, if I imp my wing on Thine,
Affliction shall advance the flight in me.

—George Herbert in

The Country of the Risen King



Death Destroyed

Our generation has never seen a man crucified in sugary religious art; but it was not a sweet sight, and few of us would dare to have a real picture of a crucifixion on our bedroom walls. A crucified slave beside the Roman road screamed until his voice died and then hung, a filthy, festering clot of flies, sometimes for days—a living man whose hands and feet were swollen masses of gangrenous meat. That is what our Lord took upon himself, "that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them, who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."

—Joy Davidman in

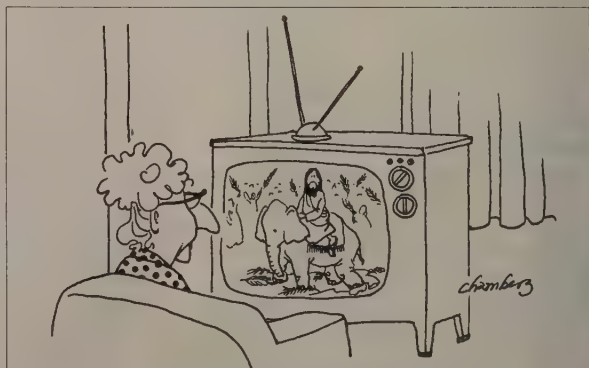
Smoke on the Mountain

He Rose for Us

His resurrection was all for others. That miracle was wrought in him, not for him.

—George MacDonald in

The Miracles of Our Lord



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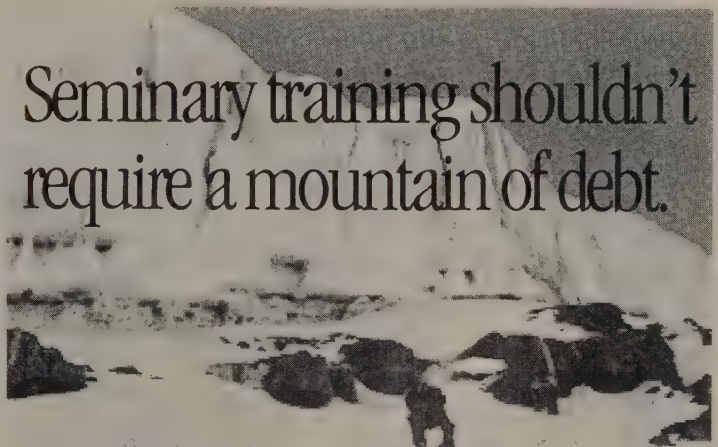
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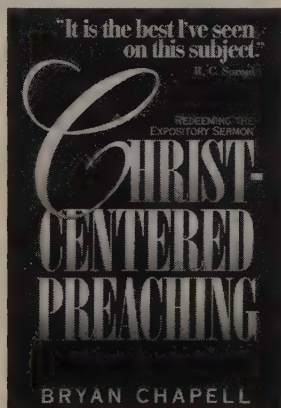
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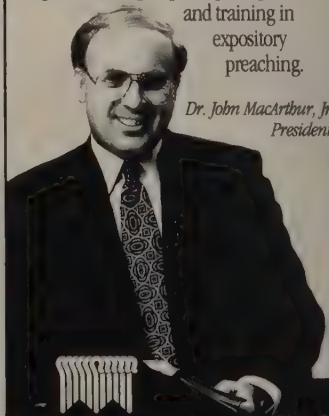
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Cost: 42 cents per character (each space & punctuation counts as a character); avg. 45 characters per line. Min. \$39.10 (85 characters). CT blind box number available at \$6 each insertion; checkmark box ☒ \$14 each insertion. Supply permanent street address and phone number. Ads set display style: \$276/column inch. Combination package available for CHRISTIANITY TODAY, CHRISTIAN READER, & YOUR CHURCH: 2 magazines—44 cents per character per insertion; 3 magazines—42 cents per character per insertion. Display style: 2 magazines—\$263 per insertion; 3 magazines—\$252 per insertion. **All classified ads will now be automatically placed on CHRISTIANITY ONLINE at no additional charge. IMPORTANT: Prepayment & written confirmation required to process ads.** Visa, MasterCard, or personal check accepted; fax (630) 260-0114. Employment ads are given priority. All other ads will be placed in first available issue. Deadline for reservation or cancellation is seven weeks prior to actual issue date. Address correspondence to: Classified Advertising, Christianity Today, 465 Gundersen Dr., Carol Stream, IL 60188.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH (ABC), Amherst, MA (college/univ.town) seeks flexible, experienced pastor with a deep personal relationship with God. Our two services with diverse worship styles need leadership with particular skill in preaching, interpreting the faith, evangelism, counseling, and nurturing and developing spiritual leadership in the body. Send résumé to Gerald Gates, 123 River Rd., So. Deerfield, MA 01373.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES: Advent Group Ministries, a Christian social service agency located in San Jose, CA, seeks resident counselors, night counselors, summer interns for adolescent residential treatment programs. Competitive salary, benefits. Residential positions provide room & board. Contact Deborah Norris: (408) 281-0708; (1-800) 98ADVENT; fax: (408) 281-2658.

FACULTY POSITIONS WAYNESBURG COLLEGE

- Accounting-Teaching forensic accounting and other courses (depending on expertise); develop new program coordinating curricula in Business Administration and Criminal Justice. Master's or JD required; experience desired. Position depends on internal approvals.
- Communication-Radio emphasis; teaching communication and advising student radio station. Master's required; practical experience desired; doctorate preferred.
- Computer Science-Two positions possible (one may be combined with mathematics); teaching all levels of programming and/or applications. Master's required, varied computer experience desired; doctorate preferred.
- Education-Department chair; teaching and administering in variety of content. Doctorate strongly preferred; school experience as administrator required.
- Mathematics-Teaching range of mathematics courses including algebra, pre-calculus, calculus, differential equations, college geometry, statistics, number theory, and numerical analysis; position possible combined with computer science.

See home page at <http://waynesburg.edu>. All positions require commitment to Christian higher education and breadth of teaching skills, plus normal full-time faculty responsibilities. Send CV, copies of transcripts, letter addressing qualifications and philosophy of education, and three references to Richard Stanislaw, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Waynesburg College, Waynesburg, PA 15370 or rstanislaw@waynesburg.edu.

CHURCH PLACEMENT SERVICE

Networking of churches & ministers seeking placement. CMPN, P.O. Box 1132, Barre, VT 05641; (802) 476-8902.

SCIENCE TEACHER. Established independent Christian school seeks a science teacher for grades 7-12. Send résumé to: Heritage Academy, 12215 Walnut Point West, Hagers-town, MD 21740 (301) 582-2600.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

MAKE A CHANGE! Teach English, business, or computers in China, Russia, Muslim Asia, or C. Europe. Call ESI at: (1-800) 895-7955. All college majors/degrees welcome.

**CHIEF ENGINEER
CHRISTIAN RADIO NETWORK**
Chief Engineer position available for quality Kansas City-based Christian radio network/group. Position requires strong background in construction, installation and maintenance of studios. AF/FM transmitters, STLs, digital audio, DCS computer automation, satellite networks, and translators. Min. 5 years exp. desired. FCC General Class license or SBE certification a plus. Excellent character and professional references expected. Some travel involved. Excellent compensation with full benefits. Please send cover letter, résumé, salary history, and references to: Personnel Director, Bott Radio Network, 10550 Barkley, Overland Park, KS 66212; (913) 642-1319. Bott Radio Network is an equal opportunity employer.

SENIOR PASTOR. English Fellowship Church, an English-speaking Evangelical congregation of 250 in Quito, Ecuador is seeking a spiritually mature person for the position of pastor. Experience in preaching and counseling is required. Some support raising is necessary. Contact the EFC Pastor Search Committee, at Casilla 17-08-8545 Quito, Ecuador or E-mail: cvaughn@ibm.net.

SENIOR PASTOR/HEAD OF STAFF First Presbyterian Church of River Forest, IL

Active, 600-member church located in an affluent Chicago suburb, seeks a dynamic preacher and leader who: (1) preaches Scripture-based sermons; (2) emphasizes prayer; (3) encourages diversity in worship by including both contemporary and traditional elements; (4) provides spiritual direction especially through Christian education and small group ministry; and (5) share the gospel by integrating evangelism into every aspect of our church lives. We are a church rich in talent, education, and assets. Successful applicant must have a minimum of 5 years experience. Attractive salary. Manse available. Send PIF to Nancy Nicholas, 619 Monroe Ave., River Forest, IL 60305.

DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION MINISTRIES. Degree required, seminary degree desired. Ten years as a full-time pastor with five years supervision of two or more pastors required. Experience with adult, children and youth educational ministries. Growing non-denominational church of 2,500 with eight pastors on staff. Member of Willow Creek Association. Send résumés to Westover Church, Attn. Administrator, 505 Muirs Chapel Road, Greensboro, NC 27410.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

MIDDLE SCHOOL DIRECTOR. Would you like to serve in a multi-staff youth ministry? A dynamic 1500 member church is seeking Director of Middle School Ministries. If interested, send your résumé along with a statement of faith to: Becky Mannel, First Presbyterian Church, 1001 S. Rankin, Edmond, OK 73034 or fax to: (405) 341-5248; email: fpedmond@ionet.net

INVEST YOUR SKILLS, vocation, and experience ministering physically and spiritually to the hurting, broken, and lost in the 10/40 Window. HOW? Contact: Mission to Unreached Peoples, toll free at (1-888) 847-6950, or E-mail: mupinfo@mup.org or [HTTP://www.mup.org/mupinfo/](http://www.mup.org/mupinfo/)

TEACH IN JAPAN. Evangelical church reaching out to the Japanese through teaching English as a second language. Mission-minded single persons needed; 2-year contracts. Support and accommodations. Write Shukugawa Bible Church, 7-12 Aoi-cho Nishinomiya-city Hyogo, 662 Japan; phone: 011-81-798-72-6055; fax: 011-81-798-72-4128.

Rochester area suburban church seeks ASSISTANT PASTOR. Seminary degree, ordination and five years experience required. Send résumé to Pittsford Community Church, 421 Marsh Road, Pittsford, NY 14534.

SENIOR MINISTER. Suburban Philadelphia restoration Movement congregation averaging 110 Sunday attendance seeks the minister God has chosen to lead us in glorifying Him by reaching out in love to make disciples of Jesus Christ and build them up in His Word. If your heart's desire is to preach from the Bible and build up believers who want to share their faith with their community, please send your resume to Ministerial Committee, Delaware Valley Christian Church, 535 N. Old Middletown Road, Media, PA 19063.

DIRECTOR OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION wanted for dynamic, family oriented Presbyterian church in a lovely suburban New England town. First Presbyterian of Fairfield, a 450+ member congregation, is seeking a full time DCE to promote and develop an active Christian community for the young people of our church. A degree in Christian Education, experience, and an ability to communicate well with all ages are key qualifications. Salary and benefits including manse commensurate with experience. Interested candidates should send PIF and personal philosophy of Christian education to: DCE Search, First Presbyterian Church of Fairfield, 2475 Easton Turnpike, Fairfield, CT 06432-1194.

AMERICA'S FOREMOST INNER-CITY FREE children's camp. Lifeguards and camp recreational workers needed. Camp Penuel Ministry now leads 1,000 to Christ yearly. Write: Camp Penuel, Box 367, Ironton, MO 63650, or call: (573) 546-3020.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

MINISTER OF EDUCATION. First Baptist Church, Southern Pines, North Carolina is seeking a full-time Minister of Education & Administration. First Baptist (1,000+ membership), a Southern Baptist Church committed to its historic Baptist heritage, is located in a vibrant, growing resort community in the Sandhills of North Carolina. The church is seeking a theologically trained and experienced Christian Educator. The individual must be a person who loves Christ and people of all ages and has attributes that work well with a "team approach" to ministry. Send a résumé to: Dr. George Griffin, Chair, Search Committee, First Baptist Church, 200 East New York Avenue, Southern Pines, NC 28387.

PRESIDENT

Prairie Bible Institute invites nominations and expressions of interest for the position of President. As chief executive officer of the Prairie Schools, the president reports directly to the Board of Directors. PBI is an independent, evangelical Christian educational institution. Prairie Schools include a graduate school/theological seminary in Calgary, AB, accredited four-year baccalaureate Bible college and elementary, junior, and senior high schools on one campus in Three Hills, Alberta, 75 minutes N/NE of Calgary. Total enrollment stands just over 1,400. Alumni of the secondary and post-secondary schools serve in 114 countries. The qualities desired in the successful candidate for President are the ability to identify with and promote Prairie's mission as an evangelical institution. Christian character and integrity. We are looking for a proven leader whose experience, skills, and qualifications are particularly well suited to the PBI Schools and the opportunities they face in the 21st century. Candidates should possess an earned doctorate, demonstrated leadership skills in an academic environment and the ability to work with the Board, faculty, staff and students to further the institution's mission. Nominations or letters of interest should be sent to: Dr. Paul Virts, Chairman, Presidential Search Committee, PBI Board of Directors, P.O. Box 4000, Three Hills, Alberta, Canada T0M 2N0. Copies of the President's job description, qualifications and application procedures can be obtained from: Office of the President, PBI, P.O. Box 4000, Three Hills, AB, Canada T0M 2N0. Review of applications will begin immediately and continue until the position is filled. By law, preference will be given to qualified Canadians.

ASSOCIATE EDITOR CHILDREN'S CURRICULUM

Group Publishing, a leading Christian publisher, is in search of an associate editor for children's curriculum. This position will be responsible for assigning and editing preschool and early elementary children's curriculum and will participate in the development of book and curriculum products. Candidates should have two or more years experience working with children in a school or church ministry setting, and demonstrate strong verbal and written skills. Prior writing or editing experience and church ministry experience would be helpful. Apply in person or send résumé to: Group Publishing, Inc., 1515 Cascade Ave., Loveland, CO 80538, Attn.: HR. For additional information call Katie Sherick at (1-800) 635-0404. EOE.

TEACHER. \$26,000; Christian college prep school. Opening in Elementary, Science, Math, English, History, coaching opportunities. Tel: (954) 966-7995; fax: (954) 961-1359.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Winebrenner Theological Seminary invites applications for two faculty positions: **CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES** (new position): Preference will be given to candidates who have an earned doctorate (ABD considered) in an appropriate field of study, possess a broad knowledge and experience of the field of Christian ministry, and demonstrate attributes and abilities that complement existing faculty strengths. Primary teaching responsibilities will be homiletics and field education with possible courses in pastoral care and counseling and leadership. Position immediately available.

OLD TESTAMENT: Ph.D. or ABD in Old Testament is required. Experience in teaching and Christian ministry is preferred. The successful candidate will teach the spectrum of Old Testament courses in the seminary curriculum. Starting date is August 1998.

The mission of Winebrenner Theological Seminary—a moderate evangelical institution in northwest Ohio affiliated with the Churches of God, General Conference—is to prepare men and women for ministry in the local churches. Interested candidates should submit a letter of application, a curriculum vitae and three letters of recommendation to Search Committee, P.O. Box 478, Findlay, Ohio 45839. Application deadline is April 15, 1998. Winebrenner Theological Seminary is an equal opportunity employer.

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR. MB Biblical Seminary in Fresno, California seeks a program administrator starting by Fall, 1998 for its On-Site Counseling Program. Qualifications: administrative experience, licensed psychologist or MFCC counselor, five years' experience as therapist or supervisor. Contact Pierre Gilbert, MBBS, 4824 E. Butler, Fresno, CA 93727. (209) 452-1768. Equal Opportunity Employer.

MINISTRY PLACEMENT for pastors & associates or churches. Call (503) 357-7830 or Believer's Dynamics, POB 596, Forest Grove, OR 97116. Since 1977.

CHRISTIANITY TODAY, INC. seeks to fill the following positions:

- **Advertising Sales Manager:** Degreed individual with 5-10 yrs. sales-management experience in the Christian market to provide day-to-day management of advertising account executive staff and departmental sales efforts.
- **Associate Editor: LEADERSHIP Journal** seeks editor with 3-5 years of experience and a thorough, broad-based understanding of the Protestant milieu/theology. Pastoral experience strongly preferred. Must be editor first, writer second. Send detailed information elaborating on interest in ministering through a magazine for church leaders, and qualifications to do so, plus writing samples.
- **Market Research Analyst:** Degreed analyst with 2-3 years exp. in market research analysis. Should be skilled in PC & Mac software, survey development for both qualitative and quantitative research, data analysis.
- **Director of Marketing:** Degreed individual with 8 years experience (preferably in magazine/book publishing) to provide strategic direction for ancillary product direct-mail marketing, supervise marketing managerial staff, and give input to new product R&D. Must have proven experience managing direct-mail marketing efforts.

To combine career with ministry, mail/fax résumé with cover letter detailing salary history to: Christianity Today, Inc., HR Dept.-CT, 465 Gunderson Dr., Carol Stream, IL 60188; fax: (630) 260-0114; E-mail: CTiHRDept@aol.com.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

TAYLOR UNIVERSITY

Seeks applicants for the following full-time, continuing faculty positions available in August 1998. Candidates must be strongly committed to the educational mission and evangelical Christian orientation of the University. Doctorate and college-level teaching experience and/or related professional experience preferred.

- **Art:** Gilkison Family Chair in Art History. Ph.D. and distinguished scholarship and/or recognized professional standing are required.
- **Art:** MFA in studio art with emphasis in graphic design.
- **Biology (anticipated):** Cellular and molecular biology with a major emphasis in plant biology. Ph.D. in hand or near completion.
- **Communication Arts-Ft. Wayne campus:** Public relations specialty and generalist in communications. Professional experience desired.
- **Communication Arts:** Television broadcasting with some television/video production included. Professional experience desired.
- **Education:** Elementary and middle school teach education. Professional experience required. NCATE accredited program. Doctorate in hand or near completion.
- **Music:** Piano performance. Doctorate and/or outstanding performance required.
- **Physical Education (anticipated):** Athletic Training. Educational and professional qualifications.

In addition, Taylor University seeks qualified applicants for the following administrative position:

- **Director of Lehman Memorial Library-Ft. Wayne campus:** ALA accredited MLS with preference given to candidates with an additional related graduate degree. Applicants must demonstrate visionary leadership in integrating emerging technologies and electronic resumes with traditional library collections and sources. Position open May 1998.

Taylor University, a four-year liberal arts college holding to a strong evangelical Christian position, operates campuses in Upland and Fort Wayne, IN. Inquiries, credentials, and supporting materials should be addressed to Dr. Dwight Jessup, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Taylor University, 500 W. Reade Ave., Upland, IN 46989-1001. Taylor complies with federal and state guidelines for nondiscrimination in employment. Women and minority candidates are encouraged to apply. Evaluation of applications will begin immediately and continue until positions are filled.

MINISTER OF MUSIC, WORSHIP AND DRAMA position open at a growing evangelical church of 550+ with outstanding facilities and instrumental resources and a rich heritage of music ministry. Preferred candidate would have a music or seminary degree, drama experience, 5-10 yrs. Experience administering a varied music program and ability to compose or arrange music. Send résumé to Christ Community Church, 2500 Dowle Memorial Dr., Zion, IL 60099.

MINISTER OF COLLEGE MUSIC. Messiah College invites applicants who can provide creative leadership and direction to the music and worship in chapel and other corporate worship settings. A doctorate is preferred, a masters required, along with ministry experience in worship and music, and a commitment to blending contemporary and traditional worship forms. This is a faculty appointment with membership in the Music Department. Send letters of inquiry to: Dean of College Ministries, Messiah College, Grantham, PA 17027. Appointment effective August 1, 1998. AA/EOE

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

SOUTHERN WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY

Faculty and Administrative Positions

•Religion: Significant experience in ministry; credentials in Christian education, youth ministry, or preaching; commitment to the Wesleyan holiness tradition; strong leadership skills.

•Management/Business Administration: Knowledge of current research in economics, finance, human resources, international business, management or marketing.

•English: Preparation for teaching composition and creative writing. Experience in teaching journalism and advising student publications desirable.

•Director of Academic Services in Adult and Graduate Studies: Responsible for administration of academic services in teaching locations throughout South Carolina. Half-time teaching in business-related fields (undergraduate and graduate).

Southern Wesleyan University strives to create a distinctively Christian environment fostering the integration of faith, learning, and living. Women and minorities encouraged to apply. Ph.D. preferred. Send résumé and letter of application to Dr. Gloria Bell, Academic Vice President and Dean, Southern Wesleyan University, Central SC 29630-1020.

SOCIAL WORKER. National pro-life child and family service agency seeks a full-time Pregnancy Counselor for its Modesto, CA office. MSW required. Principal responsibilities include providing ongoing counseling to young women with unplanned pregnancies. Excellent counseling and relational skills required. Child welfare experience necessary. Attractive salary and benefit package. Send résumé to: Bethany Christian Services, Branch Director, 3048 Hahn Drive, Modesto, CA 95350.

MUSIC DIRECTOR. A growing 2000 member family church with a variety of worship styles in multiple locations is seeking a full-time Minister of Music and Worship. The ideal candidate will be committed to serving Jesus Christ and the church and will possess a proven record in developing and building a multi-faceted, dynamic music program. Applicants should be experienced in directing choirs for adult, youth and children as well as handbell ringers, instrumentalists and ensembles. They should also have proven administrative and management skills. Send résumé and salary requirements to Colonial Presbyterian Church, 9500 Wornall Rd., Kansas City, MO 64114 or fax to (913) 942-8032 by May 31, 1998.

PASTOR WANTED. Evangelical, Wesleyan-Arminian, non-denom. church, now 15 families, seeking part-time pastor with potential full-time near future. Strong emphasis on grace/holy living. Church located in Indianapolis's growing west side. Send résumé to: Steve Lovern, 903 Thorndale St., Indianapolis, IN 46214.

DIRECTOR OF MINISTRIES. Christ Community Church is a 13 year old church running 1700-1900 in Sunday attendance, located on 40 acres in an attractive and growing Chicago suburb. We are looking for someone to lead and manage the ministry infrastructure and the staff and volunteers who participate within it. This is a tremendous opportunity for an experienced leader and people manager who desires to equip and mobilize God's people for God's work. Please send résumé to: Diane Salzmann, Christ Community Church, 37W100 Bolcum Road, St. Charles, IL 60175 (630) 513-7500.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

NORTH PARK UNIVERSITY, CHICAGO

Tenure track position in Biology beginning August, 1998. Ph.D. or ABD. Rank and salary based on degree and experience. Teach introductory human anatomy and physiology and some of the following: genetics, health, introductory biology. Must be committed to integration of learning with Christian faith. North Park University is owned and operated by the Evangelical Covenant Church. It is also affiliated with the AuSable Institute, Shedd Aquarium, and Argonne National Laboratory. Send letter, résumé, transcripts and five references to Alice Iverson, North Park University, 3225 W. Foster Ave., Chicago, IL 60625-4895; fax: (773) 244-4952; e-mail: afi@northpark.edu. Women and minorities encouraged to apply. M-F/EOE

MINISTER OF MUSIC. Multi-cultural, evangelical, inner city church of 1,000 worshipers seeks a well qualified, versatile musician to provide full-time leadership for diverse music program. Contact Henry Wiens at (612) 823-7463 or send résumé to: Park Avenue UMC, 3400 Park Ave. S., Mpls., MN 55407.

ASSOCIATE PASTOR of Student Ministries desired for Valley Community Baptist Church (Sunday attendance 950) in Avon, CT. This position will be responsible for junior high, senior high and college age ministries. Candidates should have a minimum of 5 years large church youth ministry experience including supervision of staff members and volunteers. Excellent leadership and interpersonal skills are essential. Send résumés to: Collin Sanford, VCBC, 590 West Avon Road, Avon, CT 06001.

WORSHIP LEADER/MINISTER OF MUSIC. We seek a worship leader with the giftedness to bring our 1,000 worshipers—Builders, Boomers, and Busters alike—into God-honoring, meaningful, heartfelt, participatory worship; a visionary with the desire to harness a strong tradition of musical excellence and guide it into an even stronger worship ministry; a creative practitioner who is energized by the challenge of ministry between paradigms—crafting services of worship meaningful to young and old alike; a team player who longs to see people grow in faithfulness to Christ through participation in our current extensive worship ministry (children's music program, bell choir, adult choir, drama, worship ministry teams). If this describes you, please send your résumé to: Worship Search Committee at Covenant Presbyterian Church, 211 Knox Drive, West Lafayette, IN 47906. Phone: (765) 463-7303; fax: (765) 463-7451; email: wsc@covenantpres.org

PASTOR OF YOUTH AND ADULT EDUCATION is needed at New Guilford Brethren in Christ Church, Chambersburg, PA. Principal responsibility is with youth. Full-time position. Applicants should have appropriate training and experience. Send personal recommendations or résumé to: Dr. Robert Verno, Senior Pastor, New Guilford BIC Church, 1575 Mont Alto Road, Chambersburg, PA 17201

VINE BOOKS SEEKS SENIOR EDITOR

Servant Publications seeks a senior editor for its Vine imprint that serves Evangelicals. The successful candidate will have at least five years' experience as a book editor, preferably but not necessarily, in Evangelical Christian publishing and two years' experience in acquisitions. The job requires relocation to Ann Arbor, MI. Applicants should send letter and résumé to: Bert Ghezzi, Editorial Director, Servant Publications, 1143 Highland Drive, Ann Arbor, MI 48108 or fax them to: (407) 647-0221.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES.

Growing urban university of 2,000 students and 270 full-time employees seeks a human resources generalist to manage all aspects of the HR function including staff recruitment, employee benefits, compensation, policy development, performance appraisal, and staff training and development. Bachelor's degree and five years of progressively responsible human resources experience required. Master's degree and higher education experience desirable. We seek applicants who enthusiastically support North Park's mission of Christian higher education. Position is available August 1, 1998. Submit résumé and cover letter to: Vice President for Administration and Finance, North Park University, 3225 W. Foster Ave., Chicago, IL 60625. North Park is operated by the Evangelical Covenant Church and is an equal opportunity employer.

ASSOCIATE PASTOR/YOUTH MINISTRY.

First Presbyterian Church of Santa Rosa is looking for a Youth Pastor whose lifestyle and Biblical, Christ-centered teaching is relevant to junior and senior high youth. Must demonstrate a contagious enthusiasm for Christ's love, which will inspire our youth and those in our community. Our 800 member congregation and 80 active youth participants look forward to continued growth under your leadership. Please send your résumé to: APNC, attn. Carl Vanden Heuvel, 1550 Pacific Ave., Santa Rosa, CA 95404.

GROWTH ORIENTED, evangelical multi-staff A.B.C. Church in suburban Cincinnati looking for experienced, spiritually mature Senior Pastor. Immediate opening. Send résumé to Senior Pastor Search Committee, c/o Kenwood Baptist Church, 8341 Kenwood Road, Cincinnati, OH 45236-2099.

LIFE-CHANGING TEACHERS

Wheaton Academy believes teachers must have a growing relationship with Christ, must be excellent in their field, must believe biblical integration and scholastic excellence are inseparable, must hold high standards, must be capable of motivating a range of students, and must enjoy working specifically with teenagers. Our mission to "nurture growth in students through excellence, relationships, and service, all to the glory of God," is truly the foundation and philosophic centerpiece of everything we do at Wheaton Academy. Founded in 1853 and accredited since 1911, we serve Christian families with a traditional college preparatory curriculum, an innovative January term (Winterim) and comprehensive extracurricular programs (15 sports). Our growing student body (400+) benefits from a personal environment, a mature student culture, and regular opportunities for leadership training. Our school is located on a beautiful, country-style 43 acres in Chicago's western suburbs. A 6-year, 15M Learning Resource, Field House, Fine Arts expansion plan begins this spring.

1998-99 OPENINGS: Science (chemistry emphasis), math, Spanish/other combination, contact Jon Keith, Principal at (630) 231-0727, ext. 16 or write: 900 Prince Crossing Road, West Chicago, IL 60185 for an information packet and application.

TRI STATE PREGNANCY CENTER seeks Counseling Director, Dubuque, Iowa. Part-time position, nursing degree & public speaking ability helpful. Send résumé to: Tri State Pregnancy Center, 1725 Delhi, Dubuque, IA 52004; phone: (319) 556-5250; fax: (319) 557-3124.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

HOUSEPARENTS

Shelter Care, an organization with a rich history of over 25 years of helping troubled young people and families, has openings for mature couples. The program, located in Akron, OH, uses a family model with many supportive helps. Each couple is responsible for 4 children. Position is full-time and includes salary and an excellent benefits package. If interested, send resume to 680 E. Market St., Ste. 306, Akron, OH 44304; phone: (330) 376-4200 or fax: (330) 376-8601.

ASSOCIATE PASTOR/YOUTH MINISTRY.

First Presbyterian Church of Santa Rosa is looking for a Youth Pastor whose lifestyle and Biblical, Christ-centered teaching is relevant to junior and senior high youth. Must demonstrate a contagious enthusiasm for Christ's love, which will inspire our youth and those in our community. Our 800 member congregation and 80 active youth participants look forward to continued growth under your leadership. Please send your résumé to: APNC, attn. Carl Vanden Heuvel, 1550 Pacific Ave., Santa Rosa, CA 95404.

YOUTH & FAMILY MINISTRY.

Seeking enthusiastic evangelical Christian gifted in discipleship, with heart for prayer. Graduate level training and prior experience in leading successful youth and family ministries. Knowledge of Reformed theology. Well organized communicator, counselor and teacher, capable of initiating and directing ministry programs and recruiting/training of lay workers. Résumé to: PNC, Presbyterian Church of Old Greenwich, 38 West End Ave., Old Greenwich, CT 06870.

DEAN, COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

Union University has reopened its search and invites nominations and applications for the position of Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. Applicants must have an earned terminal degree in one of the disciplines of the College of Arts and Sciences; a research doctorate is preferred. Those applying must have five years full-time teaching experience, with a proven record of excellence in teaching, interdisciplinary perspective and commitment to the objectives of Christian liberal arts education. A strong record of effective academic administration in higher education at or above the department chair level is required. All faculty and staff are professing Christians and are expected to be active members of an evangelical Christian church. Preference in hiring is given to Southern Baptists. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. To apply, send a letter of application, curriculum vitae, and names of references to: Cynthia Powell Jayne, Chair, Dean of Arts and Science Screening Committee, Union University, 1050 Union University Drive, Jackson, TN 38305; fax: (901) 661-7175; email: cjayne@uu.edu. For more information about Union University, please see our web site at www.uu.edu. Union University is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Women and minorities are encouraged to apply.

BOOKS, FILMS, AND TAPES

EVANGELISTIC MATERIAL IN ARABIC: books, tracts, cassettes. In English: *The Bible and Islam* (\$4.95 U.S./\$5.95 Canada). Write: Arabic Dept., Back to God Hour, 6555 W. College Dr., Palos Heights, IL 60463.

BAKER BOOK HOUSE buys libraries, large & small. Phone: (616) 957-3110; fax: (888) 263-7310; E-mail: used.books@bakerbooks.com. Grand Rapids, MI 49546.

BOOKS, FILMS, AND TAPES

6,000 GOOD USED BOOKS FOR SALE. Thousands already sold. Get monthly free book list from Pastor Wayne, 3940 Winewood Ct. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49508; E-mail: 73223.2010@compuserve.com.

THE HOUSE CHURCH MOVEMENT—a catalog of books and tapes available on this fresh, new, revolutionary movement. P.O. Box 285, Sargent, GA 30275; (1-800) 645-2342.

200,000 USED BOOKS. Libraries purchased. Kregel Used Books, Box 2607, Grand Rapids, MI 49501; (616) 459-9444; fax: (1-888) USD-BOOK; Web: www.Kregel.com

PUBLISH YOUR BOOK NOW! Your book can be produced and promoted by the leading subsidy book publisher. Send for free booklet P-53. Vantage Press, 516 W. 34th St., New York, NY 10001.

THE LIBRARY OF SPIRITUAL CLASSICS.

The greatest literature on the deeper Christian life ever penned. Free catalog. Spiritual Classics, 1275 Hwy. 16 W, Newnan, GA 30263; (770) 254-9442.

MANUSCRIPTS WANTED, ALL TYPES.

Publisher w/ 75-year tradition. *Author's Guide to Subsidy Publishing*: (1-800) 695-9599.

Want to know the truth about Roman Catholicism? **FREE CASSETTE.** Home Bible Fellowship, 4002 W. 42nd St., Tulsa, OK 74107.

BOOKSALE: Biblical, Theological, Religion. <http://members.aol.com/kvcbooks/index.htm>

HEAVEN. Experience its glory. Find out how? Toll free (1-888) 286-1990.

NEW BOOK: *Christianity and Creationism*. Send \$24.95 to Dr. Craig Wiens, 365 Riffel Rd., F. Wooster, OH 44691.

MINISTRY AIDS

☒ **TROUBLED YOUTH:** Starting an outreach? You can avoid major surprises we survived starting our camp/community ministry in 1970. Save time & pain with our survival manual & networking. Call Rich at Youth Investment Fdn.: (612) 449-0004.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR TEENAGER parenting seminars. Find out how to schedule one at your church. Call (1-800) 561-9309 or visit our website at <http://www.uyt.com>.

POSITIONS WANTED

STRATEGIC PLANNING RETREAT. Seasoned business consultant/corporate trainer with extensive evangelical ministry experience and xlt preaching, teaching, and presentation skills will assist your church leaders in analyzing current strengths/weaknesses, and writing a strategic planning document that will bring focus and renewal to your church's ministry. Contact: Archie Luper, ChurchPlanning, (931) 394-4000; www.churchplanning.com

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

CHRISTIAN BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY. Call (1-800) 585-5873, option 3. Leave my ID #4911 at the end of message.

CHRISTIAN BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY! Call (1-800) 585-5873 option 3 (24 hrs) Use I.D. #5777 or visit <http://www.angelfire.com/ok/dspears>

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

ASSEMBLE PRODUCTS at home for best companies. Great extra income idea! (1-800) 377-6000, ext.8290.

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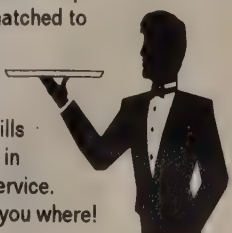
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A Cure for Spiritual Deafness

Once thought of hermits as shaggy recluses notable mainly for their self-obsession and dearth of social skills—people like the Unabomber. Thomas Merton corrected my misconception. “To be really mad, you need other people,” he explained. “When you are by yourself you soon get tired of your craziness. It is too exhausting.”

A recent book by Peter France, *Hermits*, has helped to fill in the picture. France gave up a high-profile career with the BBC to lead a contemplative life on a Greek island. He did so not as an act of sacrifice, rather as a quest for the wisdom available only through a life of solitude. Living apart from the press of popular opinion “confers insights not available to society,” France concluded.

Saint Anthony of Egypt, the famous Desert Father, chose the hermitic life in deliberate contrast to his upper-crust upbringing. After 20 years locked away, not seeing another human face, Anthony emerged healthy, balanced, and full of sage advice. From then on he alternated between solo retreats and pastoral visits. France likens the pattern to that of scientists who work alone in search of cures for deadly diseases.

You cannot read about hermits, of course, without encountering strangeness. One monk lusted after a beautiful woman. When she died he took his tunic to her tomb and used it to dry the pus from her corpse. Keeping the smell close to him in his cell, he reminded himself, “This is what you lust after—take your fill.”

Some monks competed in a kind of ascetic Olympics, testing how long they could go without food, water, or sleep. These, too, had a method to their madness: their privations caused so much suffering that they left no mental void for carnal thoughts to fill.

France relates other stories that cast a different light on these eremites. When one brother bragged about his dietary discipline, his spiritual director replied, “Don’t tell me, my child, that you’ve spent 30 years without eating meat. But tell me the truth: How many days have you spent without speaking ill of your brother? Without judging your neighbour? Without letting useless words pass your lips?”

The thirst for solitude seems to increase whenever society is in a state of turmoil. Jewish Essenes retreated into the desert in Jesus’ day; the Buddha withdrew in order to purge himself of social illusions; the Hindu Gandhi observed a regimen of strict silence on Mondays, a practice he would not interrupt even for meetings with the king of England.

Solitude rips off all masks and disguises and breaks needless dependence on material goods. Henry

David Thoreau perfected a peculiar American blend of asceticism, love of nature, and self-reliance. A friend once remarked that Thoreau could get more out of 10 minutes with a chickadee than most men could get out of a night with Cleopatra. Thoreau insisted, “I never found the companion that was so companionable as solitude.”

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the English landed gentry hired “ornamental hermits.” Recognizing the value of solitude but unwilling to endure its rigors, the wealthy ensconced these surrogates in little hermitages in their fancy gardens. If you can’t devote yourself to a life of simplicity and prayer, why not pay somebody to do it for you?

Thomas Merton was the best apologist for the life of solitude in our century. He viewed life in community as the real sacrifice and made constant appeals for the privilege of solitude, a wish finally granted him after 24 years. Merton longed to join those “men on this miserable, noisy, cruel earth who tasted the marvelous joy of silence and solitude, who dwelt in forgotten mountain cells, in secluded monasteries, where the news and desires and appetites and conflicts of the world no longer reached them.” Nevertheless, he insisted that “the only justification for a life of deliberate solitude is the conviction that it will help you to love not only God but also other men.”

Merton proved that a life of solitude need not lead to isolation or irrelevance. Has our century known a more acute observer of politics, culture, and religion than this monk who rarely spoke and rarely left the grounds of his monastery?

It surprises me that, amid the moral upheaval of our waning century, the church has not responded again with a movement toward solitude. Elijah, Moses, and Jacob met God alone. The apostle Paul, John the Baptist, and Jesus himself escaped to the wilderness for spiritual nourishment.

Relevance, we have surely mastered. The Web pages of religious organizations are technically advanced. New Christian music groups spring up in response to the slightest cultural tremor. What would happen if we sought a little *irrelevance*?

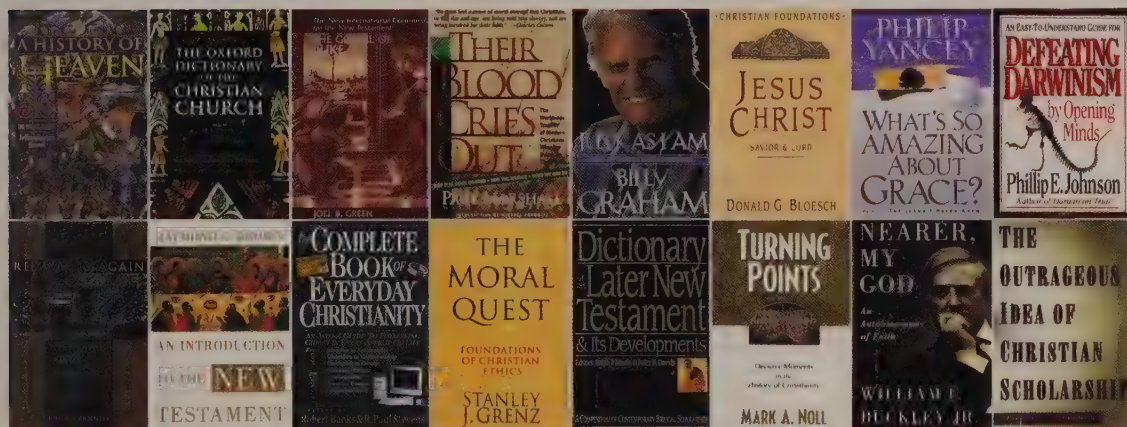
What if every Christian took a two-hour nature walk each weekend, without speaking? Or if, like Gandhi, we observed a day of silence. He chose Monday; what if we agreed to maintain silence after church on Sunday? More radical still, what if we silenced all Sunday sporting events on television and radio?

I had best stop. As the hermits remind us, these spiritual disciplines can get out of control. **C1**

Relevance,
we have surely
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What would
happen
if we sought
a little
irrelevance?

CHRISTIANITY TODAY

APRIL 27, 1998



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ANNUAL BOOKS ISSUE

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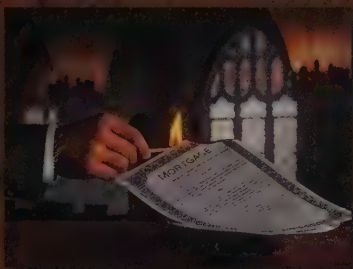
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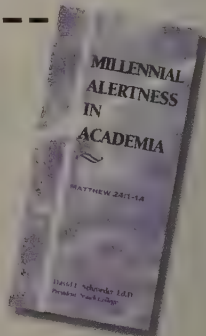
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CHRISTIANITY TODAY®

Volume 42, No. 5

April 27, 1998

A Magazine of Evangelical Conviction

ANNUAL BOOKS ISSUE

26 On the Cover: 1998 Book Awards

Our panel of judges shows a little shelf-respect: Here are 25 significant books from A (for *autobiography*—Billy Graham's, which tops the list) to Z (for *Zondervan*, his publisher). This year's specialty? Alliterative titles: *Defeating Darwinism*, *The Fabric of Faithfulness*, *A History of Heaven*, *Malcolm Muggeridge*, and *Subversive Spirituality*.

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Bagfuls of books on this subject showed me I wasn't struggling alone. *By Susan Wise Bauer*

32 Jehovah on Trial

Regina Schwartz argues that the way to peace is to kill off monotheism. *By Miroslav Volf*

70 Finding Power in Submission

Two feminist scholars write about women you'll recognize.

By Lauren F. Winner

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Why radical feminists can't hear the good words

John Paul II has for women. *By Elizabeth Fox-Genovese*

76 Reconstructing Jesus

The rewards of N. T. Wright's historical recovery of Jesus are great—but he raises more questions than he answers.

By Robert Gundry

80 How Evangelicals Won the South

And what they lost in the process. *By Grant H. Wacker*

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How journalist Cynthia Gorney has helped both sides of the abortion debate to view the other side honestly. *Interview by Wendy Murray Zoba*

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Michael Maudlin,
Managing Editor

The More Things Change...

INSIDE CT

You may have noticed a few changes in the magazine recently. We have given our departments a needed facelift. To better highlight the News section (which readers cite as the second most-valued portion of the magazine), we moved it from the back of the book to the front. We also took the longer lead News story, added it to the feature essays (the most-valued portion), and rechristened it "Special News Report" (though that offering is missing from this, our Annual Books Issue). In the past we saw the News section as "a magazine within a magazine." We now bury that metaphor. We want you to receive a single, focused, and integrated magazine.

We have also taken the bylines off our editorials. We added bylines a few years back so that readers would know the person/resource behind the position being articulated. The unintended consequence was confusion over who was speaking, the writer or the magazine. We hope it is now clear: the editorial communicates the thoughts and passions of the magazine.

Expect more tinkering, but only tinkering. Our mission has not changed. Periodically I take out the blue notebook in which I have gathered all our past "mission statements." The one I find most helpful, prescient, and inspiring is the first one: Billy Gra-

ham's 1955 speech outlining why the Christian world needs a magazine called "Christianity Today."

He envisioned (and we affirm) CT as "a rallying point" for evangelicals, "a flag . . . under which we all can gather," a "strong vigorous voice to call us together," to "reach the clergy and laity of every denomination presenting truth from the evangelical viewpoint." He proposed that it carry "hard-hitting editorial; . . . popular, well thought out journalism; . . . the greatest religious news coverage." (Not that we have implemented all his suggestions, such as "at least one evangelistic sermon" in every issue.)

Mr. Graham went on to describe the editorial policy as "pro-church" (amen), "thoroughly biblical, evangelical, and evangelistic" (yes, yes, and a yes with the qualification that the magazine's primary role is encouraging, not engaging in, evangelism), "pro-second advent" but agnostic as to which millennial framework to understand it by (preach it), "anti-communist" (no longer the hot button it was), an advocate for "social improvement" where we are "for the underdog and the down-trodden, as we believe Christ was" (a hearty amen), centrist and "mildly conservative" politically (easier said than done).

Our mission, then, and the reason for the changes, is to do better what we have always tried to do: to report on what God is doing through his church to reconcile the world to himself through and in Christ. **CT**

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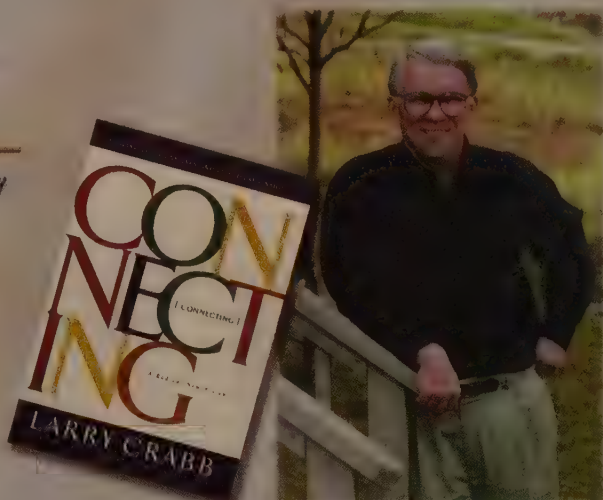
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Bringing Up Baby

Many have written to express an opinion about the News update article "Growing Criticism" (Feb. 9) concerning Growing Families International and their Preparation for Parenthood Program. A large number have taken CT to task, citing positive personal experience with the GFI program and suggesting the information we published was biased and even "misleading" to those unfamiliar with Preparation for Parenthood. Expressing a sentiment echoed by many, one parent who is also a nurse wrote, "I have been tremendously blessed and helped by the Ezzos' materials."

At the same time, however, others have applauded CT for, in the words of one, "having the courage to publish a follow-up story on the program that is currently sweeping the nation." A marriage and family therapist, observing families using GFI materials who "join the chorus of how well it's 'working,'" expressed dismay that the "definition of 'working' seems to be limited to the parents' convenience." "I've never heard these parents discuss their children's emotional well-being or how much they enjoy the relationships with them," she says. "I find that grievous."

Randy Frame, who wrote CT's article, suggests that friends of GFI gain access to GFI's "alleged list of supporting physicians. . . . If they can't, perhaps they, like Grace Community Church, will begin asking some of the same questions critics have been asking."

One Who Has Fallen

I want to thank you for your article on Jimmy Swaggart ["Still Wrestling with the Devil," Mar. 2]. It was refreshing to see a more gracious approach toward one who has fallen rather than a critical attack. Randall Balmer made a great point we should remember, that, like Swaggart, we are all human and daily need the grace and forgiveness of God. May God help us to practice Galatians 6:1: "looking to yourself, lest you too be tempted."

*Pastor Joseph Pjecha
Tionesta Alliance Church
Tionesta, Pa.*

Randall Balmer's story on Jimmy Swaggart was one of the saddest I have read in a long time. I had hoped to discover some insight from Swaggart, some deeper understanding of what happened to him, and what true religion really is. But there lingers about him a hint of a victim practicing a type of confession that avoids consequences by convincingly delivering sentimental intensity, not unlike another famous evangelical now making tabloid headlines (President Clinton). *Trey Bane
Marietta, Ga.*

Thank you for the article on Jimmy Swaggart. I agreed with the church on discipline; however, he did at times cause me to pull my truck off the road and have church.

*George Moizman
Orting, Wash.*

When I conducted my first evangelistic meeting after finishing Southwestern Bible Institute in Waxahachie, Texas (now Southwestern Assemblies of God University), in June 1949 at Ferriday, Louisiana, a young teenager attended regularly. His name was Jimmy Swaggart. I had no idea his ministry in TV evangelism would be so far-reaching over the world in the years ahead.

As I have traveled over the world, I have seen the productive work of Jimmy in many countries, where he spent millions helping orphans, building Bible schools, and helping churches during his heyday in evangelism.

I have kept in touch with Jimmy and fully believe that God has used him mightily in years past. I believe he still has a heart of gold.

*Talmadge Ford McNabb
Browns Mills, N.J.*

Mercy, Not Justice

✉ Ronald J. Sider and Fred Clark properly defend government as a God-ordained necessity, but their understanding of justice as going beyond unbiased courts is unconvincing ["Should We Give Up on Government?" March 2]. When God makes the poor in spirit rich in Christ, it is an act of mercy, not justice. Similarly, when individuals, churches, and governments decide to give aid to the poor beyond fair treatment, they are being more

than just; they are being merciful. The issue with which many Christians wrestle is not government and the justice it should provide; the issue is how merciful the state should be.

*Mark Heijerman
Fairfield, N.J.*

I'm not sure Sider and Clark get the point about libertarian principles. Though there are varieties of libertarians, the main theme I am hearing from them is that government is not necessarily evil, it just can't do some things very well. They do not want to eliminate government, though they would like to greatly reduce its size and remove many of its unproductive restrictions. The title of the book by Harry Browne, the Libertarian party's 1996 candidate for president, says it concisely: *Why Government Doesn't Work*.

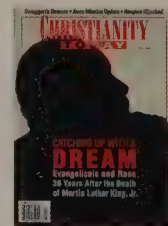
Libertarians are not giving up on government, but they are provoking the question as to what government should be doing and if there are not better ways to accomplish desirable ends other than having a government program for it.

*Edward Y. Hopkins
Lynchburg, Va.*

The Relevance of King's Dream

✉ Thanks to Edward Gilbreath's recent cover story, "Catching Up with a Dream" (Mar. 2), my confidence in the dream and its relevance in the body of Christ has been renewed.

*Dr. Bruce L. Thiessen
Sacramento, Calif.*



✉ I was very saddened to read of Spencer Perkins's death and thought the articles devoted to racism and Martin Luther King timely in that light.

My memories of growing up in a white, Virginia suburb during the era of Selma and Birmingham and Watts and that "I Have a Dream" speech are still vivid. The pastor of my parents' church was dismissed due to his participation in a civil-rights march, and everyone around me buzzed with contempt and fear of King. Now there are voices on both sides of the racial divide judging him through politically correct lenses that annihilate the historic perspective, while at the same time viewing PK's growing emphases on racial reconciliation (and similar attempts) as mere "hugfests."

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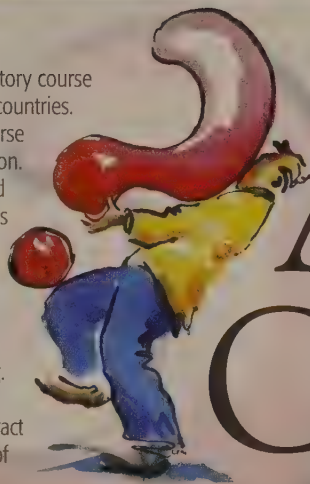
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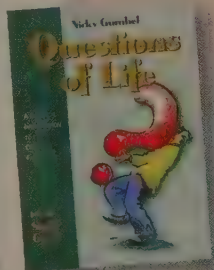
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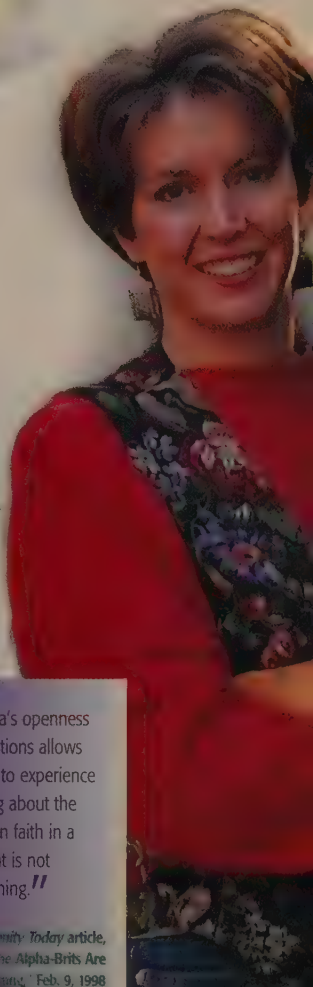
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evangelist

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—Christianity Today article,
The Alpha-Brits Are
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LETTERS

move from dialogue to strategy, with whites and blacks arm in arm; isn't this the substance of "I Have A Dream"? Let's not lose the opportunity!

*Pastor Drew Mountcastle
New Middletown, Ohio*

Reclaiming the Hospice Vision

✉ [With regard to the Special News Report "Hospice Hijacked?" Mar. 2], as a hospice chaplain, I fear that more and more of the patients who worry about being a burden will consider assisted suicide as a way of easing the financial hardship on family and society. Of the various factors that may lead a hospice patient to seek assisted suicide, the most disturbing is the desire to save money. I am alarmed at the number of terminally ill patients who are aware of the high cost of health care and are increasingly inclined to make decisions based on financial considerations.

As an ordained minister, I am further alarmed by the tacit admission of the church that caring for the dying is not often considered an efficient use of resources. How can the original vision of

hospice care be reclaimed unless the church returns to its First Love and stops viewing people primarily as economic potentials?

*Rev. Larry David Hoxey
Henderson, Nev.*

Truth Worse Than Our Fears

✉ L. Gregory Jones has given us a marvelous look at the possibilities of forgiveness ["How Much Truth Can We Take?" Feb. 9]. I lived in South Africa from 1972-77 and 1985-93. I preached love and forgiveness. I taught Bible college students from every tribe. I saw the anger, fear, hatred, and horrors of apartheid up close and personal. I wept with my black colleagues and often argued with my white friends. I'm certain I could have and should have done much more. For the sake of a work visa I sometimes remained silent. Please forgive me.

I've been in and out of South Africa during the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's work. The truth is actually worse than our worst fears. That forgiveness from victims is being given is testimony to the cry for freedom that lives in every heart. The resistance to for-

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FOREWORD BY MAX LUCADO

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An Open Letter About "The Gift of Salvation"

Because of dialogue with some of their critics, and in the interest of evangelical unity, the evangelical team who helped to draft "The Gift of Salvation" (CT, Dec. 8, 1997, p. 34) decided to explain publicly, in the letter printed below, what their purposes and understanding were as they put together this second Evangelicals and Catholics Together document.

Since its publication in December 1997, "The Gift of Salvation," of which we along with other evangelical and Roman Catholic theologians were signatories, has garnered much attention on both sides of this historic confessional divide. We are eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace lest the body of Christ be further fractured through careless conduct or willful disregard on our part. We are thus pleased to respond to various comments and questions concerning the purpose and intended meaning of "The Gift of Salvation."

"The Gift of Salvation" is not an official accord between the Roman Catholic Church and any evangelical church or denomination. It is a good faith effort on the part of *some* Roman Catholics and *some* evangelicals to say, with as much clarity as possible, how they understand God's gracious gift of salvation on the basis of the Word of God. We evangelicals who signed "The Gift of Salvation" do not claim a unity of faith with the church of Rome. What we do acknowledge is a unity in Christ with Roman Catholic believers who, no less than we ourselves, have been saved by God's grace and justified by faith alone. Despite our doctrinal differences, we who by faith know, love, trust, and hope in Christ the Mediator are brothers and sisters in the Lord.

We believe that "The Gift of Salvation" is a significant first step in the right direction, but we do not claim that we have reached a complete common agreement on the doctrine of salvation as expressed in the official teachings of our respective communities. As Timothy George wrote in his introduction to "The Gift of Salvation" in the December 1997 issue of *CHRISTIANITY TODAY*, "We rejoice that our Roman Catholic interlocutors have been able to agree with us that the doctrine of justification set forth in this document agrees with what the Reformers meant by justification by faith alone (*sola fide*). . . . [But] this still does not resolve all the differences between our two traditions on this crucial matter."

Likewise, Cardinal Edward Cassidy declared: "This does not mean that evangelicals and Catholics have overcome all their doctrinal differences or that their understanding of the gospel and of the Christian message has suddenly become identical. We will surely continue to evangelize according to our beliefs." Yet what we have affirmed together in this document, we believe, is of fundamental importance.

When "The Gift of Salvation" speaks of "needlessly divisive disputes" between Roman Catholics and evangelicals, it does not refer to the many weighty theological matters on which we still conscientiously disagree, such as sacramental theology, Marian devotion, purgatory, and so forth. "The Gift of Salvation" takes note of *these* matters, referring to them as "serious and persistent differences" which are "necessarily interrelated" with the affirmations we have made in common, and are thus future agenda items for us. The fact that these issues are "on the table" does not mean that they are "up for grabs," but rather that they must be pursued with rigor and honesty in our continuing dialogue. By "needlessly divisive disputes" we mean the kind of mutual recrimination and uncharitable taunting that has resulted

in Protestant-bashing and Catholic-baiting in the past and that still persists today.

Our methodology in crafting "The Gift of Salvation" was to study the Bible together and to formulate a statement on salvation derived from and based upon the evidence of Holy Scripture alone. In doing so we were in line with the historic evangelical insistence on the sufficiency of Scripture and the recent Roman Catholic renaissance in biblical studies.

Based on our common study of the Bible, we were able to agree that the work of redemption has been accomplished (a word that means *done, completed*) by Christ's atoning sacrifice on the cross. "The Gift of Salvation" affirms a declaratory, forensic justification on the sole ground of the righteousness of Christ alone, a standing before God not earned by any good works or merits on our own. It states that in justification, here and now, God graciously constitutes us his forgiven friends, and that is how henceforth we stand in relation to him. In these terms, we intended to affirm nothing less than "justification by grace alone because of Christ alone through faith alone," which is the biblical gospel.

The word *imputation* (not used in the body of the document) refers to God's crediting of righteousness to us because of what Christ has done for us: which means, God's accounting of Christ's righteousness to all those who are united with him through faith. As evangelicals, we saw this teaching as implicit in the doctrine of justification by faith alone and tried to express it in biblical terms. Our discussion was also informed by the superb biblical scholarship of Fr. Joseph Fitzmyer, whose recent *Commentary on Romans* illuminates the Pauline meaning of justification:

When, then, Paul in Romans says that Christ Jesus "justified" human beings "by his blood" (3:25; cf. 5:9), he means that by what Christ suffered in his passion and death he has brought it about that sinful human beings can stand before God's tribunal acquitted or innocent, with the judgment not based on observance of the Mosaic Law. . . . Paul insists on the utter gratuity of this justification because "all alike have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (3:23). Consequently, this uprightness does not belong to human beings (10:3), and it is not something that they have produced or merited; it is an alien uprightness, one belonging rightly to another (to Christ) and attributed to them because of what that other has done for them. So Paul understands God "justifying the godless" (4:5) or "crediting uprightness" to human beings quite "apart from deeds."

As we have said before, we do not seek Christian unity at the expense of Christian truth. We are engaged in an ecumenism of conviction, not an ecumenism of accommodation. That commitment to unity in truth alone is held with equal firmness by both the evangelical and Roman Catholic theologians in this ongoing process. We see our statement as expressing, not indeed unity in every aspect of the gospel, but unity in its basic dimension, with hope of that unity being extended through further discussions.

In the sixteenth century, Calvin, Bucer, and Melancthon, among others, met with Roman Catholic theologians to discuss the central doctrines of the Reformation. We, with them, stand in that same tradition, committed to the principle of *ecclesia semper reformanda* (the church always reforming), and we believe that both doctrinal reformation and Christian unity flow from the gracious work of the Holy Spirit. For this we pray and beg the prayers of all God's people.

Timothy George, Thomas C. Oden, J. I. Packer



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Kirbyjon Caldwell

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LETTERS

givenness in some is testimony that we are often bound by our sinful natures. That even one victim can forgive in South Africa's story of hate is proof that God's grace is still greater than all our sin.

*Jim Grams
Springfield, Mo.*

Let the Prisoners Compete

I agree on the need for providing training and teaching prisoners real-life skills. However, let me fill you in on the negative impact of prison labor on small businesses ["Let the Prisoners Work," Editorial, Feb. 9]. We have laws prohibiting the importation of products made by prison or slave labor abroad. Yet U.S. companies have to compete against home-grown "slave" labor. A drapery manufacturer in my district is totally shut out of any U.S. government contract to make draperies for federal office buildings because Federal Prison Industries (FPI) has this market all to itself. He is not even allowed to bid on federal government contracts.

In fact, FPI has unilaterally seized all federal government contracts in over 85 different industries, ranging from manu-

facturers of rocket launchers to furniture makers. In several hearings before the Small Business Committee of the House of Representatives, I have seen ample evidence of FPI displacing U.S. jobs.

The legislation you alluded to came about because the business community's very existence was threatened by this competition from very low-wage prison labor. This bill will promote full, fair, and open competition for all federal contracts by allowing every firm the opportunity to bid. This legislation is simply a matter of balancing training and working of prisoners with the free-market system.

*Rep. Donald A. Manzullo (R-Ill.)
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.*

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Did Christianity Cause the Holocaust?

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In defending myself against the Jews, I am acting for the Lord," said Adolf Hitler. "The difference between the church and me is that I am finishing the job." Hitler was lying in an attempt to mislead his public by concealing his own racial animosity behind a mask of Christian language.

Now, a group of prominent Jews has accused the United States Holocaust Museum of the same thing, of misleading the public by blaming Hitler's genocidal program on historic Christian beliefs about Jews (see "Is Holocaust Museum Anti-Christian?," p. 14). The writers of the U.S. Holocaust Museum orientation film *Antisemitism*, they say, have confused harsh Christian statements about Jewish religion with the race-based ideologies that informed Nazism. In addition, they have taken Hitler's explanation for his motivations at face value. Should Hitler's attempts to use the church to justify himself tell us any more about Christian theology than, say, David Koresh's ravings tell us about the Bible?

Hundreds of thousands of Christians who have visited the United States Holocaust Museum have sat and squirmed through all 14 minutes of the film's loose linking of historic Christian condemnation of Jewish refusal to believe in Jesus with Nazi racism. Most of those Christians, vaguely aware that there has been persistent prejudice against Jews for most of European history, have meekly accepted the film's claims and have not protested the inclusion of this anti-Christian message in a tax-funded national museum.

In December, however, six Jews, Jews who knew the horrific facts of historic Christian anti-Semitism, did indeed protest, sending a letter to the then director of the museum, Walter Reich. In that letter, Michael Horowitz, Elliott Abrams, and other notable Jewish thinkers called attention to the film's unfairness in portraying anti-Semitism in almost exclusively Christian terms. And since then they have taken a lot of heat for their stance—from *The New Republic* to vile personal attacks via e-mail.

The film paints with a broad brush. A dull voice intones disconnected facts and quotations that leave the viewer believing that anti-Jewish bias is the result of Christian influence on the Roman Empire, that it has been Christian society alone that has marginalized and oppressed Jews, and that Nazi racial prejudice against the Jews was in clear continuity with earlier religious prejudice. The anti-Judaism that preceded Christianity and that



has long existed outside Europe is ignored.

Certainly one reason American Christians have not heretofore protested the dubious film is that they are largely unaware of the history of Christian anti-Judaism. They have heard, vaguely, about ghettos and pogroms, and they may have heard that Christians once called Jews "Christ-killers" and circulated rumors that blamed Jews for the Black Death. But they have not studied their own history, and they have no framework in which to place isolated facts and evaluate the claims of this film.

Facts without a framework

Let's be clear: From its very earliest days, Christianity spoke ill of "the Jews." The apostles (all of them Jews) felt deeply the rejection of their good news about Jesus from their own community's leaders, and they took the gospel to a more receptive Gentile audience. The internal disputes between Jesus and the leaders of various, competing Judaisms were transposed into a setting where the inner divisions of Judaism were obscured. Paul's hope for a church in which barriers between Jews and Gentiles were obliterated turned into a barricaded community.

From the early second century, the church fathers, puzzled over the fact that Jewish leaders did not interpret their own Scriptures as Jesus and his apostles had, concluded that the Jews were blind, obdurate, stubborn, hard-hearted—and possibly demonic. John Chrysostom called

the Jews, "... inveterate murderers, destroyers, men possessed by the devil, [whom] debauchery and drunkenness have given ... the manners of the pig and the lusty goat." Despite their harsh words, many of the Fathers did not cease to appeal for Jews to come to Jesus (though, tragically, they required such converts to give up their Jewishness). Nor did church leaders advise or officially support violence against Jews: the Jews were to be preserved in misery as a sign of reprobation, the Fathers concluded, until the Last Day when God would exact judgment.

From Constantine to the Renaissance (with the notable, bloody exception of the Spanish Inquisition), both the "Christianized" empire and the imperialized church protected the existence of Jews, while progressively restricting their rights and their economic activity. On the whole, it was mobs, stirred by fanatics, who were responsible for the burning of synagogues and the killing of Jews. Church and state needed Jews, both to prop up a triumphalist theology and to foster finance and trade. And at times when other non-Christian religions were not tolerated, they protected the Jews' radically circumscribed existence.

For all the horrible history of Christian European anti-Judaism, it was almost always a cultural and theological prejudice, not a racial one, and therefore it was at least possible for Jews to escape the pressures through assimilation and conversion. Sadly, when they refused conversion, they faced even further straitening of their circumstances, as when Martin Luther, deeply disappointed by Jewish lack of interest in his Reformation, called them "this damned, rejected race," and advised the German princes to raze their synagogues and houses and forbid their rabbis to teach.

Nazi anti-Semitism was different. It targeted Jews as a race. Even those who had been baptized and assimilated were sought and rooted out, even from monasteries and convents. It was their fantasized *racial* characteristics that threatened the mythology of Aryan blood purity.

In March, John Paul II emphasized that same distinction between historic Christian anti-Judaism and various secular, racist anti-Semitismisms in his cautiously worded apology for the role some "sons and daughters of the Church" played in the Holocaust. Nazi acts and ideology, he claimed, had their "roots outside of Christianity."

Some have complained that this distinction cannot bear the weight the pope puts on it. And surely there is a debate to be had: To what degree did Christian beliefs about Jewish unbelief merely set the historical stage for the Holocaust, and to what degree did they actually contribute to the Holocaust? But this requires a complex and careful analysis that no 14-minute film (nor even an hour-long television special) can be made to bear.

The wages of guilt

Yes, Christians have plenty to apologize for in the way we have treated Jews in the past. But accurate history is vital for many reasons, among them this: indiscriminate guilt-mongering can lead Christians to be unfaithful to their own faith.

Take, for example, this comment attributed by the *New York Times* to National Council of Churches general secretary Joan Brown Campbell: "If you look at the Nazi regime, you can see in it the philosophy of Christian superiority." Campbell's remark was inaccurate, ignoring Nazi beliefs about the defects in historic Christianity. But it was also made in an interview in which she undercut the rising con-

cern about persecution of Christians around the globe. Her timidity about the claims of Christ caused her to cast doubt on the efforts others are making to save lives and to spare believers from torture and imprisonment.

Likewise, Rosemary Radford Ruether's fascinating historical account of Christian anti-Judaism, *Faith and Fratricide* (1974), called Christians to abandon the belief that Jesus is the savior for everyone in favor of the notion that Jesus is the savior of some, while others will have their own "saviors." Overwhelmed by the history she recounts, Ruether is convinced that anti-Judaism is the inevitable corollary of believing Jesus is the savior of the *world*.

Christians must confront their anti-Judaism, but they cannot retreat from the core of their faith. Making unwarranted connections between Christianity's true-to-itself claims for Jesus and the tragedy of the Holocaust leads Christians like Campbell to the brink of denying their Lord (something about which Jesus himself had strong words) and to undercut an important humanitarian movement.

A museum of conscience

The concerned Jews' protest didn't receive the public attention it should have because the museum was soon after embroiled in a controversy over an invitation to Yasser Arafat to visit the exhibit. Museum director Reich fought the invitation and refused to be part of the welcoming committee. He was fired February 18. "This is a matter of conscience for me," Reich said, "and this is a museum of conscience."

As a museum of conscience, the U.S. Holocaust Museum has a responsibility to report how Jews have suffered, in large part because of morally repugnant stereotyping. How ironic and sad that its own film should foster inaccurate stereotypes of Christianity!

The museum celebrates its fifth anniversary this month. The controversies have come at a bad time, casting a shadow over an institution all Americans should take pride in. But what better time is there to correct the egregious stereotyping of this film and assure the public of the care and accuracy with which the museum's exhibits report the most tragic event of the twentieth century?

As communities of conscience, the churches also have a big burden. That burden is, first, to educate their members on the history of both Judaism and anti-Judaism. Contact with those for whom Judaism is a living faith is essential so that Christians do not think that Judaism froze in fixed form in the first century. (Some of the nastiest comments early church fathers made about Jews reveal they no longer had active contact with living Judaism.)

Second, the churches' burden is to take care in how we preach about Jews in the Scriptures—not treating *Pharisee* as a simple synonym for *hypocrite*, for example, and not treating the Old Testament (as many have done) as a simple history of unbelief or as a mere codebook of messianic clues. Indeed, here American evangelicals have an advantage, thanks to the appreciative reading of the Old Testament handed to us by our Puritan forebears, and thanks to the more positive reading of the preservation of the Jews popularized by dispensationalism.

Above all, let us avoid triumphalism. Deaf to the invitation to self-examination brought by the biblical prophets, the Fathers applied their criticism only to the Jews. They spoke only of the church's glories, and forgot that the prophets' challenges apply also to us. CT

Courts Divided on Scouting

Courts in two states gave conflicting rulings in March as to whether the Boy Scouts of America is exempt from civil-rights laws in restricting its membership.

On March 23, the California Supreme Court ruled that Boy Scouts can bar homosexuals, atheists, or agnostics because the group as a private association is exempt from civil-rights laws.

However, on March 2, the New Jersey Court of appeals ruled that the 1990 dismissal of homosexual Scout leader James Dale was "wrongful and discriminatory."

Scouts spokesperson Gregg Shields says the New Jersey ruling will be appealed. "The group has a right as a voluntary organization to teach youth the traditional values that it has taught since 1910 and to establish membership and leadership standards."

The Boy Scout oath acknowledges a duty to God and requires scouts to keep "physically strong, mentally awake and morally straight." Dale contended that homosexuality is not immoral.

In a lower court ruling in 1995, New Jersey Superior Court Judge Patrick McGann said the Boy Scouts were within their rights as a private association to remove Dale, now 27, as assistant scoutmaster.

However, the three-judge appeals court determined that the Boy Scouts are a "public accommodation" and had violated antidiscrimination laws. Jay Sekulow of the American Center for Law and Justice says there is precedent for winning at the highest court. In 1996, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that a veterans group did not have to include homosexuals in its Saint Patrick's Day parade.

Social Principles found in the UMC's Book of Discipline, which forbids ministers from performing homosexual-union ceremonies. Nebraska bishop Joel Martinez suspended Creech last November.

Creech maintained the Social Principles are not binding. He says the verdict "shows we are guided more by God's grace and love than regulations."

But Jim Heideringer, publisher of the UMC's evangelical newspaper *Good News*, says the denomination remains sharply divided over the homosexuality issue. "It has really threatened the unity of the church," he says. Martinez adds, "The continuing division of opinion and convictions on this matter will require of us spiritual maturity." The evangelical Confessing Movement in the UMC stated, "It threatens the connection and the ties that bind us together in worship and ministry."

UNITED METHODISTS



Supportive hug: Creech (right) is greeted by backer Dave England at the trial.

Pastor Acquitted in Ceremony Trial

A jury of Nebraska United Methodist ministers fell one vote short of convicting Omaha First United Methodist Church (UMC) pastor Jimmy Creech on March 14 of disobeying denominational rules by performing a same-sex ceremony uniting two lesbians in his congregation last September.

Although eight of the thirteen jury members voted to

convict Creech, the tally was one vote shy of the requirement for a guilty verdict.

The trial is the first challenge of the current UMC policy against homosexual-union ceremonies. The result could shape the policy of the nation's second-largest Protestant denomination toward homosexuals.

Creech, 53, had been charged with violating the

WASHINGTON

Is Holocaust Museum Anti-Christian?

Six prominent Jews are accusing the U.S. Holocaust Museum of anti-Christian bias in showing a 14-minute film on the roots of anti-Semitism.

The film alleges that Christian churches played a key role in promoting anti-Semitism, leading to Nazi Germany's genocide of European Jewry during World War II. In a letter to the director of the Holocaust Museum, the group, led by Michael Horowitz of the Hudson Institute, wrote, "We believe that the film advances a profoundly inaccurate thesis: that Christianity and Christian leaders were the initial causes of anti-Semitism," and that "the film repeats and prop-

agates libels of Christianity" (see "Did Christianity Cause the Holocaust? p.12).

Other signers are film critic Michael Medved, historian



Awaiting "selection": Hungarian Jews at the railhead of Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp in Poland in 1944.

David Dalin, and Reagan administration official Elliot Abrams. Holocaust Museum spokesperson Howard White counters, "This film is a product

of much scholarship and has been reviewed by the 17-member museum's church-relations committee, which consists of theologians and historians both Protestant and Catholic."

However, Marc Saperstein, a professor of Jewish history, argues, "The case for emphasizing the continuity between Christian doctrine and the Nazi death camps is not ultimately persuasive."

Rabbi Yechiel Eckstein, president of the Chicago-based International Fellowship of Christians and Jews, says, "I do think that the history of Christians' attitudes, policies, and views towards Jews at least created the fertile ground in which anti-Semitism grew and spread."

By Mary Cagney.

Federal Judges Block Restrictions

State legislatures in 20 states have passed partial-birth abortion bans, but efforts to implement the laws have been repeatedly stymied by court rulings, primarily at the federal level.

Currently, 11 states are facing court challenges. Ban opponents argue that the definitions of partial-birth abortion are vaguely worded and that an exception based on the health of the mother is needed.

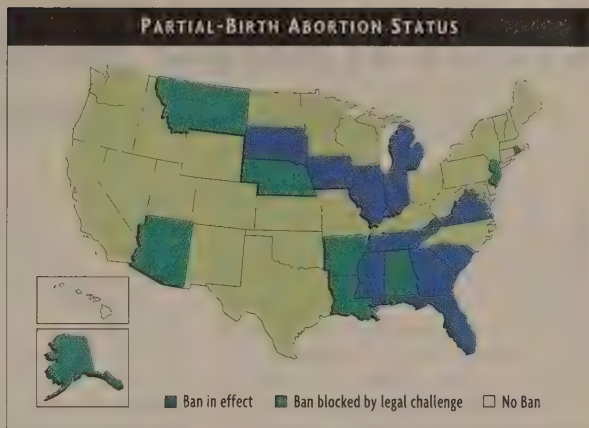
"Until the Supreme Court deals directly with partial-birth abortion, nobody is going to know whether these laws are constitutional or not," suggests Nik Nikas, counsel

for Americans United for Life in Chicago.

The Supreme Court seems to be in no hurry to settle the matter. In a 6-to-3 decision on March 23, the justices refused to review a lower court ruling that had invalidated a 1995 Ohio law restricting partial-birth abortion.

Nevertheless, Mary Spaulding-Balch, director of state legislation for the National Right to Life Committee, says partial-birth abortion bans are supported across the political spectrum.

"The momentum has not stopped even though there



JUNE GUNAWAN/SOURCE: NATIONAL RIGHT TO LIFE COMMITTEE, INC.

have been court injunctions," Spaulding-Balch says. State legislatures have overridden gubernatorial vetoes in Alaska, New Jersey, and Florida. In Congress, the issue is ex-

pected to be raised a third straight year.

State legislatures began enacting bans following President Clinton's second veto (CT, Oct. 27, 1997, p. 70). [CT]

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM AMENDMENT

Panel Advances Istook Proposal

A constitutional amendment that would allow prayer in public schools, religious symbols on government property, and tax dollars for religious schools passed its first hurdle March 4.

Voting along party lines, the House Judiciary Committee approved the Religious Freedom Amendment sponsored by Rep. Ernest Istook (R-Okla.) 16 to 11, paving the way for a vote by the House.

Republicans have tried unsuccessfully for the past 15 years to pass similar legislation.

Some Christian organizations have been seeking to amend the Constitution more specifically since the U.S. Supreme Court barred state-sponsored public school prayer and Bible reading in the early 1960s. Supporters of the amendment say it is necessary because the court system has overstepped its authority in restricting religious practices. But critics, such as Barry Lynn, executive director of Americans United for the Separation

of Church and State, say the amendment would "subject schoolchildren to coercive prayer in public schools."

However, Istook says the amendment will not permit "government establishment"

of religion. He says the biggest difficulty in gaining passage "will be correcting the misunderstanding people have of the phrase *separation of church and state*."

The amendment faces a substantial hur-

dle before becoming law. More than 10,000 constitutional amendments have been introduced as legislation but only 26 have passed. A two-thirds vote for ratification is needed in both the House and Senate, then legislatures in three-fourths of the states must approve it before becoming law.

"It's an uphill fight, but we think that it's an important effort," says Arne Owens, director of communications for the Christian Coalition. "We plan to be very active with our efforts to build support for passing the amendment." [CT]



Istook

News Briefs

◆ Barnes & Noble, the nation's largest bookseller, has been indicted by juries in Alabama and Tennessee on child pornography charges arising from the sale of books containing photographs of naked children. The two books in question are *The Age of Innocence*, by David Hamilton, and *Radiant Identities*, by Jock Sturges. If Barnes & Noble is convicted, it could face fines of up to \$320,000.

◆ The board of the **Association of Vineyard Churches** has announced that Todd Hunter is the new national director of the movement's 500 churches. Hunter, 40, succeeds John Wimber, who died last November (CT, Jan. 12, 1998, p. 58). Hunter has been executive pastor of the 5,000-member Anaheim Vineyard Christian Fellowship.

◆ The **Stone-Campbell Journal** began publication this month, with William R. Baker, biblical division chair at Saint Louis Christian College, as general editor. The editorial board will be composed of members of the Churches of Christ, and the magazine will focus on biblical interpretation, history, theology, apologetics, philosophy, and cultural criticism.

◆ **Lloyd Merle Perry**, 81, former professor of practical theology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School and Lancaster Bible College, died on February 15.

◆ The **People of Destiny** movement, based in Gaithersburg, Maryland, has changed its name to PDI Ministries. It is a network of 33 churches founded by Larry Tomczak and C. J. Mahaney.

◆ **Asbury Theological Seminary**, now in its seventy-fifth year in Wilmore, Kentucky, is planning to develop a full-program campus in Orlando, Florida, in the fall of 1999. The interdenominational school will initially offer master of divinity and master of arts degrees.

◆ David J. Robinson has been inaugurated as the second president of the **Houston Graduate School of Theology**, an evangelical Friends seminary started in 1983. Founding president Delbert P. Vaughn has been elevated to chancellor. [CT]



Hunter

From Trauma to Truth

Once-abused children demand accountability.

Life changed drastically for Richard Darr just before he turned six. Under Christian and Missionary Alliance (C&MA) rules, he could no longer stay with his parents, who spent nine months at a stretch evangelizing in the West African nation of Mali. At the C&MA Mamou Alliance Academy in Guinea, he could only communicate with his parents, 300 miles away, through letters, and he was forbidden to write anything negative.

But Darr and at least 30 other children at the West African boarding school suffered a more harrowing form of alienation. From 1950 to 1971, children were beaten with belts, forced to eat their own vomit, punched and slapped in the face, coerced into performing oral sex, required to sit in their own feces, fondled, and beaten with a strap to the point of bleeding.

Not until 1995, after persistent complaints by a group of adults who had been Mamou students, did the C&MA impanel a commission to investigate.

The panel's 95-page report, filed after 18 months of research and interviews, identifies nine offenders; four are retired, three are dead, and two are no longer affiliated with the C&MA. Two individuals who refused to cooperate with the panel have been convicted at denominational disciplinary hearings.

The commission faulted the denomination for improper training, poor oversight, and negligence. The Mamou staff, rather than being loving surrogate parents, punished too frequently and affirmed too little, the report indicates.

Richard W. Bailey, chair of the C&MA's board of managers, sent a letter expressing regret to Mamou alumni in January. "Please accept our heartfelt apology for our inadequate supervision and understanding of the happenings at Mamou Academy, while you were a student."

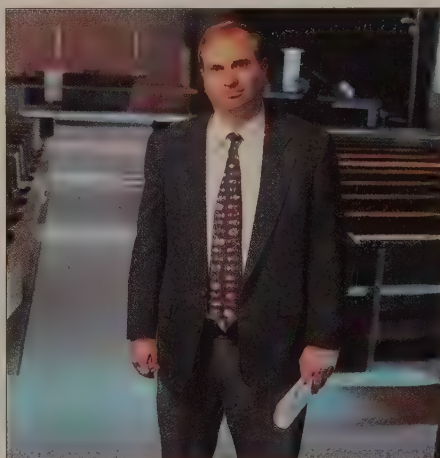
SAFEGUARDING THE FUTURE: But an apology has not brought full satisfaction. "What happened to us is not an isolated instance," says Darr, now a 43-year-old United Methodist pastor in Libertyville, Illinois. "Evangelical missions are too quick to forgive in these situations, and sometimes the offenders are allowed to continue in ministry and repeat the violations."

Darr hopes to see the formation of a

permanent interagency committee that deals with such allegations. Children of missionaries have reported similar abuse at other boarding schools in West Africa.

"To rectify the past, we need to safeguard the future," says Darr, who notes that 120 North American missions organizations still operate boarding schools, with a combined number of 15,000 students.

Darr urges mission agencies to teach leaders how to detect child abuse, conduct thorough background checks on em-



Survivor: Darr suffered abuse at the hands of dorm parents, a teacher, and a nurse during first and second grades.

ployees, and publicly discipline convicted abusers.

INITIAL ACCUSATIONS DOUBTED: A decade ago, most parents and denominational officials balked when they first heard reports of abuse.

"We wouldn't have believed our children," says Henry Neudorf of Osler, Saskatchewan. "We had been thoroughly brainwashed into thinking that they were being taken care of by dedicated people." While Neudorf, 75, and his wife, Hazel, worked to establish churches in Mali, three of their four children were physically abused at Mamou. After a period of estrangement, the Neudorf children and parents have reconciled.

Following years of receiving little sympathy from the denomination, a committee that was composed of abuse victims went public with the allegations (CT, Aug. 14, 1995, p. 60). Soon afterwards, the C&MA agreed to pay most of

the therapy bills for abuse victims.

Many abused children came to hate not only the Mamou staff and their parents, but God. Amazingly, half of them are active in ministry, several of them in prominent posts, including Compassion International president Wess Stafford.

At the time, boarding-school officials ordered students not to upset their parents, lest ministry be compromised.

Largely in response to the accusations, the C&MA has made changes in its missions policies. "We have better screening and better training," Bailey told CT. "Once on location, we have very close supervision and careful accountability." The denomination now allows parents to home school their children or send them to nearby private schools.

CULPRITS CONVICTED: Two of the accused C&MA retirees confessed before the commission and accepted the denomination's counseling offer.

However, two others who denied any wrongdoing were found guilty by a six-member church tribunal in November.

An accused houseparent suggested the complaints had been fabricated by those "who desired to injure his reputation." The C&MA suspended his credentials after the discipline committee unanimously ruled that overwhelming evidence showed him guilty of sexual, physical, and psychological abuse. There will be no further punishment. Pursuing the matter in civil or criminal courts would be extremely difficult since the abuse occurred so long ago and in a foreign country.

"The accused are in their late seventies and early eighties," Bailey says. "What kind of discipline can you mete out?"

But Beverly Shellrude Thompson of Burlington, Ontario, Canada, says abusers do not automatically stop.

"One of my perpetrators was a nurse who still had access to children until a year ago," says Shellrude Thompson, 45. "Perpetrators usually don't stop because they get old."

But Bailey hopes a denomination-sponsored Mamou reunion in June will bring closure to the matter. In the meantime, former missionary children are frustrated that a more detailed report of recommendations the independent commission sent to the C&MA has not been distributed to affected parties as promised.

"If this information doesn't get out into the open, we'll be back to square one," Darr says. "It will be like an open, festering wound."

By John W. Kennedy.

Does 'The Gift of Salvation' Sell Out the Reformation?

The recent statement from evangelical and Roman Catholic leaders on the Christian doctrine of justification "sells out" the Reformation, according to James Boice, chairman of the Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals (ACE).

The Alliance in late February issued a pointed response to "The Gift of Salvation," a statement from Evangelicals and Catholics Together (ECT) on the doctrine of justification and the mandate for global evangelism (CT, Jan. 12, 1998, p. 61). ECT is an independent group of scholars and ministry leaders, formed in 1994. "I hate to use *selling us out*, but it seems to me that's what it does," Boice said to CHRISTIANITY TODAY of the latest ECT document, a follow-up to an earlier controversial statement (CT, May 15, 1995, p. 53). "It really sells out the Reformation." But ECT evangelicals vehemently disagree. Timothy

George argues, "We are engaged in an ecumenism of conviction, not an ecumenism of accommodation."

As evangelical scholars have evaluated "The Gift of Salvation," many have given cautious support, but others, such as Boice, have been sounding the alarm. ACE's "Appeal to Fellow Evangelicals" (www.Christianity.net/ct/archives) notes that "The Gift of Salvation" has "divided evangelicals from evangelicals [and] revealed that the unity we thought we had was not as deep as we believed."

The ACE statement asserts that "Gift of Salvation" falls short of the "biblical and Reformation doctrine of *sola fide* [faith alone]," that it is a misleading attempt to "bring harmony via ambiguous formulas," and that it undermines evangelistic outreach, especially in Catholic-majority countries.

The ten signers, mostly scholars, authors and pastors, of the ACE appeal include R. C. Sproul, John Armstrong, Michael Horton, and Boice. Philadelphia-based ACE was formed to recall the evangelical movement to its roots in the Protestant Reformation (CT, June 17, 1996, p. 62).

WHERE'S THE GOSPEL? "The Gift of Salvation" affirms justification by faith alone. But ACE argues there are "irreconcilable" differences between historic Protestant and Catholic understandings of how God reconciles sinners to himself. The appeal says, "We see [imputed righteousness] as the heart of the Gospel."

The Protestant Reformers held that God justifies believers by imputing Christ's righteousness to them. But Catholic doctrine, formulated in response to the Reformation, taught that God saves the faithful by infusing them with Christ's righteousness through a process that requires human cooperation. As a result, one of the enduring fault lines between historic Protestantism and Catholicism is the question of whether a faithful Christian has full assurance of salvation

See **THEOLOGY** on page 21

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NAE Rethinks Mission

Departing leader calls for better use of resources.

For several years, National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) leaders have recognized they must appeal to a broader constituency. But now, with the imminent departure of president Don Argue, the organization is poised for additional restructuring in order to maintain its focus and vitality.

At its annual meeting last month in Orlando, leaders underscored the importance of this transition period.

"The NAE can't move into the new millennium as just another parachurch ministry," Argue declared. "The paradigms have changed." He says the Carol Stream, Illinois-based organization needs to become a network resource center and technological data base for evangelical ministries—but he is not the person to oversee such a realignment.

"I haven't accomplished everything I wanted to, but the NAE needs someone with gifts that are different than mine," Argue, 58, told CT.

Argue has raised the profile of NAE, climaxed by meetings with religious and government leaders in China (CT, April 6, 1998, p. 26). In his three years at the NAE helm, Argue has become cochair of the State Department's Subcommittee on Religious Freedom and Persecution Abroad, a post in which he will continue. He will become president of Northwest College in Kirkland, Washington, on June 1 (CT, Feb. 9, 1998, p. 92).

AGING CONSTITUENCY: While the evangelical movement has changed dramatically in the past 40 years, the NAE has not. The average age of NAE direct-mail donors is now over 70.

"Large denominations, parachurch ministries, and colleges are now doing their own thing," Argue told CT. "A new compelling motivation to work together must be discovered."

At the meeting, Carol S. Childress, information broker with the Dallas-based Leadership Network, cautioned that younger Christians are not as loyal to institutions as older believers are.

"To those under 50, real-life ministry is not meeting inside church walls," says

Childress, 49. "Few are giving to sustain ongoing organizations." Rather, Childress says, they tend to form ad hoc alliances that are dissolved once a particular mission is accomplished.

"Most members of NAE have been shaped by hierarchical structures," Childress told CT. "But that's not the world we're living in today."

RESHAPING THE MOLD: Part of NAE's concerns stem from its success. The organization has spun off several min-



Departing leaders: Argue (left) confers with Hofman at the NAE convention.

istries that have their own boards and agendas, such as National Religious Broadcasters. While the 49 member denominations include some as large as Argue's own 2.5 million-member Assemblies of God, the NAE includes many tiny groups, such as the Evangelical Methodist Church and the Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church. Many are members in order to have a lobbying link to Washington, D.C., via the NAE's government-affairs office.

R. Lamar Vest, who started a two-year term as NAE chair last month, sees denominational diversity as the organization's largest asset. "There is still a common mission."

Vest is first assistant general overseer for the Church of God in Cleveland, Tennessee. He concurs with Argue's goals of making NAE more inclusive for minorities, women, and younger people.

"The life and vibrancy of any movement depends on how broad a participation can be brought on board," Vest, 57, told CT.

"Some dramatic changes are going to have to be made."

STOPGAP MOVES: The search for a new president could take a year. In the interim, David L. Melvin, 39, has been named director of operations. He has been with NAE for a decade, including three years as vice president. Melvin, an ordained Reformed Church in America minister, will be a candidate for the president's post.

"Evangelicalism as it is perceived across America seems to be getting broader," Melvin says. "NAE must establish what makes us the National Association of Evangelicals."

That broadening needs to reach those who historically have not played a large role in the NAE, according to Leonard

Hofman, who completed a two-year term as chair. "NAE must obviously be more gender-inclusive," says Hofman, a 70-year-old former executive of the Christian Reformed Church in North America. Currently, the 15-member NAE executive board includes only two women.

RACIAL RECONCILIATION: Nonetheless, the NAE is trying to be more inclusive. For example, 20 percent of the executive board is African American. Next January, 200

evangelical leaders will gather in Atlanta for a joint summit of the NAE and National Black Evangelical Association, which has been a separate entity for 35 years. Leaders hope to emerge with a plan of action on common strategies, rather than merely asking questions.

"Racism and reconciliation are not on the radar screen of most white evangelicals, because we don't deal with it daily," Argue says. "Racism is always on the agenda at black evangelical meetings because they deal with it every day."

Edward L. Foggs, an African American, is next in line for the NAE chair in 2000. He is general secretary of the Leadership Council for the Church of God in Anderson, Indiana.

"NAE is trying to be a strong advocate for racial reconciliation, which has not always been its strongest suit," Foggs says. "Positive change is taking place."

*By John W. Kennedy
in Orlando.*



New regime: Vest and Melvin.

Another New Era?

Millions lost in double-your-money scam.

In a double-your-money scam, remarkably similar to the New Era Philanthropy scandal (CT, Oct. 27, 1997, p. 86), a Los Angeles-area woman has been convicted in a \$4.4 million fraud case.

After the March 6 verdict in Wichita, Kansas, federal Judge Monti Belot denounced Priscilla Deters, 63, as a "danger to any honest person." Deters could be sentenced to four years in prison for each of the 12 counts. She could also be fined up to \$250,000. Sentencing is set for May 22.

Deters's company, Productions Plus, promised church groups it would make "matching gifts" for their projects if they first put up "deposits," which Deters held for a year.

"The premise is savings and convenience and the result is good," her materials stated. In response, church groups in 21 states, mainly evangelical Nazarenes and Friends (Quakers), poured nearly \$6.5 million into Productions Plus between 1990 and 1995. Deters pledged that funds would be kept safe in certificates of deposit, while matching gifts were to come from highly profitable businesses she ran. "I am a service agency without a fee," Deters stated in 1991. "I have one purpose, and that is to bring service to the community."

EARLY PAYOFFS: While slightly more than \$2 million made its way back to investors, checks and bank statements detailed how she paid off early depositors with money from later ones in a classic Ponzi scheme. Prosecutors showed that Deters, instead of safeguarding her clients' funds, spent \$4.4 million on herself and her family.

"If there were business profits," says Kansas State investigator Gary Fulton, who searched six years of bank records, "I never found them." Deters gave more than \$1 million to her four sons for work performed for Productions Plus. She gave a \$200,000 gift to help a son buy a home and paid \$120,000 in wages to her mother, who died in 1994 at age 97. Some \$18,000 was spent on dental work. "She was a shrewd, calculating thief," argued prosecutor Annette Gurney.

'GREAT FINANCIAL OPPORTUNITY': Deters recruited churches with the help of endorsements from prominent

church figures, especially in Friends circles.

The most important came from T. Eugene Coffin, who recommended Deters in 1988 while chair of a national Friends Ministers Conference. At his behest, conference planners placed \$7,500 with Deters; a year later she returned \$50,000 to the group. When news of the generous matching gift spread, pastors and superintendents lined up to sign up. (Coffin now



Trial and tribulation: Deters leaves federal court after the first day of testimony. She is out of jail after posting \$200,000 bond.

has Alzheimer's disease and did not testify.)

Maurice Roberts, superintendent of the Friends' Mid-America Yearly Meeting in Wichita, collected \$439,000 from his churches to send to Deters. Roberts was forced to resign in October 1994 when it became clear that the yearly meeting faced losses of as much as \$200,000. R. J. Wegner, who oversaw Nazarene congregations in North Dakota and South Dakota, collected \$600,000, more than \$500,000 of which disappeared in the scheme. In a letter to pastors, Wegner wrote, "I, as your district superintendent, am very excited, happy, and thrilled with this great financial opportunity knocking at our door. We cannot afford to pass this up."

Other groups drawn into the scam included the Houston Graduate School of Theology, a decade-old Friends-related

seminary in Texas, that saw in Deters an opportunity to obtain funds to help build a new campus. It mounted a fundraising campaign around the plan and bought a large tract of land with her early payments.

But the school later lost more than \$250,000. The new campus remains unbuilt, the land has been put up for sale, and the school has fallen behind in its repayment of funds borrowed to sink into the scheme.

The Friends Church in Cherokee, Oklahoma, recruited community members to send \$475,000, planning to use its gifts to build a worship and community center. Cherokee's loss is in excess of \$400,000. Other victims included John Wesley College in High Point, North Carolina, Barclay College in Haviland, Kansas, and Indiana Wesleyan University in Marion, Deters's alma mater.

Individuals also lost large sums. For example, Mary Washburn, a widow in Cherokee, invested her entire \$68,000 life savings in the failed community center venture; Allen Dace, a retired Nazarene pastor from Chatham, Illinois, put \$154,000 into a nonexistent electronic sign business that Deters claimed was producing copious profits.

LEGAL TROUBLES: Many victims described Deters as charismatic and highly persuasive when presenting her program. But prosecutors charged that she failed to tell her victims that in 1991 cease-and-desist orders had been issued against her in California, North Dakota, and South Dakota by securities commissioners in those states. California followed up its order with an injunction in 1995, and a civil-contempt citation in 1997. The federal indictment in Wichita came in December 1996.

In 1991, when Wegner, the Nazarene superintendent, learned about North Dakota's cease-and-desist order, he defiantly declared he would rather "believe people in the church," and sent the money to Deters anyway. At the trial, Wegner said, "You could say I was rather innocent, and maybe a little on the dumb side."

Deters's defense counsel, Steve Gradert—appointed by the court because Deters said she could not afford one—attempted to portray her as "an honest, hardworking Christian woman" victimized by a shadowy conspiracy involving church officials who were "working for Satan." However, Gradert presented no concrete evidence of any conspiracy. Deters did not testify at the trial.

By Chuck Fager in Wichita.

Will New Christian TV Network Beat the Odds?

Industry naysayers have not dented the confidence of Lowell "Bud" Paxson in the television network he is birthing. Due to be launched in August, Pax Net will offer family-oriented programming that addresses issues of faith. And like its flagship offering—reruns of *Touched by an Angel*—Paxson plans to confound his critics.

"Sure there are skeptics out of Hollywood and the TV industry: no sex, no violence, no ratings," Paxson says. "But I have no doubt that mainstream media will recognize that talking about God is a good thing and can make you money. The success in any network start-up is counterprogramming."

That strategy—programming that targets an underserved audience—combined with Paxson's entrepreneurial savvy, has been successful before.

"Bud's track record is pretty impressive," says Jerry Rose, president of Christian Communications of Chicagoland, which recently sold WCFC TV-38 in Chicago to Paxson for \$120 million in cash.

MIDAS TOUCH: Certainly Paxson has proved that he can make money. The West Palm Beach, Florida, resident apprenticed as an entrepreneur in the radio industry, founded the Home Shopping Network in 1982, and took his company public in 1986. He founded the Silver King Communications group of broadcast television stations, eventually amassing a dozen, eight of them in the top ten U.S. markets. Paxson sold both enterprises in 1990.

Since then he has bought and sold a number of properties, including the Travel Channel. Paxson Communications went public in 1994. The company owns, or is close to acquiring, 73 television stations for Pax Net, which, when combined, can reach 70 percent of U.S. households.

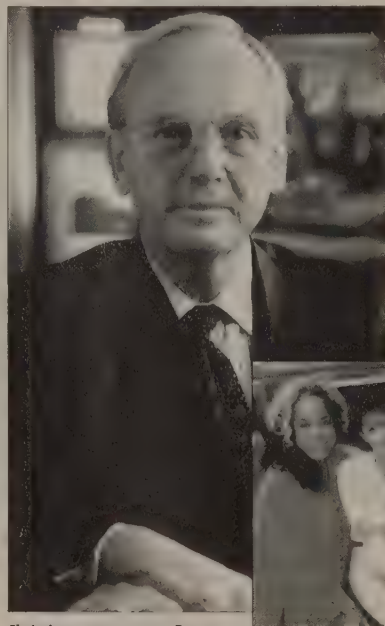
Paxson, 63-year-old chair and CEO of Paxson Communications, says Pax Net will project a "God flavor." Programming will raise the issue of faith, but not drive it home by pounding on a pulpit. "TV can only plant the seed about the Father and Jesus," Paxson says. "When Christian TV tries to be all things, it fails. As a whole... it's not doing much for the kingdom."

His goal is to craft excellent entertainment programming. "We forget what we

were created for, which is to worship God and show him in all his glory," Paxson says. "God will be glorified by storytelling."

"He has a point worth listening to," says Brandt Gustavson, president of the National Religious Broadcasters. "I think there's room for all of us to do the thing God has called us to do."

Paxson began his journey of faith in 1986 following the breakup of his second marriage. He remarried in 1990 and now



Christian entrepreneur: Paxson is hinging Pax Net's hopes on reruns of *Touched by an Angel*, currently the top-rated drama on CBS.

places his Christianity at the center of his personal life and business plans.

In 1992, he cofounded the nonprofit Christian Network (CT, Oct. 2, 1995, p. 98). The network produces worship and praise programming, which is aired overnight on Paxson stations and 100 other independent stations. Paxson also is planting a new church in West Palm Beach.

He credits his business success to such acts of Christian obedience to God. "If you take a piece of your capital, commerce, management time, and profit and devote it to something [God] directs, he will have your business grow," says Paxson.

TIMING IS EVERYTHING: But Paxson

is also quick to seize an opportunity. He sees a hunger for quality family programming. Years ago, broadcaster Pat Robertson, founder of the Family Channel, had a similar vision. But that cable channel has been sold to Fox Network mogul Rupert Murdoch, who is shifting the programming focus toward children (CT, July 14, 1997, p. 60).

Andi Sporkin, vice president of communications for CBS, agrees. "Without question, there's an audience for that kind of programming. He has the potential to be enormously successful."

Pax Net hopes to build on the success of the CBS drama *Touched by an Angel*, which faced its own uphill battle when it first aired four seasons ago. "It had every factor to fail," says Sporkin. Now it is the second-highest-ranking drama on television.

Investors have been skittish about Paxson's plans. Pax Net stock dropped a couple of points following the announcement, but it recently has returned to former levels. Paxson is resolute that Americans are hungry for spiritual enrichment, pointing to the curiosity awakened by the end of the millennium.

Pax Net has spent more than \$200 million to acquire reruns of *Touched by an Angel*, *Promised Land*, *Dr. Quinn Medicine Woman*, and *Christy*, all of which originally appeared on CBS. From Focus on

the Family, Pax Net will broadcast *The Last Chance Detective Series*. The network will air at least one original show: *Celebrities and Charities*, which is like *Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous* with a charitable twist.

Implicit in the Pax Net strategy is positioning for the emergence of digital television. Rose sold TV-38 in anticipation of that. Conversion to meet government standards by 2000 will cost around \$13 million per station, Rose says. Pax Net has deep pockets and is better able to comply than the typical independent station owner.

But there is humility and a self-deprecating sense of humor in Paxson's witness as evidenced in the title of his autobiography, *Threading the Needle*, to be published in August by HarperCollins. "I can see the head and shoulders of my camel popping through the needle," he says, referring to Mark 10:25. But Paxson is still pushing from behind to finish the job.

By Linda Murray Green
in West Palm Beach.

THEOLOGY from page 17

or remains uncertain until death.

In discussing justification, "The Gift of Salvation" does not use either the term *imputed* or *infused*, causing ACE to view the document as "dangerously ambiguous."

ECT signer George argues that the purpose of "The Gift of Salvation" was to develop a joint statement on justification by contemporary evangelicals and Roman Catholics. Jesuit scholar Avery Dulles, an ECT signer, says, "We were careful to follow Trent, the teaching of the Second Vatican Council . . . we are not far-out Catholic theologians."

George, in a written response (see Letters, p. 9), says, "As evangelicals, we see this teaching [on imputation] as implicit in the doctrine of justification by faith alone and tried to express it in biblical terms."

ACE's Armstrong agrees that some Catholics and evangelicals are coming to "similar understandings" of what the Bible says. But he believes "The Gift of Salvation" lines up with historic Catholic dogma in ways that are unacceptable to evangelicals. He says, "The way the document is worded, Catholics can sign it and still hold on to what the church teaches." George says ECT evangelicals do not have "unity of faith with the Church of Rome," but do have a "unity in Christ" with Catholic believers.

CLEAR TO WHOM? In spite of the ECT goal of restating the doctrine of justification with "clarity and charity," ACE leaders believe the theological waters have been muddied. Armstrong says, "I don't think the average layperson, and even the average pastor, is able to make those distinctions [of doctrine] quite so clearly." ACE asserts that "The Gift of Salvation" agreement "is not really agreement, and the declaration of unity is at best misleading and at worse fraudulent."

However, ECT leaders believe that both sides were open about where they achieved agreement and where they did not. Richard John Neuhaus, an ECT Catholic, told CT, "You had a group of very responsible, theologically astute evangelical Protestants and a group of very responsible, theologically astute Roman Catholics, and they did come together, and they did agree."

EVANGELISTIC OUTREACH: Rick Phillips, ACE spokesman, notes with alarm that following release of "The Gift of Salvation" last October, ECT leaders met with Catholic bishops from Latin America.

At that meeting, Cardinal Cassidy, a top Vatican leader, presented a paper in which he called for "newcomers" to "not

target for their evangelizing work the active, baptized members of the church that has been responsible for the original evangelization" of a country.

Phillips asks, "What are the implications of missionaries in South America trying to raise support?" But ECT leaders have made strong statements in favor of evangelistic outreach (CT, Mar. 2, 1998, p. 70). Also, "The Gift of Salvation" says, "Evangelicals must speak the gospel to Catholics, and Catholics to evangelicals."

Despite its concerns, ACE sees value in dialogue with Catholics and also remains

committed to evangelical unity. Armstrong, Horton, and Sproul were among ACE members who accepted an invitation to discuss "The Gift of Salvation" in Washington. Armstrong says that since the release of "The Gift of Salvation," he has spent much time in discussion with ECT evangelicals. Armstrong says, "I think some of the opposition that has been raised could have been cut off had . . . they heeded the counsel of several within their circle who cautioned them not to go quite so quickly."

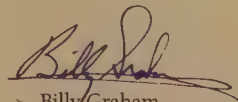
By Art Moore.

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EGYPT



Packed house: Palau speaks to an overflow crowd of 4,000 at Kasr el-Dobara.

Crowds Exceed Palau's Expectations

Adapting technological methods developed earlier by Billy Graham's Global Mission (CT, April 24, 1995, p. 36), Luis Palau preached to more than 600,000 Egyptians last month in the country's largest evangelistic outreach in modern history.

Palau preached from Cairo's Kasr el-Dobara, one of the largest Protestant congregations in the Middle East, from March 12 to 15. The church immediately edited and copied the videotaped services, then sent couriers across the country to 570 primarily Presbyterian churches, which televised the videos the next day. One service ended early due to a bomb threat. Organizers earlier expected only 200 churches to be involved. "It's reason for people who have been praying to rejoice," Palau told CT. Because overflow crowds attended, many outlying locations plan on immediately rescreening the videos.

Egyptian Christians face a climate of legal restraint and are also being victimized by Muslim militants in many parts of Egypt (CT, Aug. 11, 1997, p. 44). Palau initially planned to address nominal believers with the intent of avoiding unnecessary offense to Muslims, but church leaders encouraged boldness.

Menes Abdul Noor, pastor of Kasr el-Dobara, requested that "Christians in the West keep pressure on all governments because it works to the protection of fellow believers."

Leaders are enthusiastic about reaching cultural and nominal Christians. Traditional Orthodox teaching and custom have kept Orthodox and evangelical groups from significant partnerships in the past. This campaign brought cooperation as some smaller Protestant churches held their overflow gatherings in larger Catholic or Coptic churches. Several churches reported this was the first time all seats were filled.

Evangelical leaders from six Arab countries came to observe. Many reported they will duplicate the videos, along with printed materials, for use within their own countries.

"I see the same trigger points that were in Latin America 35 years ago," Palau says. "In the next 30 years, the Arabic world will be saturated with the gospel of Jesus Christ."

Abdul Noor, whose congregation numbers more than 4,000, concurs. "The time to reach the Middle East is now."

By Patricia C. Roberts.

GUYANA

Christians Help Reform Constitution

Guyanese Christians are taking a prominent role in re-crafting the nation's constitution in hopes of making the South American country more democratic.

Ernest Belisle, moderator of the Methodist Church in Guyana, has been named chair of the Forum of Constitutional Reform. The forum is bringing together churches, trade unions, and human-rights organizations to recommend changes to the constitution for protection of human rights and the promotion of interracial harmony. They hope a new constitution will be adopted by Parliament within three years.

The drive to reform the constitution comes after a violent election season late last year. In December, 77-year-old Chicago-born Janet Jagan succeeded her late husband, Cheddi, as president. She earlier had been general secretary of the ruling People's Progressive Party (PPP).

Election campaigns have often agitated racial divisions. The country is nearly half Indo-Guyanese (mainly Hindus and Muslims) who support the PPP. Most of the one-third of Afro-Guyanese (predominantly Christians) back the opposition People's National Congress (PNC).

Racial tensions exacerbated during a nearly two-week delay in declaration of final results. PNC backers took to the streets of Georgetown, charging electoral fraud and attacking Indo-Guyanese.

Following a series of bomb attacks, the Guyana Council of Churches cosponsored a national prayer service with Hindu and Muslim leaders.

Anglican Bishop Randolph George and Roman Catholic Bishop Benedict Singh issued a joint letter calling for Christians "to recognize that, through acts of kindness . . . the barriers of fear and insecurity can and will be removed. If we waste this opportunity, we may find ourselves doomed to the wages of division and strife followed by the destruction of our country."

Christian churches are among the few institutions in Guyana whose membership



Presidential celebration: Supporters of Jagan dance following her election victory.

straddles the racial divisions in society. "Christians have been praying and fasting since the election," says church planter Lucius Bruynning, with World Harvest Missions. "We need an intervention from God to change the course of our nation."

Parliament on March 16 approved an audit of contested election results in an effort to keep a lid on violence. Foreign election monitors will open ballot boxes and conduct the audit.

By Mike James in Georgetown.

Evangelical Mission Torched by Mob

After an evangelical church under construction was burned down in the heavily Catholic town of El Quinche, church leaders have intensified their efforts to defuse tensions between religious groups.

"There are continual threats in the town," says missionary Kevin Mayfield, field director for the Saint

Louis-based Berean Mission in Ecuador. "Many people are very agitated."

A large mob set fire to the Berean-related Evangelical Church of the Good Shepherd on March 2, causing an estimated \$40,000 damage.

El Quinche is a Roman Catholic stronghold 25 miles northeast of the capital, Quito.

A large basilica several blocks from the evangelical church is the site of a reported visit by the Virgin Mary and a popular destination for pilgrims seeking healing.

The burning led to an unprecedented statement by Ecuadorian Roman Catholic and Protestant church officials. "We lament and reject this violent act provoked by false religious motivations," leaders said. "It is not only against the commandment to love, but

also against human rights and constitutional rights of freedom of worship recognized in the Ecuadorian constitution."

Despite being concerned about another attack, Mayfield is optimistic. He says several people have made professions of faith since the incident.

As soon as legal hurdles are cleared, the mission will start to rebuild the burned-out church building.

*By Kenneth D. MacHarg
in Quito.*

GREECE

Court Upholds Right to Evangelize

In a landmark victory for Greek evangelicals, the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg, France, has upheld the right of Protestants to evangelize freely. While allowing current Greek anti-proselytism laws to stand, the court affirmed the necessity of "the freedom everyone must have to manifest his religion."

The high-profile case, involving three Greek Air Force officers, Dimitrios Larissis, Savvas Mandalaidis, and Ioannis Sarandis, concluded a four-year court battle over the fairness of a Greek antiproselytism statute. It marked the first time a democratic country defended antiproselytism laws in an international court.

Beginning with their 1992 conviction in military court for unlawful proselytism, the officers lost two successive appeals to higher Greek courts. They then turned to the European Commission on Human Rights for help.

John Warwick Montgomery, who is currently a barrister and law professor in England, argued the officers' appeal before the European Court (CT, Oct. 6, 1997, p. 89). In its February decision, the court drew a distinction between the officers' military and civilian evangelism. The court found the Greek government guilty of violating the Euro-

pean Convention on Human Rights and awarded the officers one million drachmas (\$3,200).

Greece is overwhelmingly dominated by the Greek Orthodox Church. The Greek constitution has historically protected that church's interests. The law in question prohibits any form of proselytism.

In recent years, Greek evangelicals have seen a marked increase in incidents of persecution. Three years ago, rioters in central Greece beat and stoned an evangelistic team from Athens-based Hellenic Ministries. Last summer, authorities forcibly evicted the athletic ministry More Than Gold from an international track-and-field competition after discovering its Protestant identity (CT, Nov. 17, 1997, p. 76).

In a display of unity, the Greek Evangelical Alliance in January passed a resolution denouncing government attempts to close the largest Protestant church in Thessaloniki. Despite government opposition, however, Protestants are making great strides in Greece. The officers' denomination, the Free Apostolic Church of Pentecost, has planted churches in virtually every Greek city and operates the largest radio network in the country.

By Peter Moschovis.



Tourist attraction? A "stable," center, will be one of the sights at the museum.

Prostitution Museum Prompts Protests

A small but vocal number of Christians on the city council and elsewhere are protesting the establishment of a museum of prostitution in Kalgoorlie.

Construction began last month after the council gave approval on a 7-to-6 vote. The proposal had been defeated earlier. The museum will memorialize the brothels set up in the western Australia desert for gold miners a century ago. Kalgoorlie is about 250 miles inland from Perth, Western Australia.

Nowadays, the city of 35,000, rather than being dominated by adventurous male transients, is home to many married couples who want a stable place to raise young children.

Although prostitution is legal in Australia, Christians and family-minded residents say the new development violates a state "containment" policy that limits brothel activity.

Robert Hicks, president of the Kalgoorlie branch of the

Australian Family Association, is preparing for further action if a dozen small rooms in construction plans are used not for a nostalgic look at prostitution but for modern-day practitioners.

"We don't agree that even contained prostitution should be supported," Hicks says. "It has adverse effects on the physical and spiritual health of individuals, on relationships, and the whole community."

The brothel museum retains the name Club 181, an establishment of the original prostitute belt of the "golden mile" of Kalgoorlie. Mary-Anne Kenworthy, the madam who now runs Club 181 from Perth, says the museum will boost tourism. It will contain paintings and photos of prostitutes' garments and situations. In addition, stables—the original, open-fronted shacklike rooms facing the street in which prostitutes displayed themselves—will be featured.

By Clare Booth.

CHRISTIANITY TODAY

Web Site Directory

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www.calvin.edu
George Fox University
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Young-Earth Theory Gains Advocates

A new generation of Christian scholars and scientists, armed with earned doctorates and a literal view of the Genesis Creation narrative, is hoping to breathe new life into the theory that the Earth is thousands, not billions, of years old.

In a departure from the Darwin bashing that has characterized the biblical creationist movement in the past, a young group of scientists and others are advancing new analysis in support of their views. "It's time to put up or shut up," says Jeff Myers, a professor who helped coordinate a recent young-Earth conference at Dayton, Tennessee's Bryan College. He says, "If all we can do is nip at the heels of Darwinism, we're not doing much good."

CONTRADICTIONS SEEN: Even die-hard young-Earth creationists admit they are at a disadvantage because of the widespread acceptance of evolutionary theory and how scientific data have been interpreted according to Darwinism.

Still, Kurt Wise, Bryan's director of origins research, says he argues for researching physical evidence from the perspective that Genesis 1 describes God creating the universe in six, 24-hour days.

As a paleontologist, Wise, who was a protégé of renowned Harvard evolutionist Stephen Jay Gould, brings solid academic credentials to the debate. So do such figures as University of South Carolina astronomer Danny Faulkner, the Institute for Creation Research's Steve Austin, who earned a doctorate at Penn State University, and John Baumgardner and D. Russell Humphreys, affiliated with national laboratories in New Mexico.

Wise sees a contradiction between the Darwinian view that countless species became extinct before humans existed and the Genesis account of death and disease as a consequence of Adam and Eve's sin.

"The Earth is young because of biblical statements," Wise says. But he admits, "Scientifically, there is not enough evidence to indicate the Earth is young."

Wise argues that there is some physical evidence indicating that the Earth is not as old as accepted scientific theory states. That evidence includes the rate of decay in the Earth's magnetic field, the rate of salt accumulation in the oceans, and the rapid recovery of Mount Saint Helens following its eruption 18 years ago.

LITTLE CREDIBILITY: But creationist analysis fails to convince Hugh Ross, an

astronomer and author. "I've been exposed to over 100 scientific arguments from young-Earth creationists as to why the Earth and the universe must be young," says Ross, founder of Reasons to Believe ministry in Pasadena, California.

"I judge all of them as bogus. Once you've made corrections for the misunderstandings and misapplications of principles, all the young-Earth arguments become old-Earth arguments."

In *Genesis and the New Science*, to be released in the fall by NavPress, Ross describes parallels between the Genesis narrative and recent scientific findings.

Ross says recent scientific discoveries make a stronger case for the view that the Earth has existed for eons. For example, he says scientific measurements indicating that land bridges joining continents attracted migrants before quickly falling apart bear a similarity to human migration following the Tower of Babel as described in Genesis.

THE BEST BALANCE? Other Christian academics question whether young-Earth creationists have struck the best balance between religion and science. Lehigh University's Michael Behe told CHRISTIANITY TODAY in a telephone interview that young-Earth creationists are very good people, "but they're putting their religious views based on their interpretation of Scripture ahead of physical data."

Behe, whose *Darwin's Black Box* (1996, Free Press) chronicled the biochemical challenges to evolutionary theory, says that while scientific data do not point to a young Earth, scientific theories are works in progress that must be adjusted as new discoveries are made.

But Behe adds, "People who favor a young-Earth interpretation will think that, when all of the scientific evidence comes in, it will favor their view."

In spite of the divisions between religious believers, University of California law professor Phillip Johnson, whose books critique Darwinism, says Christians should set aside internally divisive issues and focus on establishing the credibility of a theistic world-view.

Johnson told CT, "People of differing theological views should learn who's close to them, form alliances and put aside divisive issues 'til later." He says, "I say after we've settled the issue of a Creator, we'll have a wonderful time arguing about the age of the Earth."

By Ken Walker in Dayton, Tennessee.

Religious Persecution Bill Drops Trade Sanction Clause

The Freedom from Religious Persecution Act has been revised so that countries engaged in religious persecution would lose all American assistance. The bill's earlier version called for trade sanctions against governments that persecute religious groups.

The Freedom from Religious Persecution Act, known as the Wolf-Specter Bill after its cosponsors Rep. Frank Wolf (R-Va.) and Sen. Arlen Specter (R-Penn.), calls for creating an Office of Religious Persecution Monitoring in the State Department. The office would issue annual reports and determine which countries engage in religious persecution.

Wolf says that the bill attempts "to highlight the most life-threatening kinds of religious persecution." The bill mentions "abduction, enslavement, killing, imprisonment, forced mass relocation, rape, crucifixion, or other forms of torture, and the imposition of fines or penalties that have a confiscatory purpose or effect" (CT, Aug. 11, 1997, p. 61).

NO SANCTIONS: Last year, Wolf found it a hard sell to get Congress to restrict trade as a way of punishing the Chinese government for its abuse of religious people (CT, June 16, 1997, p. 54). The Wolf-Specter Bill, Wolf says, now focuses on restricting government aid, not trade sanctions, to encourage change. The change is extremely significant, in part because some of America's largest trading partners, including China, receive nearly no U.S. foreign aid.

As the bill has been amended, it has been gaining support from across the political spectrum. It establishes two categories of religious persecution. The first involves direct government participation in persecution, while the second involves government inaction to eliminate persecution.

Under the revised bill, once the new State Department office has issued a finding of religious persecution, the U.S. government could terminate "non-humanitarian" foreign aid.

In addition, the bill authorizes the shut-off of loan guarantees from the Export-Import Bank and vigorous opposition to loans from the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

The bill allows that any enforcement

action may be waived by the President for "national security reasons," but requires an in-depth explanation of the waiver.

The law would also make it easier for refugees fleeing religious persecution to seek U.S. asylum. It requires State Department officials to be trained in understanding religious persecution issues.

Sudan is singled out for trade sanctions. An estimated 1.5 million people have died during internal warfare between the Muslim government and rebel groups. There have been widespread reports of enslavement, torture, and killing of Christians.

UPHILL BATTLE: In late March, the House International Relations Committee approved the bill by a vote of 31 to 5. The Clinton administration still opposes the measure.

Some congressional representatives worry about the bill's possible effects on trade and loosening immigration laws to allow persecuted people of faith to enter the United States. Rep. Lamar Smith (R-Texas) argues that the act would let anyone declaring religious persecution to enter the United States. Supporters deny the claim.

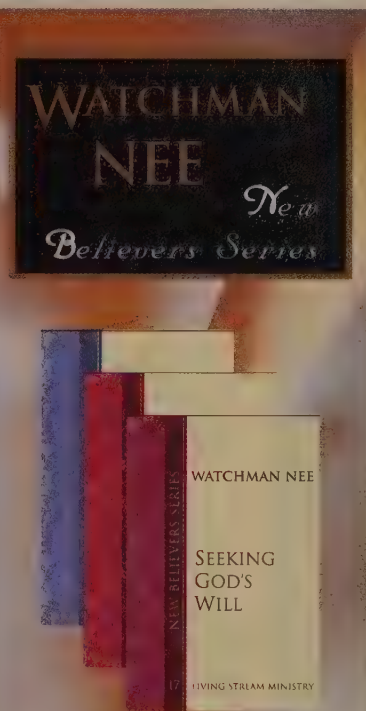
High-visibility endorsements by Roman Catholic bishops and several Jewish organizations have been helpful, supporters say, in swaying a committee that has only a handful of evangelicals and is almost half Catholic and Jewish.

Supporters have sought to persuade liberals by pointing to the endorsements of people such as Ron Sider of Evangelicals for Social Action. "It is an ironic tragedy that anybody would suppose that this is only a right-wing agenda," Sider says.

"The key question is whether the evangelical community will stand up and be counted," says the Hudson Institute's Michael Horowitz, a leading figure in the fight against persecution of Christians. "If it is just a handful of Washington leaders, it will not be enough. There has to be a commitment on the denominational level."

People in the pews are still grasping the reality of persecution. Meegan Avery, who leads a Denver task force on the persecuted church, says, "People find it hard to believe that this stuff goes on. They initially treat us as if we are trying to sell them a bill of goods."

By Tony Carnes.



A series of 24, available individually or in a boxed set (ISBN 0-7363-0136-4)

New believers earnestly desire to know the Lord Jesus in a deeper way. They have a hunger for the Word of God and long to understand and fully experience the reality of salvation. In twenty-four simple yet profound messages, Watchman Nee guides new believers through some of the most pressing issues that they face, helping them to mature in the Lord and to be built up with other believers.

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CT 98BOOK awards

Once again we attempt the momentous task of discerning the year's best books. Here is how we did it. More than 200 books published in 1997 were nominated by publishers. Ballots were then sent to about 150 pastors, scholars, writers, and other church leaders, whose votes determined our "Top 25" list.

Billy Graham's long-awaited autobiography, *Just As I Am*, is a fitting choice for CT's Book of the Year. Graham emphasized the impact of books—and book reviews—in his vision statement for a new magazine that he presented to evangelical leaders in 1955. A year later, CHRISTIANITY TODAY was launched.

Indeed, anyone who wants to understand the history and current challenges of evangelicalism, its strengths and its weaknesses, would do well to work through the books listed here, beginning with Graham's account of more than 50 years of ministry.

Strengths? First, a continuing emphasis on evangelism and an unwavering commitment to the centrality of Jesus Christ. Second, a rich harvest of mature Christian scholarship in history (George Marsden, Joel Carpenter, and Mark Noll constitute quite a triumvirate) and New Testament studies. Third, a productive reckoning with evangelicalism's fundamentalist strain, evident both in Carpenter's *Revive Us Again* and in Philip Yancey's *What's So Amazing About Grace?*, a book that was prominently displayed—and bought—not only in Christian venues but in the secular superstores, reaching a new audience. Fourth, an ecumenism rooted in orthodoxy, variously attested by Donald Bloesch's work, the Ancient Christian Commentary Series, edited by Tom Oden (the first volume, on Mark, is just about to appear), the ongoing ECT conversation, and, on a smaller scale, by the presence on this list of William F. Buckley's "autobiography of faith," steeped in Catholic piety.

Weaknesses? There is not much notice here of the work being done by Ron Sider and others who preach the holistic gospel, including the parts about the poor and the widows and the prisoners. And where is the Old Testament? With the notable exception of *Leap Over a Wall*, Eugene Peterson's meditation on the life of David, this list reflects the evangelical tendency to ignore a huge chunk of the Scriptures. Some of the most important work being done in theology today is beginning to redress this imbalance. (In the process, many scholars are taking up the question of "Jewish-Christian relations" in a new way.) As the book review editor, I don't get to vote, but I hope that among the books recognized in the 1999 CT Book Awards will be Christopher Seitz's *Word Without End: The Old Testament As Abiding Theological Witness* (Eerdmans).

What do they say about the Cubs? Wait 'til next year.

By John Wilson, Book Review Editor.

1998 BOOK of the YEAR

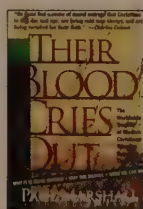
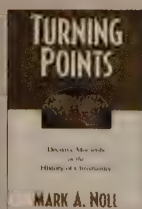
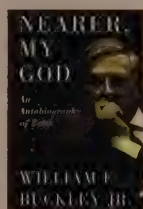
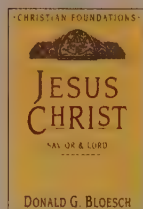
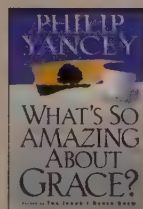
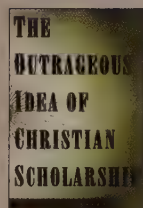


AN EXCERPT

In the Bible, an evangelist is a person sent by God to announce the Gospel, the Good News; he or she has a spiritual gift that has never been withdrawn from the Church. Methods differ, but the central truth remains: an evangelist is a person who has been called and especially equipped by God to declare the Good News to those who have not yet accepted it, with the goal of challenging them to turn to Christ in repentance and faith and to follow Him in obedience to His will. The evangelist is not called to do *everything* in the church or in the world that God wants done. On the contrary, the calling of the evangelist is very specific.

WINNERS

- 1 JUST AS I AM**, by Billy Graham; *HarperSanFrancisco/Zondervan*
- 2 THE OUTRAGEOUS IDEA OF CHRISTIAN SCHOLARSHIP**, by George M. Marsden; *Oxford University Press*
- 3 REVIVE US AGAIN: THE REAWAKENING OF AMERICAN FUNDAMENTALISM**, by Joel A. Carpenter; *Oxford University Press*
- 4 WHAT'S SO AMAZING ABOUT GRACE?** by Philip Yancey; *Zondervan*
- 5 DEFEATING DARWINISM BY OPENING MINDS**, by Phillip E. Johnson; *InterVarsity*
- 6 DICTIONARY OF THE LATER NEW TESTAMENT AND ITS DEVELOPMENTS**, edited by Ralph P. Martin and Peter H. Davids; *InterVarsity*
- 7 JESUS CHRIST**, by Donald G. Bloesch; *InterVarsity*
- 8 NEARER, MY GOD: AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF FAITH**, by William F. Buckley, Jr.; *Doubleday*
- 9 TURNING POINTS: DECISIVE MOMENTS IN THE HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY**, by Mark A. Noll; *Baker*
- 10 THE OXFORD DICTIONARY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH, 3RD ED.**, edited by F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone; *Oxford University Press*
- 11 THEIR BLOOD CRIES OUT**, by Paul Marshall with Lela Gilbert; *Word*
- 12 A HISTORY OF HEAVEN**, by Jeffrey Burton Russell; *Princeton University Press*
- 13 AN INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW TESTAMENT**, by Raymond E. Brown; *Doubleday*
- 14 THE COMPLETE BOOK OF EVERYDAY CHRISTIANITY**, edited by Robert Banks and R. Paul Stevens; *InterVarsity*
- 15 THE GOSPEL OF LUKE**, by Joel B. Green; *Eerdmans*
- 16 THE MORAL QUEST: FOUNDATIONS OF CHRISTIAN ETHICS**, by Stanley J. Grenz; *InterVarsity*
- 17 MALCOLM MUGGERIDGE**, by Gregory Wolfe; *Eerdmans*
- 18 THE UNIVERSE NEXT DOOR: A BASIC WORLDVIEW CATALOG**, by James W. Sire; *InterVarsity*
- 19 WRITTEN ON THE HEART: THE CASE FOR NATURAL LAW**, by J. Budziszewski; *InterVarsity*
- 20 THE FABRIC OF FAITHFULNESS**, by Steven Garber; *InterVarsity*
- 21 LEAP OVER A WALL: EARTHY SPIRITUALITY FOR EVERYDAY CHRISTIANS**, by Eugene H. Peterson; *HarperSanFrancisco*
- 22 HOW WIDE THE DIVIDE? A MORMON AND AN EVANGELICAL IN CONVERSATION**, by Craig L. Blomberg and Stephen E. Robinson; *InterVarsity*
- 23 SUBVERSIVE SPIRITUALITY**, by Eugene H. Peterson; *Eerdmans*
- 24 THE HOLINESS-PENTECOSTAL TRADITION**, by Vinson Synan; *Eerdmans*
- 25 THE ONE AND THE MANY: AMERICA'S STRUGGLE FOR THE COMMON GOOD**, by Martin E. Marty; *Harvard University Press*



SUSAN WISE BAUER

The Myth of a Better PRAYER LIFE



*Bagfuls of books on this subject showed me
I wasn't struggling alone.*

I admit it: this past year, I went for months without having a disciplined time of prayer. I didn't stop praying altogether, of course. I sent up "arrow prayers" (God, help me get through this morning without collapsing!) and felt growing guilt over my missed devotions. I wasn't suffering from doubt: God was still real and powerful to me. But the act of prayer itself was empty. When I folded my hands to pray, my words yielded nothing. I'm doing something wrong, I thought.

Halfway through October, I picked up Susan Howatch's *Absolute Truths* at a booksale. And as I read, in quiet moments snatched before sleep, I discovered myself in the novel. I was the wife of the bishop, a woman spiritually drained, exhausted by

the demands of parenthood and a clerical marriage. Facing complicated relationships, difficult church duties, and a parish seething with power plays, the bishop's wife starts a spiritual journal. "I made the decision," she writes, "to get up early so that I can do my praying . . . but as far as I can see there have been no positive results and I'm getting discouraged."

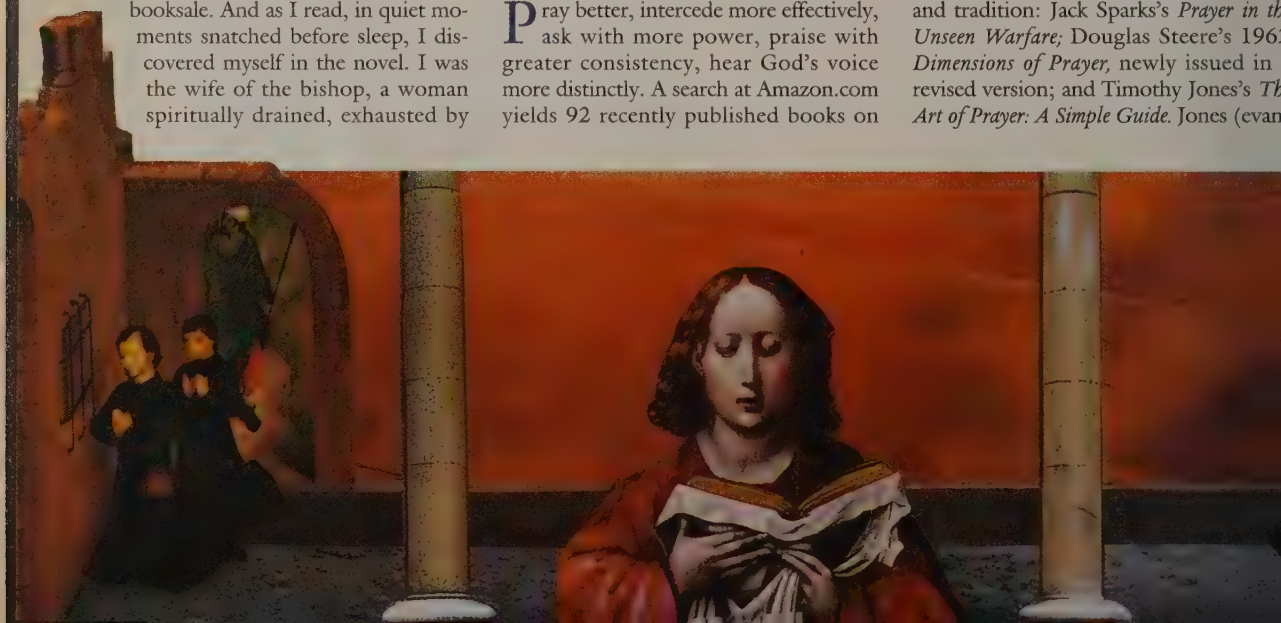
I sympathized; and as I read on, I recognized another impulse. "I'm just wondering," the bishop's wife muses, "if I should drop into the SPCK bookshop and invest in a tome on prayer."

Pray better, intercede more effectively, ask with more power, praise with greater consistency, hear God's voice more distinctly. A search at Amazon.com yields 92 recently published books on

how to pray. Buying a book seems to be a universal reaction to trouble in the prayer closet.

Many of those 92 books are about prayer as an independent spiritual "technique" that can "center" any life. But writers who ground the experience of prayer in Christian theology are equally prolific. And within certain parameters—a biblical picture of God, a confession of Christ as the only Way, an acceptance of our basic sinfulness—these Christian books on prayer seem almost interchangeable.

Take, for example, three recently published volumes, widely divided by time and tradition: Jack Sparks's *Prayer in the Unseen Warfare*; Douglas Steere's 1963 *Dimensions of Prayer*, newly issued in a revised version; and Timothy Jones's *The Art of Prayer: A Simple Guide*. Jones (evan-



gelical that he is) speaks of prayer as conversation: "While God is awe-inspiring and almighty, prayer can still take on the qualities of daily conversation. We can converse as with a friend, with a lack of self-consciousness." Steere, a Friends adherent, approaches prayer in all its facets as an ongoing exercise in "coming into God's presence." And for Father Sparks, whose book is an adaptation of a sixteenth-century Eastern Orthodox text, prayer is the ruling discipline of the Christian life, a powerful act that "makes us masters of ourselves, conquerors of the devil, and children of God."

Each book reassures the timid believer: "Prayer is for nonexperts," writes Jones. "We learn to pray," Sparks confirms, "... by beginning to pray." "In learning to pray," Steere promises, "... the only really fatal failure is to stop praying and not to begin again."

And each book breaks prayer into its component parts. "Let us combine in our prayer the four actions Saint Basil the Great describes," begins Sparks, "first, glorify God; then give thanks to Him for the mercies He has shown us; confess our sins and transgressions of His commandments; and finally, ask Him to grant what we need—particularly in regard to our salvation." Jones confirms these elements, although he quotes Charles Colson instead of Saint Basil; Steere covers each stage in turn.

What about the practicalities of prayer? Steere writes, "It helps to have a posture, whether kneeling or standing or sitting or prostrate. . . . It helps to read briefly in the Bible or in some devotional classic as a warm-up." Jones recommends getting up early, scheduling regular times of prayer, and absorbing the insights of spiritual writers. Sparks is the most technique-

centered of the three, fencing the mysticism of spiritual combat with disciplines and caution. We bring ourselves in the presence of God, he writes, "step by step," and he lays out the steps in a neatly bulleted list.

Still having trouble? All three books tell us what to do when our minds wander and our prayers seem to go nowhere. Don't worry about how prayer "feels," Jones writes. Instead, "trust that below and behind our scattered processes a great unseen work is still being done."

"You must struggle," Sparks writes, "and will find yourself in a continuing struggle. . . . Having once begun, we must patiently maintain the life of prayer."

Absolute Truths

By Susan Howatch
Fawcett Crest, 1994
624 pp.; \$6.50, paper

The Art of Prayer: A Simple Guide

By Timothy Jones
Ballantine Books, 1997
256 pp.; \$11, paper

Prayer in the Unseen Warfare

By Jack N. Sparks
Conciliar Press, 1996
142 pp.; \$9.95, paper

Dimensions of Prayer: Cultivating a Relationship with God

By Douglas V. Steere
Upper Room Books, 1997
128 pp.; \$13.95, hardcover

Psalms for Praying: An Invitation to Wholeness

By Nan C. Merrill
Continuum Books, 1997
311 pp.; \$16.95, paper

The Book of Daily Prayer, 1998

Edited by Kim Sadler
United Church Press, 1997
384 pp.; \$12.95, paper

The Book of Uncommon Prayer

Edited by Daniel and Constance Pollock
Word, 1996
198 pp.; \$16.99, hardcover

So Amazing, So Divine

By Isaac Watts
Paraclete Press, 1997
204 pp.; \$10.95, paper

Children and Prayer: A Shared Pilgrimage

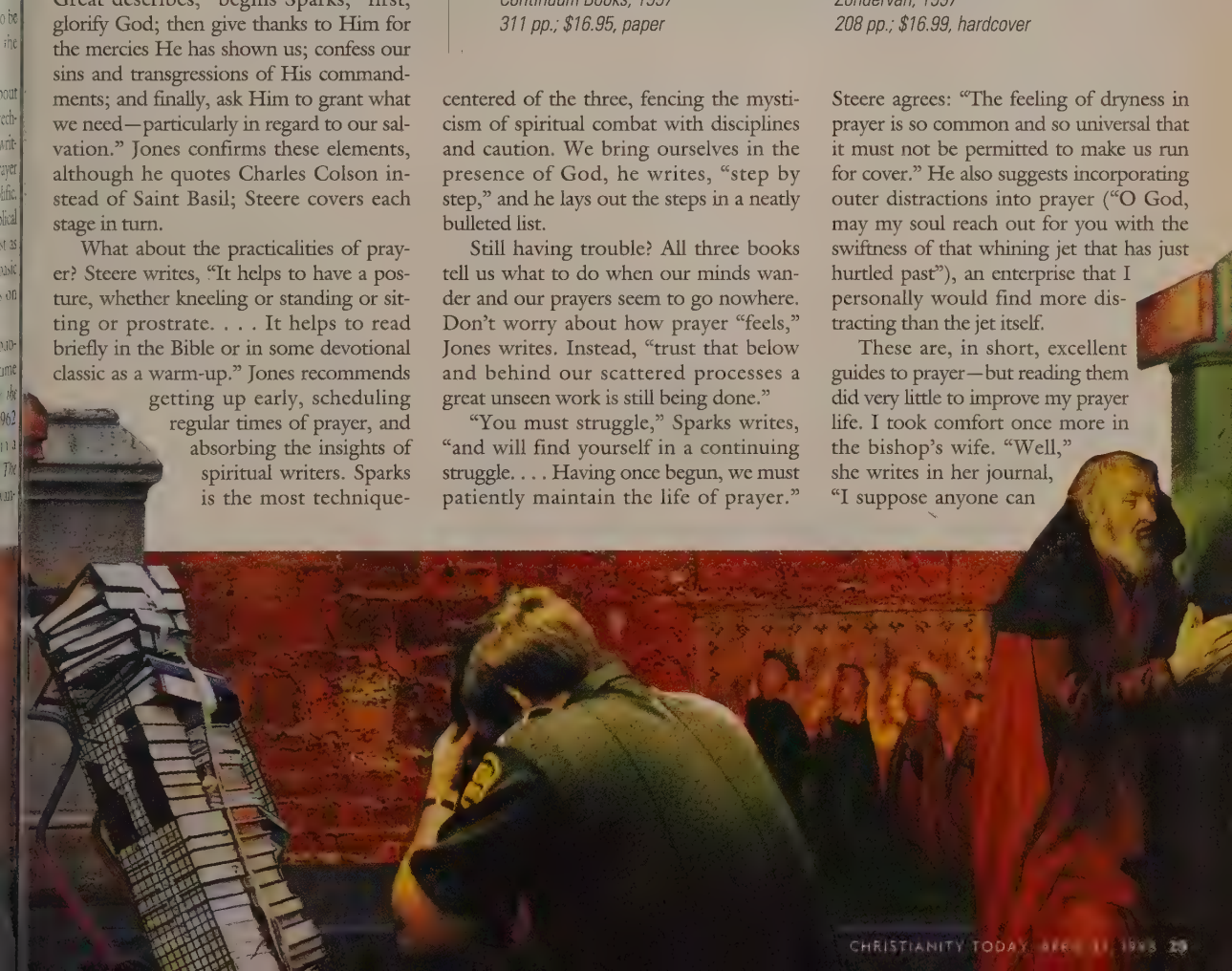
By Betty Shannon Cloyd
Upper Room Books, 1997
165 pp.; \$11.95, paper

Whole Prayer: Speaking and Listening to God

By Walter Wangerin
Zondervan, 1997
208 pp.; \$16.99, hardcover

Steere agrees: "The feeling of dryness in prayer is so common and so universal that it must not be permitted to make us run for cover." He also suggests incorporating outer distractions into prayer ("O God, may my soul reach out for you with the swiftness of that whining jet that has just hurtled past"), an enterprise that I personally would find more distracting than the jet itself.

These are, in short, excellent guides to prayer—but reading them did very little to improve my prayer life. I took comfort once more in the bishop's wife. "Well," she writes in her journal, "I suppose anyone can



make a mistake. . . . I did buy the book on prayer, but I couldn't get on with it. This was a real disappointment because for some reason I was convinced that buying the book on prayer would lead to a big breakthrough."

I had 15 books on prayer stacked by my bed, but a breakthrough wasn't looming on my horizon either. And when I confessed my difficulties to a wise older woman at church, she said at once, "Oh, I have such a hard time with prayer. My words don't seem to reflect what's in my heart. I have *ten* books about prayer on my shelf, but none of them have done much to help."

The plethora of books on prayer suggests to me not only that we buy books because we find prayer difficult but also that the books are ultimately unsatisfying: Better technique doesn't necessarily make for better prayer.

Sparks, Jones, and Steere certainly make no such claims. All three are orthodox, after all; and none falls into the trap of treating God as the great Power Source in the sky. Jones writes, "We do not tame or manipulate God by any practice or discipline." Sparks carefully sets prayer within the context of a whole life devoted to God; *Prayer in the Unseen Warfare* deals with tithing, fasting, almsgiving, corporate worship, and the Eucharist as integral to the healthy prayer life.

Yet these books are undoubtedly pitched to an audience accustomed to solving its problems with the help of how-to books, an evangelical public that has already bought *Seven Steps to Financial Success*, *Seven Steps to Revitalizing the Small-Town Church*, and *Seven Steps to Salvation*. Jones tells us that prayer should not be approached as a project to be mastered, but his publisher has divided his book into three how-to sections: How We Approach God, What We Say, How We Keep Going. *Prayer in the Unseen Warfare* is loaded with such headings as "Steps to Success" (eight numbered paragraphs follow), and each chapter concludes with study questions ("Of what value do you find the five steps suggested early in this chapter?").

I'm not casting stones; I recognize this tendency in myself. I buy how-to books on eating better, on writing, on parenting, on exercise. And I can measure the success of my purchases: lower numbers on the bathroom scale, fewer

editorial rejection slips, a day without sibling rivalry, a mile run in seven minutes. But how do I know when my book on prayer has yielded success?

Jones, Steere, and Sparks all promise me that God always answers, and each writer gives me a different paradigm for hearing him. Jones, the conversationalist, says that God carries on his side of the dialogue as life unfolds: "Daily events (and nonevents) are a kind of alphabet through which God communicates." He gives us an example; on an airplane, headed to see his critically ill father, he prayed that his father would not die until he was able to say goodbye. The prayer was not answered as he had hoped, but Jones concludes that God answered in another way: "While I certainly shed tears, while I regretted missing seeing my father one last time, God answered me with his presence. He held me during a dark time."

But how do I read my own alphabet? If I don't feel those arms around me, have I still heard God's voice? Steere suggests that we have heard God when we find our hearts changing. From his perspective, prayer is not a conversation but an examination of the self in the presence of God's Light. "Hold up your desires before a God of love . . ." he writes, "and it is amazing the sorting over, the sifting power that takes place there—if you stay on your knees." Steere never questions God's power or treats him as impersonal; yet he devotes his attention to the attitudes prayer develops in us rather than to the voice of God in answer.

Sparks assures us that if we are diligent in prayer and continue it for some time, we will hear God's voice: "The soul so prepared experiences communion with the Lord and is aware of it—unless the Lord deems it better, for the good of that soul, to prolong its thirst and hunger for Him before satisfying it." But this is as unsatisfying to the seeker as a conversation without reply. If I am finding my hunger prolonged, how long do I persist before I decide that my technique is at fault?

These books, good as they are, feel a bit like going through marriage counseling by correspondence course. After all, most of us struggle to hear God in the same way that we learn what a spouse is really saying: through nonverbal clues, expressions, deeds, shrugs of the shoulder, small gifts or stony silences. A couple that has never seen a good marriage modeled be-

fore their eyes will be at a loss, unfamiliar with normal nonverbal communication, oblivious to each other's messages. A book on marriage may help, but ultimately an experienced counselor must provide personal instruction in the skills of communication.

The bishop's wife, musing over her book purchase, writes, "I should . . . stop being too proud to seek advice on prayer. . . . The trouble is that I'm such a Protestant at heart that I don't like people giving me orders or advice on my spiritual life and getting between me and God. The very phrase 'spiritual director' makes me recoil."

We buy books, in part, because of our reluctance to take prayer out of the closet: Most of us don't have (and wouldn't welcome) the interference of a spiritual director—an experienced Christian who helps us to pray and lends a hand in interpreting the answers.

The theory of prayer is, in fact, immensely simple. Tell God your needs, thank him for his gifts, cry out to him in sorrow, praise him for his greatness, listen for his answers. The difficulty lies in putting this simplicity into practice in each difficult and complex life. Here, books will always fail us. All they can do is tell stories of other spiritual experiences, and these may sound trite or heretical when enshrined in print. Jones tells the story of a friend who interpreted a dream about actor John Goodman as God's voice, telling her that one day she would find a husband. How do I then interpret my dream, last night, that I had lost my child and could not find him?

Father Sparks, unhampered by the Protestant tendency to hide in the prayer closet, doesn't mince words in his introduction to *Prayer in the Spiritual Warfare*:

The book you are holding contains essential information for all Christians. Its use, however, requires a context: the Church and Orthodox spiritual guidance. No one should undertake to follow all that is said here without guidance. Everyone needs a spiritual father or guide.

This warning is especially strong when Sparks discusses such mystic undertakings as meditation on a single phrase. "You need a counselor," he writes, "[but not] merely an associate, a friend of the same mind, with whom you can talk. Now you need an experienced spiritual father to verify all that occurs when you use the



Jesus Prayer." Such a spiritual father might suggest that a dream of John Goodman represents, not God's voice, but a subconscious still mulling over last night's HBO offerings.

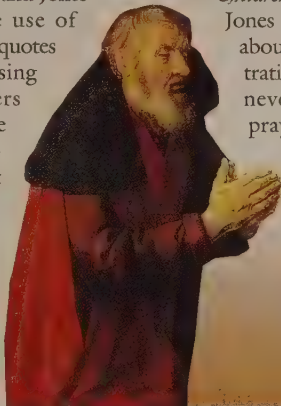
Alas, spiritual directors, as another Susan Howatch character observes, are not as easy to acquire as sacks of potatoes. In their inevitable absence, we have books. But books too can give us the key to escape the lonely isolation of the prayer closet. Steere, Sparks, and Jones all recommend the use of model prayers. Jones quotes Eugene Peterson: using the prayers of others connects us with the "experience of generations." In the ancient prayers of the church, Sparks writes, are revealed the "hearts of saintly men and women. . . . Therefore: get yourself a prayer book."

My stack of books on prayer contains a number of modern prayer books, but most show a distressing tendency to flabby ecumenicism. Nan C. Merrill's *Psalms for Praying* fixes up the Hebrew poems, which (as she writes in her foreword) "often reflect a patriarchal society based on fear and guilt that projects evil and sin onto outer enemies." Naughty King David. Merrill's solution is to remove God from the Psalms, replacing him with a nonspecific spiritual force ("Love is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear?"). The United Church Press's *Book of Daily Prayer*, a daily guide to morning and evening prayer, is too often trendy ("You are an Equal Opportunity Parent! Help me always to remember this essential fact") and addresses God, variously, as "my Mother, my Father," "Grandmother, Grandfather" and "O, Great Spirit, who connects me with all things." *The Book of Uncommon Prayer*, edited by Constance and Daniel Pollock, is slightly better, culling devotional passages from great writers and assembling them into a handy hardback volume. Thomas More, John Donne, Jane Austen, and Feodor Dostoyevsky make helpful appearances (Ralph Waldo Emerson, Plato, and Walt Whitman make unhelpful ones). But there's a gap here, perhaps reflecting our twentieth-century preference for isolation: where are good, orthodox modern prayers to be found?

The best source for model prayers

remains the Book of Common Prayer, perhaps supplemented by Isaac Watts's *So Amazing, So Divine*, one of a series of spiritual classics reissued by Paraclete Press. But prayer-seekers who have difficulty with archaic language will have to make do with the brief modern prayers provided by Timothy Jones at the ends of his chapters.

A different type of prayer-closet key is provided by Betty Shannon Cloyd's *Children and Prayer: A Shared Pilgrimage*. Jones tells us that his impulse to write about prayer comes partly from frustration: his parents prayed, but they never talked to him about how to pray; and he progressed through a religious education without much input. "I was largely on



These books, good as they are, feel a bit like going through marriage counseling by correspondence course.

my own when it came to the actual encounter of my soul with God," he confesses. I find myself in this same situation. Cloyd is a bit too sanguine about the natural insight and holiness of children, but her book is invaluable to the parent who wants to avoid repeating this mistake from generation to generation. She suggests different ways to involve children in prayer, models for praying in front of your children, and even projects that bring the act of prayer down to the concrete thought level of a four-year-old.

One book on prayer for adults stands out among all those on my shelf: Walter Wangerin's *Whole Prayer*. Wangerin has not attempted to write a guide to prayer. Rather, he seems to be giving us a glimpse into his own life of prayer. The book is as much spiritual memoir as spiritual advice. When he comes to the vexed question of hearing God, Wangerin doesn't indulge in abstractions: instead, he tells us how he reads the alphabet. God speaks through "all the elements of creation and all the details of human experience . . . through the words of people . . . through the Church." But to know what the voice of God is saying, we must use Scripture:

So you think that a moment of ineffable joy was divine communication to you.

How can you be sure? Find another such moment of similar detail and shape and purpose in the Bible. . . . What does the Bible say about its moment? . . . How does it relate to the Creator? The Redeemer? The Holy Spirit? . . . Be sure that your interpretation of the event which happened to you does not contradict the teachings . . . in the whole of the Bible.

Wangerin admonishes us, "How important it is to have studied God's dictionary in order to discriminate with clarity the words of God uttered in your own life." He then tells us, over and over, how this happened for him: of the time he finally understood what it means to pray simply; of a night when he was lost on a dark lake, unable to see the shore, and

heard the voice of a friend: God's answer to his prayer, *O Lord, hear my voice!* All of Wangerin's how-tos are placed, not in the sterile room of technical skill, but in the crowded and always-changing corridors of daily life. They cease to become how-tos and become life itself. And perhaps the strongest list of how-tos does not have to do directly with prayer itself, but with what Wangerin calls "the pieties": "private, pious disciplines that train us in behavior and lifestyle to hear the still, small voice of the Lord." Give alms, he writes; fast, worship, and pray. And find partners in prayer: those who can help you to understand your needs, examine your soul, and hear the voice of God.

I am still searching for a partner in prayer. In the meantime, I am finding Wangerin's book a reasonable substitute. *Whole Prayer* finally impelled me to come back to my knees, to rise every morning and follow a form of prayer, to wait for God to infuse his presence into my faithful words. I am praying for a spiritual director, a wise and mature companion in prayer. When God provides one, I will know that I have heard his voice. **CT**

Susan Wise Bauer teaches literature at the College of William and Mary. She is the author of The Revolt (Word), a novel; her second novel, Though the Darkness Hide Thee, is forthcoming from Multnomah.

JEHOVAH ON TRIAL



*Regina Schwartz argues that the way to peace
is by killing off monotheism.*

If the power of a book is measured by its ability to keep readers captive and stimulate thought, Regina M. Schwartz has written a powerful book. Some of its power lies in the accessible and often intriguing style, characterized by strong metaphors and stark contrasts. But style will captivate and stimulate only if it keeps offering treasures of content.

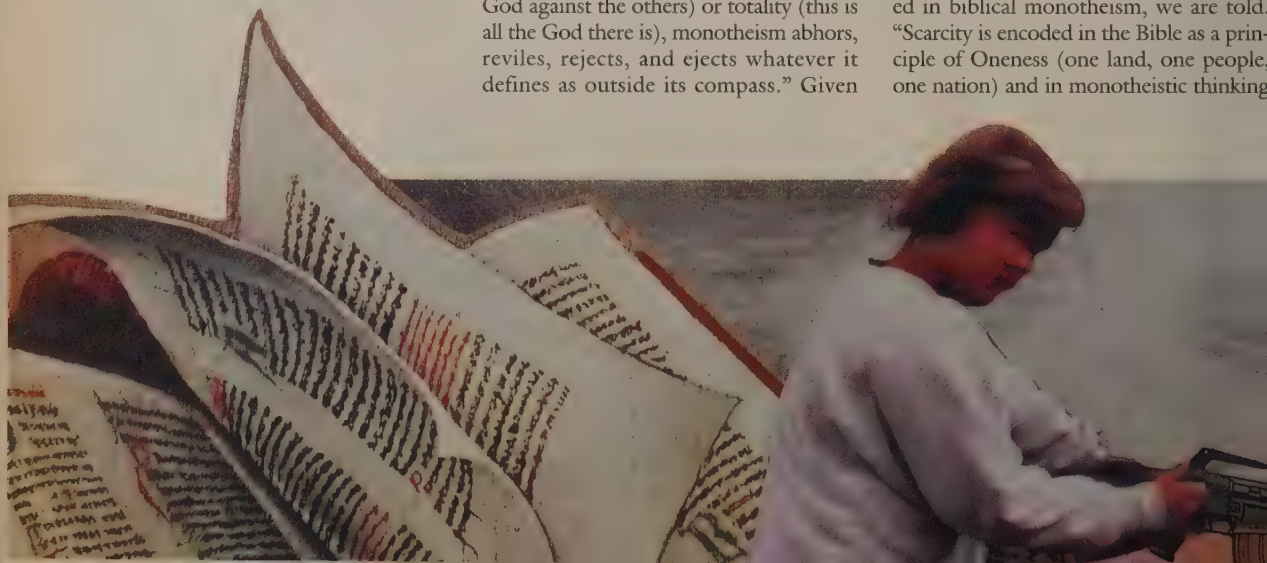
The treasure of Schwartz's book is that of a provocation. No doubt the book will make some people furious, partly because, for all its fundamental flaws, it exposes a disturbing underside of lived monotheistic faiths. Even after the dust

kicked up by a strenuous debate with her has settled, her main thesis will continue to challenge both Christian thought and practice. What about the Canaanites? What about all those peoples slaughtered so that God can offer the infant Israel, just born out of the Egyptian slavery, a land flowing with milk and honey?

With these disturbing questions, Schwartz sets out on a journey to explore "the biblical sources" of national conflicts, racial hatreds, and ethnic divisions. At the center of her interest lies the relation between monotheism and identity. The subtitle states her thesis most tersely: "The Violent Legacy of Monotheism." She explains, "Whether as singleness (this God against the others) or totality (this is all the God there is), monotheism abhors, reviles, rejects, and ejects whatever it defines as outside its compass." Given

that the belief in one God "forges identity antithetically," it issues in a mistaken notion of identity ("we are 'us' because we are not 'them'") and contributes to a violent practice ("we can remain 'us' only if we obliterate 'them'").

Why does belief in one God forge identities antithetically? one could ask, wondering whether the chain with which Schwartz connects violence to monotheism might lack a crucial link. And why is the claim to distinctive identity sufficiently important to spawn violence? The answer, argues Schwartz, lies in the principle of *scarcity*—the belief that everything is in short supply and must be competed for. This principle, too, is rooted in biblical monotheism, we are told. "Scarcity is encoded in the Bible as a principle of Oneness (one land, one people, one nation) and in monotheistic thinking





**The Curse of Cain:
The Violent Legacy
of Monotheism**

By Regina M. Schwartz
Univ. of Chicago Press
211 pp.; \$22.95

(one Deity), it becomes a demand of exclusive allegiance that threatens with the violence of exclusion."

The story of Cain and Abel provides Schwartz with the key to the evils of monotheism. She calls it a story of "original violence." Unlike the story of original sin, though, the story of original violence does not suggest that we kill *because* Cain did, but that we kill *for similar reasons*. Without stating so explicitly, however, Schwartz implies that, at another level, the story of Cain and Abel is a story of original sin, with this twist: the sinner is not Cain but his divine Maker. We kill because God did something wrong, argues Schwartz. Cain was enraged by God's arbitrary decision to accept Abel's sacrifice and reject Cain's; we all kill because of the same arbitrariness of the one God of the Bible. "What kind of God is this who chooses one sacrifice over the other? This God who excludes some and prefers others, who casts some out, is a monotheistic God—monotheistic not only because he demands allegiance to himself alone but because he confers his favor on one alone."

Just as in the story of Jacob and Esau

some "unexplained scarcity makes a human father have only one blessing to confer but two sons to receive it," so also in the story of Cain and Abel "some obscure scarcity motivates a divine Father to accept only one offering from two sons." Thus the one God of the Bible, the God of exclusive identities and artificial scarcities, is an instigator of the violence so pervasive in the Western world.

Schwartz is careful not to put *all* the blame on monotheism; other factors contribute to violence, too. But monotheism nonetheless offers a religiously sanctioned symbolic universe in which the violence of "us" against "them" is decisively legitimized.

Schwartz employs most of her arguments to chisel away at monotheism. Occasionally, though, she climbs the mountain of debris left by her chisel and, like an alternative Moses, surveys the new promised land. In that land the One and the Same has opened itself "into endless difference," and its imitation is "not a replication of the Same, the identical, but a proliferation of nonidentical repetitions." There the first commandment, "to have no other God," has given way to a new commandment, "to let every person walk in the name of his god" and let multiple gods legitimize liquefied identities. There "the old 'monotheist' Book" is closed and new books are "fruitful and multiply." "The Same" is no more in the new promised land, and therefore the rivalry for "the Same" has disappeared.

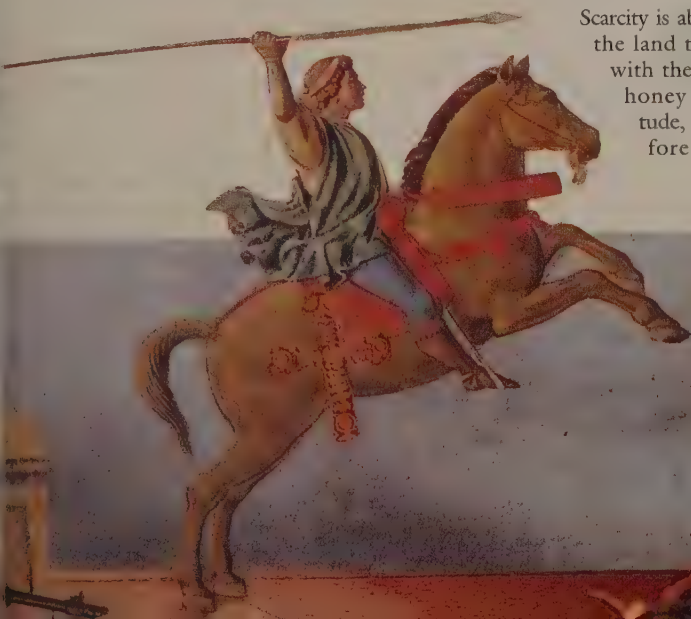
Scarcity is abolished in the land that flows with the milk and honey of plenty, and therefore violence

has given way to peace sustained by the practice of generosity.

It would be easy to respond to Schwartz's book with a barrage of small gripes. What kind of book is this, one could ask, that peddles distortions as uncontested verities? Where does the Bible "insist that you slay your *Other* to forge your identity" (the first *italics* mine), for instance? Or what is one to make of the claim that Christ himself had "yearnings to be God"? How much data must one ignore to conclude that the war in Bosnia is best explained in terms of "the monotheistic commitments of nationalism"?

Schwartz can also be faulted for one-sided and superficial readings of the biblical texts. Take the key biblical passage in her book, the story of Cain and Abel. Why assume that God's acceptance of Abel's sacrifice and rejection of Cain's is arbitrary? Simply because the text does not state the reason explicitly? Why not see Cain as an arrogant first-born and Abel his despised sibling, a reading suggested by the meaning of the names of the two brothers in the original? Far from being arbitrary, God's action would then invert the order of social inequalities established by the powerful. Or, why highlight only God's rejection of Cain's sacrifice but overlook God's continued commitment to Cain, even to the point of placing a protective mark on the condemned criminal so he would not be killed? Far from excluding Cain, God's intention would then be to embrace him.

Distortions such as those just mentioned suggest an impatient



mind armed with a deft pen. What makes the book intriguing is the "system" behind the impatience. Many of these distortions are not arbitrary errors but are governed by Schwartz's main thesis about monotheism, identity, and scarcity, and by the alternative she proposes. Many of them line up nicely around the fundamental contrasts that make up the backbone of the book: Not one, but many gods! Not the struggle for the proper identity, but an endless composing and recomposing of "temporary and multiple identifications"! Not scarcity, but plenitude! So one has to ask whether her three-pronged main thesis is more defensible than her individual arguments.

I think not. The tendency toward distortion encountered in her individual arguments besets the main thesis, only on a larger scale. But before pointing out the flaws in the three prongs of her thesis, let me underscore that the distortions in Schwartz's thought often simply mirror much more distressing distortions—those of Christian, Muslim, and Jewish social practice. Our allegiance to the true God notwithstanding, in thought, word, and deed we serve the false god she critiques.

First, God's *oneness*. Should not a person who sees the oneness of God as a source of antithetically constructed identities and the consequent exclusion of the other deal with the fact that God's oneness correlates with the stress on the common humanity of all people? Schwartz never does. Inversely, should not a person who argues that the belief in many gods will eliminate the polarity between "us" and "them" explain why this belief will not simply multiply that same polarity at a different level? With many gods, why would there be peace instead of struggle of all against all, unconstrained by anything but the law of the jungle in which the strong swallow the weak?

Schwartz protests this suggestion. To advocate many gods, she writes, is "not to endorse some kind of Nietzschean neopaganism; the idea is not to replace ethics with the rule of the strong." But we look in vain for arguments that justify her protest.

Second, *identity*. Schwartz "locates the origins of violence in identity formation, arguing that imagining identity as an act of distinguishing and separating from others, of boundary making and line drawing, is the most frequent and fundamental act of violence we commit." What she fails to explain is how identity can be imagined at all without acts of "distinguishing and separating from others." Without such acts, would not all differences melt away so that

there would be nobody, strictly speaking, to be engaged in such temporary identifications? She also fails to explain why "temporary identifications" would be less violent than stable identities. Could not temporary identifications, precisely because they are temporary and therefore uncertain, be potentially more violent than are the stable and therefore more secure identities?

Third, *scarcity*. As Peter Berkowitz puts it in a review of her book, Schwartz writes "as if scarcity were an idea that the Bible arbitrarily invented and violently inscribed in the mind of the faithful, as if scarcity were a law manufactured by monotheism out of thin air and which, if we were to construct the correct concepts, we would be free to think away." The problem of scarcity is so much a part of



the world we inhabit that a world in which scarcity could not (not: *would not*!) occur is strictly unimaginable—except as a world of the dead in which nothing could be scarce because nothing could be possessed. Every plenitude carries in it its own potential scarcity.

With all the small and large flaws in Schwartz's book, one may think that we should simply abandon it to the "gnawing critique of mice." For two reasons I think this would be a mistake. First, scattered throughout the book are significant insights. For instance, Schwartz rightly warns against the all-too-common conflation of exodus and conquest as a result of which exodus (as a metaphor) becomes unthinkable without violence.

Also, she rightly highlights the insight that, metaphorically speaking, the life of a sojourner moving about with a tent may be religiously more desirable than settled life in palaces. Finally, she is bold enough to suggest that both memory and community "depend upon forgetting" and that rather than dissolving community, a certain kind of forgetting may in fact build community. For these insights and

more, Schwartz's book should be read.

The second, and more important, reason why we should read the book consists in a challenge that Schwartz's three-pronged thesis poses for Christian thinking about scarcity, identity, and the nature of God. I do not mean an *apologetic* challenge that, for instance, the violence of conquest presents even for those theologians who do not think, as Schwartz does, that this violence is explainable in terms of the oneness of Israel's God. No, Schwartz's main thesis presents a *theological* challenge that touches the very core of the Christian faith: How should we live in a world in which struggles over scarcity and identity rage? What kind of God should we serve? Both Schwartz's critique of monotheism and her alternative proposal, which centers on plenitude, fluid identities, and divine plurality, can prod us to give a richer and more faithful account of who God is and what it means to serve God in a world of scarcity and clashing identities.

Let us assume that on the whole Schwartz is wrong. First, let us assume that the problem of *scarcity* is neither exacerbated by believing in one God nor overcome by imagining a world of plenitude. But how should we manage scarcity? One way is by advocating an economy of desert, which says that what is mine is mine and what is yours is yours, and when I give you something that is mine you must give me the proportionate amount of something that is yours.

Why is it that Christians often think these terms and thus fuel the fires of criticism such as Schwartz's? Should we not instead, seek to subvert the economy of deserts by the economy of grace? In this economy, scarcity is overcome by self-giving, not by dividing possessions according to deserts or by the utopian assumption that there is enough for everyone. Only through self-giving can we hope to create a world of plenitude—a truly heavenly world in which the other never emerges as a debtor because she has already given to having joyfully received, and because even before the gift has reached her she was already engaged in a movement of advancement and reciprocity.

Second, let us assume that separation is essential for formation of *identity* and that the creative act of differentiation ought to be distinguished from the violent act of exclusion. But how should we go about maintaining boundaries and managing relations between groups with discrete identities? Christians have often advocated a "politics of purity," which

seeks to push others out of our world and eject otherness from within ourselves. To the extent that we have, we are legitimate targets of Schwartz's attack. Could Christian theologians conceive of a plausible alternative account of identity formation, an account according to which boundaries exist but are porous, in which the other is not perceived as a threat by simply being other but is experienced as enrichment? I think the doctrine of the Trinity points precisely in this direction.

Finally, let us assume that the *oneness* of God is not inimical to the peaceful coexistence of people but is rather an important precondition for it. How then should we think about the one God? Along with adherents of the other two monotheistic religions—Judaism and Islam—Christians have been sometimes tempted to conceive of God almost as a kind of private deity, the God who automatically rejects “them” by electing “us” and who therefore provides a divine sanction for our strenuous efforts to keep our identity pure, even if this means obliterating the other. But is this the God of Abraham and Sarah? Is this the God revealed in Jesus Christ by the power of the Spirit? Is not the God of Abraham and Sarah the God who ultimately elects some in order that the divine blessing may come to all? Is not the God whom we encounter in the story of Jesus Christ the Triune God? Is not *this* God a community of persons each of whom indwells the others and all of whom are therefore persons precisely by not having self-enclosed and “pure” identities? Does not the eternal blessedness of this God consist in the circular movement of divine love in which the giving of the self coalesces with the receiving of the other?

It would be easy simply to dismiss Schwartz for having misread the character of the one God of the Bible and distorted the implications of biblical monotheism for life in a world of scarcity and clashing identities. It would be more difficult as well as more fruitful to offer plausible alternative accounts of Trinitarian monotheism and to demonstrate its salutary social consequences. But even if this were done, the truly difficult task for Christians would remain: to stop behaving as if the idol Schwartz seeks to demolish were in fact the God they worship. **CT**

Miroslav Volf is professor of systematic theology at Fuller Theological Seminary. He is the author of several books, including After Our Likeness: The Church As the Image of Trinity, recently published by Eerdmans.

RECOMMENDED READINGS



Richard J. Mouw, president of Fuller Theological Seminary

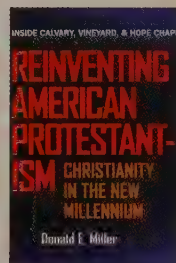
Even for evangelicals who keep a watchful eye on things Roman Catholic, Michael W. Cuneo's **The Smoke of Satan: Conservative and Traditionalist Dissent in Contemporary American Catholicism** (Oxford University Press, 1997, 215 pp; \$27.50, hardcover) sheds light on little-known movements within Catholicism: thriving communities of traditionalist nuns and priests, mystical Marian devotees whose ties to mainstream Catholicism are quite strained, and “the-end-is-near” apocalypticists—to say nothing of the separatist Catholics who believe that the present occupant of the papal throne is an imposter and a forerunner of the Antichrist. The truths here are not only stranger than much fiction, they add up to a tale that reads like a well-written novel. **CT**

Amy Plantinga Pauw, Henry P. Mobley Associate Professor of Theology at Louisville Presbyterian Seminary and a lay member of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

“A revolution is transforming American Protestantism,” Don Miller declares in **Reinventing American Protestantism: Christianity in the New Millennium** (University of California Press, 1997, 253 pp.; \$27.50, hardcover). The vanguard of this movement is what Miller calls “new paradigm churches” (NPCs), networks of Christian fellowships that adopt contemporary styles of music, welcoming settings for worship, and a responsiveness to the therapeutic, individualistic, and antiestablishment mood of the culture. His book is a detailed and engaging account of three southern California churches founded in the 1960s and '70s: Calvary Chapel, Vineyard Christian Fellowship, and Hope Chapel. Often independent or postdenominational, NPCs reject the bureaucratic rigidities and traditional liturgical tastes of mainstream Protestantism. Despite theological similarities, their efforts to democratize access to the sacred distinguish NPCs from most evangelical and fundamentalist churches as well.

As a liberal Episcopalian, Miller is clearly an outsider to these groups, yet he presents a sympathetic portrait of enthusiastic worship, organizational flexibility, intense discipleship in small cell groups, and the ability to attract and nurture those whose history and lifestyle have disenfranchised them from more established churches. On all these counts, Miller's concluding call for mainstream Protestantism to learn from NPCs is welcome.

But Mark Noll's warning in *Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* about antitraditional forms of Christian piety deserves heed here as well. The biblicistic, authoritarian style of these pastors, “unfettered” by knowledge of the larger Christian tradition, hamstrings careful theological reflection. Routinization of these churches is inevitable. And when it comes, the confluence of this style of pastoral leadership with a hierarchical bureaucracy may be the worst of both worlds. **CT**

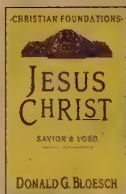


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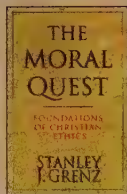
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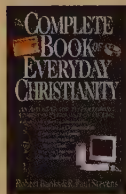
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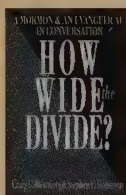
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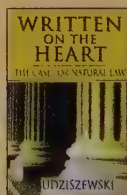
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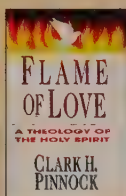
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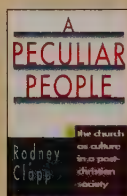
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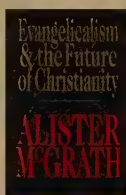
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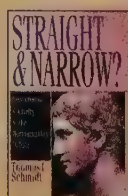
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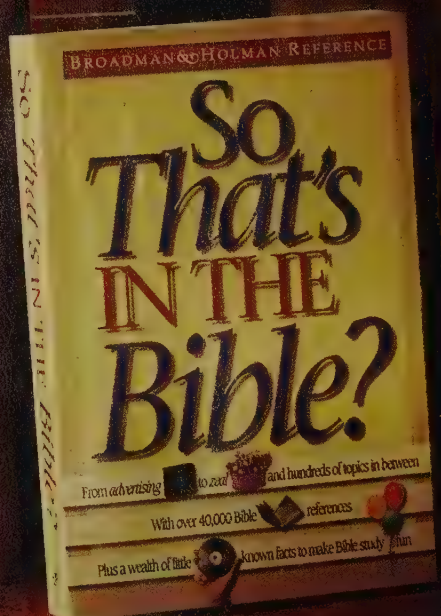
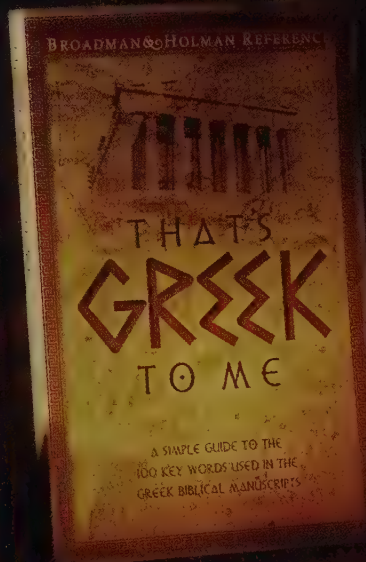
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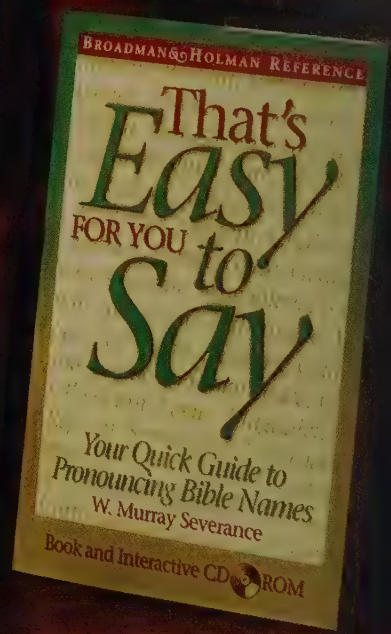
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² Mark my words! I, Paul, tell you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no value to you at all. ³ Again I declare to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is obligated to obey the whole law. ⁴ You who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace.

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² Listen! I, Paul, tell you this: If you are counting on circumcision to make you right with God, then Christ cannot help you. ³ I'll say it again. If you are trying to find favor with God by being circumcised, you must obey all of the regulations in the whole law of Moses. ⁴ For if you are trying to make yourselves right with God by keeping the law, you have been cut off from Christ! You have fallen away from God's grace.

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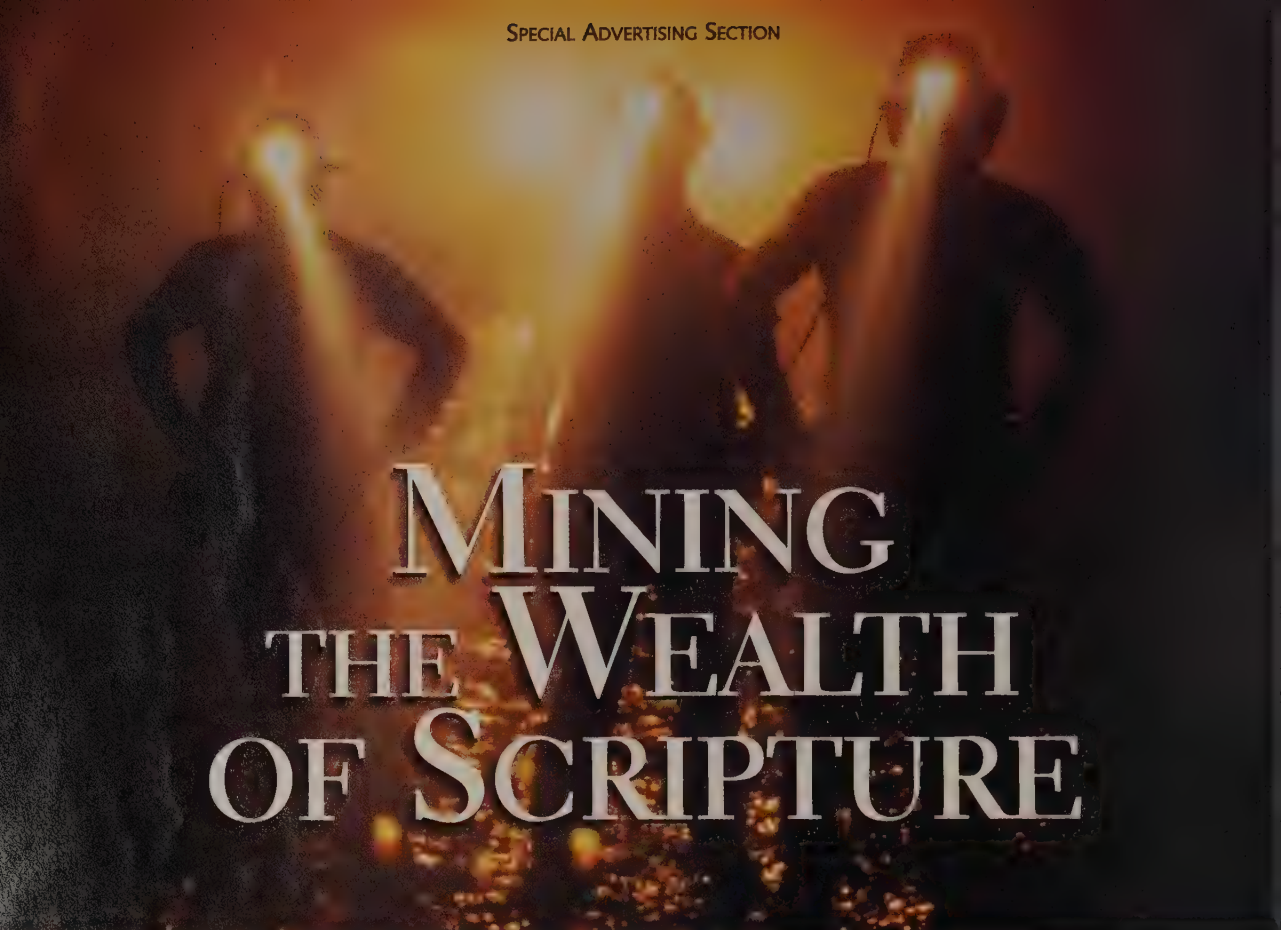
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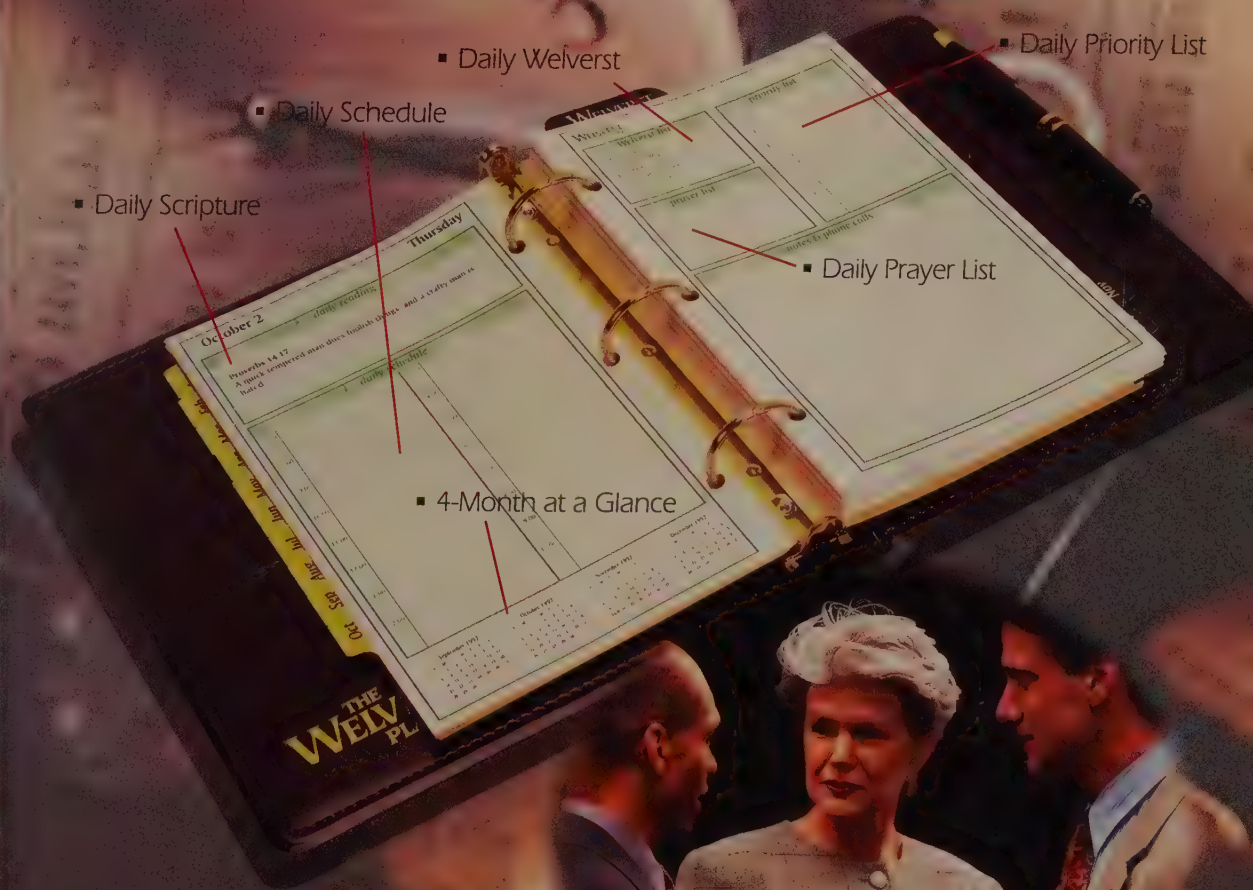
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Along with the New King James Version and standard study-Bible tools (introductions, outlines, maps, charts of biblical information, timelines, a Bible-reading plan), *The MacArthur Study Bible* also offers several unique features: 20,000 notes by MacArthur (filling nearly half of each page); a 200-page topical index; harmony of the Gospels; harmony of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles; and an overview of systematic theology. Helpful articles (for example, "How We Got the Bible") and a meaty center reference column round out this excellent volume.

Meanwhile, *The Contemporary Parallel New Testament* features the texts of eight translations of the New Testament—King James Version, New American Standard Bible Updated Edition, New Century Version, Contemporary English Version, New International Version, New Living Translation, New King James Version, and The Message. With the exception of the classic KJV, all of these translations have been published in recent years. Edited by well-known scholar John R. Kohlenberger III, *The Contemporary Parallel New Testament* is also the first edition to include both the NIV and the NKJV, making it especially noteworthy (hardcover, 1,600 pages, \$39.99).

Handbooks and surveys. *The NIV Bible Companion*, by Alister E. McGrath, is subtitled "a basic commentary on the Old and New Testaments." This book could well become a staple for Christian schools offering survey courses of the entire Bible. In a fascinating, easy-to-read style, McGrath offers key features and information covering each book of the Bible (Zondervan, hardcover, 448 pages, \$24.99).

It would be wrong to classify *The Old Testament: Text and Context* as merely an overview of Scriptures. This is college-level material that covers the ancient literature and cultures of the Old Testament. Authors Victor H. Matthews and James C. Moyer are professors of religious studies at Southwestern Missouri State University.

As historians, they demonstrate frequent links between the culture of ancient Israel and the cultures of the surrounding pagan nations (Hendrickson Publishers, hardcover, 308 pages, \$29.95).

Another book that can scarcely be categorized as a Bible survey is *Reading*

I've never dug
for gold, but I
searched for
even greater
treasure —
nuggets of
biblical truth.

the Bible with Heart and Mind by Tremper Longman III. It doesn't just explain the Bible; it explains how to read the Bible. It's obvious that Longman wants to spark a passion for God's Word—not merely for the information, but for an encounter with the life-changing power of God. He gives a lot of space to understanding the genres of biblical literature, but this book communicates far better than one would expect from a Old Testament scholar. It easily could serve as a resource for teaching a college-age or adult Sunday school class. Others will use the book's review of hermeneutical principles or list of shortsighted perspectives to teach those who think the Bible is too confusing to understand (NavPress, paperback, 234 pages, \$18).

Harold L. Willmington, vice president of Liberty University (Lynchburg, Va.), offers his *Bible Handbook* as a tool to equip new believers and introduce them to biblical knowledge. But

this convenient volume will undoubtedly service pastors and teachers who seek practical tools to teach an overview of Scripture. Willmington has packed his handbook with a macro view of the books of the Bible, along with charts, lists, maps, and numerous topical studies (Tyndale Publishers, hardcover, 947 pages, \$19.99).

Topical studies. A number of new releases address theological issues in a topical manner. Alistair E. McGrath, theology teacher at Oxford University and research professor of systematic theology at Regent College as well as a contributing editor for *CHRISTIANITY TODAY*, has written *Studies in Doctrine*. He covers doctrinal basics and then offers detailed discussions on the Trinity, Jesus, and the doctrine of justification by faith. McGrath applies his training and intellect in ways that laypeople appreciate. Even if you're not inclined to read his book for the theology, you'll enjoy it for his many stories and illustrations. McGrath is not merely a scholar; he is a gifted communicator (Zondervan Publishing House, hardcover, 480 pages, \$24.99).

Four recent books from Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company could be categorized as topical studies:

The Gospel for All Christians: Rethinking the Gospel Audiences challenges the view that claims each of the Gospels was tailored for a specific audience (paperback, 220 pages, \$22).

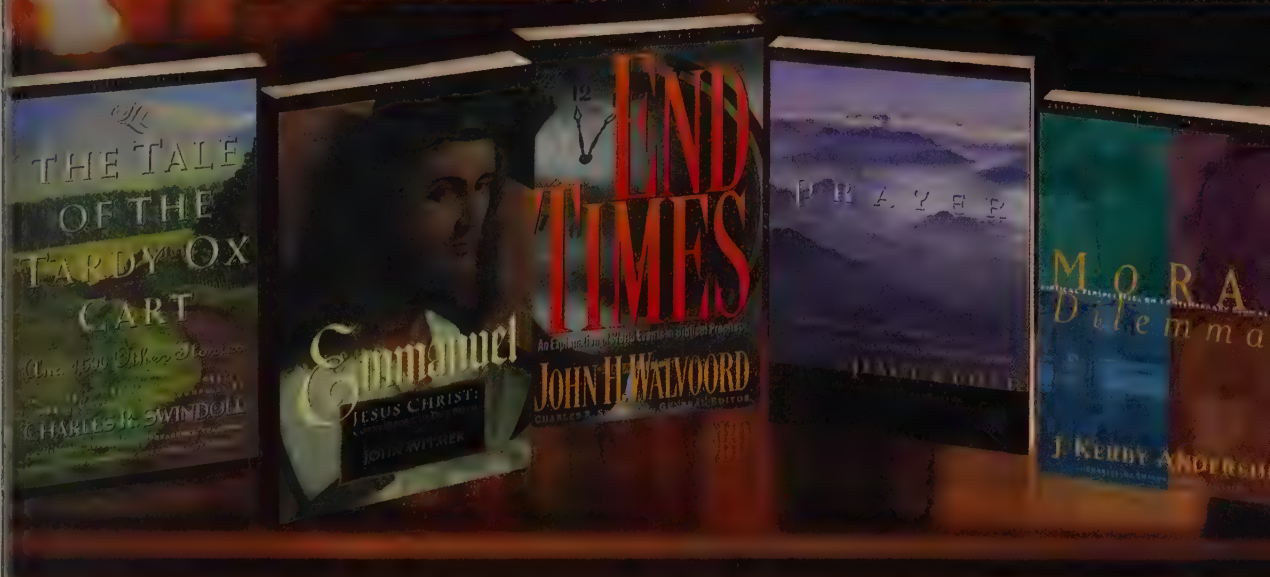
Paul Barnett's *Jesus and the Logic of History* tackles issues related to the historical credibility of Jesus in the Gospels. Evangelicals will appreciate Barnett's careful analysis of the historical methodology necessary for reading the Gospels (paperback, 182 pages, \$18).

The Theology of Paul the Apostle, by James D. G. Dunn, uses Paul's letter to the Romans as a template for building a fuller view of Paul's theology, and it covers the range of Christian theology (hardcover, 808 pages, \$45).

N. T. Wright's *What Saint Paul Really Said: Was Paul of Tarsus the Real Founder of Christianity?* provides an overview of Pauline theology.

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Wright argues that Paul did not invent his gospel, but preached the gospel of Christ. Wright also shows that Paul believed in the divinity of Christ without abandoning his Jewish monotheistic roots (paperback, 192 pages, \$14).

Brad H. Young promotes a similar theme in *Paul, the Jewish Theologian: A Pharisee Among Christians, Jews, and Gentiles*. Young demonstrates that Paul's teachings depended on his Jewish roots and must be interpreted through Jewish eyes. Young suggests it was Paul's cross-cultural abilities—not a departure from his Jewish upbringing—that enabled him as a Jew to connect with the Hellenistic culture around him. Young is president and founder of the Gospel Research Foundation, committed to exploring the Jewish roots in the Christian faith (Hendrickson Publishers, paperback, 164 pages, \$12.95).

Other recent topical studies deserve mention. Dallas Theological Seminary's Robert P. Lightner writes on the end times in *Last Days' Handbook*. It provides an excellent overview of various evangelical positions on eschatology (Thomas Nelson Publishers, paperback, 242 pages, \$12.99). Hendrickson Publishers offers Joachim Gnlika's book *Jesus of Nazareth: Message and History*, the English translation of a work released a few years ago. Gnlika addresses the historical question of Jesus not as a biography, but by inquiring about his ministry and his message (hardcover, 346 pages, \$24.95). Also from Hendrickson is Craig S. Keener's *The Spirit in the Gospels and Acts: Divine Purity and Power*, which traces ancient Jewish views of God's Spirit. Keener argues that the early church saw the Holy Spirit's work in terms of cleansing and empowering (hardcover, 282 pages, \$24.95).

Another book that examines spiritual powers is Clinton E. Arnold's *3 Crucial Questions About Spiritual Warfare*, published by Baker Books. Arnold, professor at Talbot School of Theology, answers questions debated in some evangelical and charismatic circles: What is spiritual warfare? Can a Christian be demon-possessed? Are

we called to engage territorial spirits? Regardless of one's predisposition on the subjects, Arnold's book is an important read that will help to sort out the issues and define a clear, biblical response (paperback, 224 pages, \$11.99).

Cultural studies. Customs and

Finding biblical treasure, like mining gold, can be a daunting task.

cultures of ancient peoples in faraway lands can confuse modern readers of the Bible. A couple of excellent books offer help at reducing the time and distance between now and then.

Ancient Egypt and the Old Testament provides insights into the ancient world by explaining many intriguing mysteries behind the biblical text. The author, John D. Currid, shows how Egyptian culture had an impact on the Old Testament patriarchs. He analyzes the biblical Books of History to suggest links between Egypt and Israel. He also demonstrates the influence of Egyptian wisdom literature on the Books of Poetry and Prophecy. Currid, an associate professor at Reformed Theological Seminary, paints the cultural context necessary for reading the Old Testament (Baker, paperback, 269 pages, \$21.99).

Also covering the background and context of the Pentateuch is *The IVP Bible Background and Commentary*, by John H. Walton and Victor H. Matthews.

They use nontechnical terms to make their information accessible to lay readers, providing a scriptural reference format, a glossary of terms and names, historical maps and charts, and introductory essays on each book (InterVarsity Press, hardcover, 284 pages, \$19.99).

A unique approach is what could be called "reverse" cultural studies. Rather than explain biblical culture for modern readers, these books begin with current issues and return to the Bible for principles that pertain to those issues. These books interpret contemporary culture in light of Scripture rather than analyze ancient culture, hoping to find information that connects with today's issues.

The following two books help readers understand the Bible better by bridging the gap between our modern times and ancient cultures:

InterVarsity Press's *The Complete Book of Everyday Christianity: An A-to-Z Guide to Following Christ in Every Aspect of Life* looks at almost any contemporary topic. It covers everything from adoption to abortion, chocolate to coffee, gardening to games. Extensive articles look at the Bible on topics such as credit, euthanasia, crime, politics, strategic planning, and shopping (hardcover, 1,166 pages; \$29.99).

So That's in the Bible? from Broadman & Holman lists references like a topical Bible, except the topics have been updated to reflect societal issues confronting Christians entering the twenty-first century—concerns such as marital affairs, advertising, spousal abuse, AIDS, ambition, animal rights, and assisted suicide. Sprinkled throughout the pages are insightful and intriguing sidebar notes related to issues both biblical ("Babylon," for instance) and contemporary ("baldness") (paperback, 577 pages, \$14.99).

Atlas. *The Atlas of the Bible and Christianity* uses recent computer innovations in cartography and offers maps of the Bible, along with maps covering nearly 2,000 years of church history. Missionary maps demonstrate the

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worldwide spread of Christianity. Historical maps provide snapshots of religious movements—for example, the distribution of Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, and Congregational churches in the U.S. during 1850. Commentary, instructive diagrams, and color photos complement the 160 full-color maps (Baker Books, hardcover, 160 pages, \$29.99).

One-of-a-Kind. *That's Easy for You to Say: Your Quick Guide to Pronouncing Bible Names* is a list of biblical names and places. W. Murray Severance's book looks like a dictionary, but it's not. Instead of definitions, the list provides pronunciations. So *Mahershalal-hash-baz* becomes "may hehr-shal al-HASH baz." The book comes with a bonus computer CD-ROM for audio demonstrations. Click any word from the list, and listen to the correct pronunciation (Broadman & Holman, paperback, 212 pages, \$14.99).

Commentaries

Beyond Scripture itself, perhaps no tool is more useful for discovering practical biblical research and insights than an in-depth, exegetical commentary. The problem is, how do you know which commentaries offer the most help? To mine solid rock, a gold prospector can accomplish more in a few minutes with a few well-placed sticks of dynamite than he'd do in days of swinging a pickax. In this section, we'll take a quick look at several dynamite commentaries released in the last nine months.

Gospels and Acts. Mark E. Moore's *The Chronological Life of Christ* (Vol. 2) presents concise, teachable notes. It covers the later Judean ministry of Christ, picking up where Volume 1 left off. Moore links his commentary to the NIV harmony (Thomas and Gundry), so all Gospels combine for a single story line. This book will help growing Christians, but it will also provide teaching tools for ministers of the gospel, such as icons that highlight special study topics, references to contemporary articles, and practical insights relevant for today's church

(College Press, paperback, 373 pages, \$19.99).

Ed Glasscock, a pastor for more than fifteen years, now at Southeastern Bible College, offers a commentary on *Matthew* to help readers understand the impact of Christ's life and mission. Glasscock balances serious scholarship

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want relevant
information
they can
apply to the
lives of the
people they
serve.**

with pragmatic teaching, guiding readers to discover a fresh vividness and depth of background in the earthly ministry and life of Jesus. Along with the expected historical insights, verse-by-verse exposition, cultural information, and grammatical and syntactical studies, Glasscock provides homiletic suggestions for pastors and teachers at the end of each chapter (Moody, paperback, 635 pages, \$23.99).

Eerdmans recently released *The Gospel of Luke*, by Joel B. Green, part of its acclaimed New International Commentary on the New Testament. The NICNT series is recognized by pastors, students, and scholars as a work marked by solid evangelical scholarship. Green, professor at Asbury Theological Seminary, balances concern for the first-century Roman culture with an understanding of Luke as a historical narrative (hardcover, 928 pages, \$50).

The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary, by Ben Witherington III, provides a detailed social and rhetorical analysis of the Book of Acts. Witherington, also a professor at Asbury, gives detailed attention to major theological and historical issues (Eerdmans, paperback, 875 pages, \$50).

An expositional commentary on *Acts* by James Montgomery Boice blends scriptural insight, rich devotional application, and vivid illustrations. Boice suggests that the early church portrayed in *Acts* can and should serve as a model for the church today. Writing with a pastor's heart, Boice urges us to learn what made the early church strong and how it survived in a pagan culture, noting that the vitality of the early church could benefit today's church (Baker Books, hardcover, 454 pages, \$32.99).

Epistles. Several commentaries on New Testament letters bring fresh resources for the person who desires to dig deeper into the treasures of Scripture.

Simon J. Kistemaker's book on *2 Corinthians* provides an easy-flowing commentary—thought-provoking, yet simple enough to inspire. This enjoyable read gives the feeling one might have sitting down with the author and a cup of coffee to discuss a biblical passage (Baker Books, hardcover, 495 pages, \$34.99).

Andrew H. Trotter Jr.'s commentary on *Hebrews* provides excellent material for communicators of the Word. Trotter takes the reader through several analyses of *Hebrews*—once to look at its authorship, again to study its genre, and so on to analyze its structure, Greek text, vocabulary, grammar, style, and theology (Baker Books, paperback, 222 pages, \$13.99).

David P. Nystrom's commentary on *James* joins Zondervan's NIV Application Commentary series and promises to do more than merely connect readers to the original context and culture. After helping readers discover scriptural principles, Nystrom wants to bring them back to their everyday lives. He accom-

Mining the Wealth of Scripture

plishes this, for instance, by using contemporary incidents or personalities—quoting a baseball player disgruntled over his salary offer, telling about a tennis star who longs for more to life, examining the lyrics of a popular song that speaks of desiring an elusive goodness. The result is more than devotional literature; this remains an excellent reference work that connects timeless truths with illustrations familiar to today's audiences. (hardcover, 338 pages, \$22.99).

Another commentary on *James* is Kurt A. Richardson's. Published as part of The New American Commentary series, this commentary will help pastors and teachers read the Bible with clarity and proclaim it with power. Richardson delivers insights in an easy yet cogent manner (Broadman and Holman, hardcover, 272 pages, \$27.99).

One of the more extensive sets of commentaries recently to become avail-

able is the Word Biblical Commentary. Volume 52a covers the first five chapters of the Book of Revelation in 374 pages. David Aune, theology professor at Loyola University, Chicago, provides scholars, working pastors, and serious students a multilevel approach to analyzing Revelation. Those concerned about critical textual analysis will gravitate toward the sections on Bibliography and Form/Structure/Setting. Others will use the expository portions of the book, the Comment and the Explanation. All Bible students will find something of value to their specialties. (Hardcover, \$29.99).

If you want a deal, Thomas Nelson's commentary on Revelation is a good bet. Edited by Steve Gregg, it's actually four books in one, subtitled: *Four Views: A Parallel Commentary*. The four columns on each spread represent major interpretative streams of thought on Revelation. Gregg summarizes each position—which he calls the historicist,

preterist, futurist, and spiritual views—in an unbiased and careful manner (hardcover, 528 pages, \$29.99).

Old Testament. Three Old Testament commentaries deserve note:

Duane A. Garrett provides an invigorating look at *Hosea* and *Joel* in The New American Commentary series (Broadman and Holman). His insights connect us with those people who first heard the challenging and often enigmatic messages of the ancient prophets. The preface observes that while God's *Word* never changes, his *world* does. Garrett's book links the unchanging Word with a changing world (hardcover, 426 pages, \$29.99).

For many, the meaning of *Ezekiel* remains locked away in a world of incomprehensible symbols and visions. But Daniel I. Block's commentary provides keys to the mysteries of chapters 1–24. Block, professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, opens

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doors to deciphering Ezekiel's conundrums and eccentricities (Eerdmans, hardcover, 887 pages, \$48).

Another Old Testament book that seems obscure—even irreligious at times—is *Ecclesiastes*. Tremper Longman III, professor at Westminster Theological Seminary, wrestles with the whimsical writings of Qohelet, who himself wrestled with life's meaning and vagaries. Longman questions the traditional view that Solomon authored the book and opts instead for a Solomon-like figure. Throughout, he walks the reader through a plausible, easy-to-grasp analysis of the book and provides a remarkable resource to deal with contemporary skepticism. (Eerdmans, hardcover, 306 pages, \$35.)

Bibliographies. With no shortage of books, it can be intimidating trying to find the exact book for your purposes. There is help, however, in weeding through the proliferation of commen-

taries. It comes in a series from the Institute for Biblical Research and released by Baker Books—a series of bibliographies, categorized for specialized areas of study. Elmer A. Martens's bibliography *Old Testament Theology* contains resource information on 512 books (\$11.99). Peter Enns's bibliography *Poetry & Wisdom* contains listings for 784 books (\$12.99).

Reference Works

According to some observers, the largest gold rush in U.S. history is currently under way in northern Nevada. Years after old-time prospectors boarded up their mines and moved on, new mining companies are using technology to pull out of the rocks what modern miners call "invisible gold"—specks so small that the human eye can't see them. In extreme cases, 33 tons of sulfide ore rock are processed to retrieve one ounce of gold.

As a pastor, when I'm looking for that speck of gold—a biblical insight to share with my congregation—I usually don't have time to crunch 33 tons of material. That's why I'm glad others have done the work for me. They've sifted through the ore and come up with valuable nuggets that I can readily use in sermon or class preparation.

Dictionaries and encyclopedias.

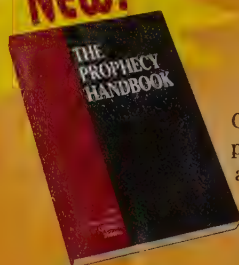
Who was Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz? Where was Eschol? And what was the purpose of footwashing? A quick reference tool to answer these kinds of biblical questions is *The Holman Concise Bible Dictionary*. With more than 2,800 entries (including contemporary topics and issues like abortion, birth control, credit cards, and dinosaurs), this handy volume should be a practical first response to basic inquiries about the Bible's message (hardcover, 694 pages, \$14.99).

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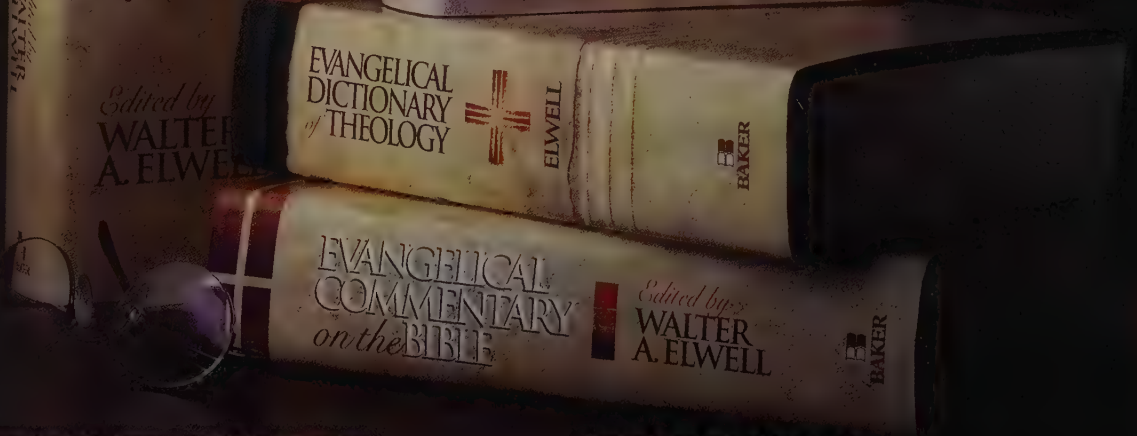
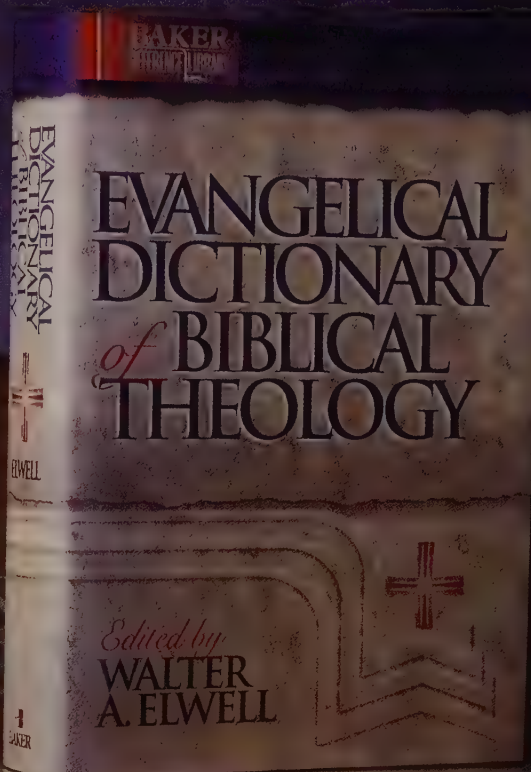
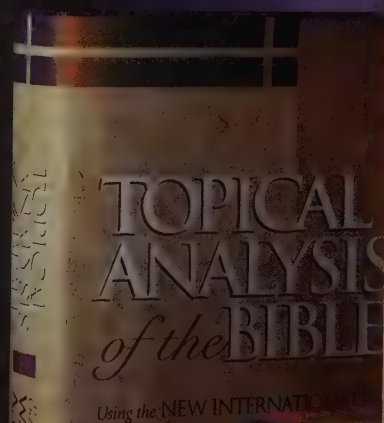
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Testament & Its Developments is "a compendium of contemporary biblical scholarship" on topics related primarily to the later epistles of the New Testament. It was preceded by two companion volumes, the *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospel* and the *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*. One could, for example, look up the word "priest" and discover how the term was understood by the writer of Hebrews as well as postapostolic writers. With a wide range of contributors and careful editing by Ralph P. Martin and Peter H. Davids, InterVarsity Press has produced an immensely useful reference book (hardcover, 1,289 pages, \$39.99).

A work of truly encyclopedic proportions that will benefit both Hebrew scholars and pastors or students desiring to mine the wealth of the Old Testament text is the *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*, edited by Willem A.

VanGemeren. Though detailed and academic in its approach, even those without a working knowledge of biblical Hebrew will benefit from this five-volume set (including Index). Hebrew listings and text appear in both Hebrew and English equivalent. Words are keyed to the numbering system of the *Exhaustive Concordance of the NIV* and linked to equivalent Strong numbers. This set should become a standard on the shelves of pastors and scholars for years to come (Zondervan, 5 volumes, \$199.99).

Another excellent Old Testament resource is the *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament* (three volumes), by Ernst Jenni and Claus Westermann, translated from the German by Mark E. Biddle. By concentrating on primary vocabulary of biblical Hebrew, Jenni and Westermann provide a concise yet useful source of definitions. They do not content themselves with that alone,

however. They also evaluate each term's theological relevance by examining various ways it is used in the language. This brings nuggets of insights to the surface, which the student otherwise would scarcely find buried in numerous commentaries (Hendrickson Publishers, hardcover, 1,638 pages, \$119.95).

Concordances. Often it pays to come back to the tried-and-true. If you can find gold by sloshing soil around in an old-timer's gold pan, why not go back to basics? One "gold-pan" type of resource is the concordance.

John R. Kohlenberger III has earned a well-deserved reputation for his work with biblical concordances, having joined with Edward W. Goodrick (now deceased) to produce exhaustive indexes for the NIV and the NRSV, among others. James A. Swanson joins Kohlenberger to add his expertise and extend this line of great reference tools in *The Greek English Concordance*. Designed for the student not fluent in New Testament Greek (headings and listings appear in Greek and are transliterated), this book will save busy pastors a lot of time. You can turn in your NIV concordance to perhaps a dozen different English words to find all the occurrences of a single Greek word, or you can turn to one listing in *The Greek English Concordance*. (Zondervan, hardcover, 1,131 pages, \$39.99).

With the immense array of resources like these covered here, prospecting for biblical riches has never been better. The student or pastor who takes advantage of these books will find valuable nuggets of information on biblical culture, grammar, and history that will expand their appreciation for and application of God's Word.

By Richard Doebl, pastor of the Gospel Tabernacle in Cloquet, Minnesota.

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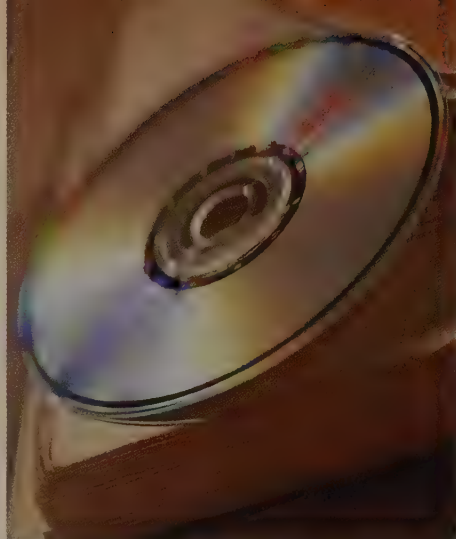
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Unless you're new to modern-day technology, you probably know that computers now help run nearly every business and nonprofit office, and they populate virtually one out of every two households.

Moreover, you may know that Bible programs for personal computers bring tremendous benefits to reading and studying the Scriptures, for two main reasons:

1. You can search Bible passages with amazing speed, then read and write about them with ease—particularly if you're a pastor, teacher, or youth leader who regularly prepares Bible-based lessons.

2. You can select from a dizzying catalog of affordable add-ons in the form of Bible translations, reference works, homiletic aids, and related books that are now available in electronic form—and they won't take up bookshelf space because they reside on your hard disk until you call them up on your personal computer.

SEVEN CATEGORIES

Whether you love your Macintosh, still prefer MS-DOS, or use an Intel-compatible PC running Microsoft Windows 3.1 or Windows 95, you can choose from many fine Bible-study programs today. These programs can be divided into five general categories and two new or additional categories.

1. Academic—programs intended for scholars or those who have some

knowledge of the original Hebrew and Greek.

2. Professional—programs intended for those in ministry (such as pastors, youth leaders, and Sunday school teachers) or others who want to do serious Scripture study but with a layman's approach to the original languages.

3. Devotional—programs intended for daily Bible reading (generally these offer only one Bible translation instead of a grocery list of them).

4. Family—programs with an emphasis on colorful maps, multimedia, or audio presentation.

5. Add-ons—electronic books intended for standalone use, or (ideally) searching and reading that's well-integrated with a Bible-study program.

In addition to rapid growth in that fifth category, software publishers in the past year have also given us many new titles in two new categories:

6. Bible-language tutorials.

7. Children's Bible-based games and activity programs.

This article attempts to be comprehensive, listing the products of 65 companies across all seven categories. Indeed, many good products exist for the benefit of everyone. However, more programs have come to market, especially for children, than can be listed in this space.

Prices vary widely, depending on the program and its edition, not to mention add-on options.

Many companies' Web sites offer

demo versions of their Bible software you can download free, as well as illustrative screen shots of their Bible programs for adults or children. (See the end of the article for vendors' e-mail addresses and Web sites, if known.)

ACADEMIC

• **Hermeneutika Company** (406/837-2244, 800/74-BIBLE) aggressively develops *BibleWorks 3.5* in 32-bit and 16-bit Windows versions. It's a finely tailored application intended for exegetical-expositional pastors, teachers, and missionaries, with more than 65 Bibles and reference works in 14 languages. It contains original language texts, grammatical morphologies and lexicons, as well as many English and European-language Bible translations. It is intended for use by those who may or may not be competent in Greek or Hebrew and who wish to break the language barrier of contemporary languages. Available on CD-ROM only.

• Developed by OakTree Software Specialists but sold by the **GRAMCORD Institute** (360/576-3000), *Accordance 3.0 for Macintosh* has an elegant single-window interface with the most advanced slate of features in a Bible-study program (graphical search constructs, diagramming, statistical analyses, and more). Its list of companion lexicons, commentaries, and so on is lengthy, and it can perform simple to sophisticated searches in Greek, Hebrew and English texts based on GRAMCORD's

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grammatical tag system.

- **GRAMCORD 2.0** for Windows is built on the same advanced technology from **GRAMCORD** (360/576-3000) but with a slightly different interface and scatterplots for pattern analysis, such as an author's style. Loizeaux's *Bible Companion* program comes with the New Testament edition; the Old Testament edition should be released by the time you read this.

- Also for Windows 3.1 and Windows 95 users, **Silver Mountain Software** (214/293-2921, 800/214-2144) publishes *Bible Windows 5.1*, which includes Greek and Hebrew texts and lexicons, all 38 volumes of The Ante-Nicene Fathers, the Silver Classical Library of 16 Greek authors, and more.

PROFESSIONAL

- **Christian Technologies Inc.** (816/478-8320, 800/366-8320) sells *Holy Scriptures* in DOS and Windows versions, accompanied by 12 Bible translations and five add-on reference works. Christian Technologies Inc. also produces the Russian Bible and the Spanish Reina Valera 1960.

- For the PC only, the **American Bible Society** (212/408-1200, 800/322-4253) lists the *ABS Reference Bible* on CD-ROM.

- Solely for the PC as well, the *Complete Word Study Bible & Reference CD* from **AMG Publishers** (423/894-6060, 800/251-7206) presents the KJV using the Strong's system; also available are the NASB plus homiletic aids.

- **Bible Research Systems** (512/251-7541, 800/423-1228) sells *Verse Search* for DOS, Windows, and Macintosh users. This competitive product includes Bible maps, a Bible dictionary, and a Bible timeline.

- **BIBLESOFT** (206/824-0682, 206/824-0547, 800/995-9058) markets its well-designed and popular *PC Study Bible* in several editions—CD-ROM Reference Library Plus, CD-ROM New Reference Library, CD-ROM Complete Reference Library, CD-ROM Discovery Plus, CD-ROM Discovery NIV, CD-ROM Discovery KJV.

- *Bible Library for Windows* from

Ellis Enterprises (405/749-0274, 800/729-9500) includes 50 Bible-related works, plus maps and hymn stories.

- **Epiphany Software** (408/251-9788, 888/333-BIBLE) sells its elegantly designed and packaged *Bible Explorer for Windows* in six editions (Discovery, Standard, Reference, Student, Teacher, Scholar).

- **Kingdom Computers** (a division of Kingdom Inc., 717/662-7515, 800/385-3436) markets the *Kingdom Bible Companion Library*. (It's the original version of the Bible Companion Series now sold by Loizeaux Brothers Inc.)

- **Kirkbride Bible & Technology** (317/633-1900, 800/428-4385) sells its *Thompson Study Bible Library* for Windows only. Based on WORDsearch and the Thompson Study System, it comes with a wealth of study resources, including Bible outlines, photos, sounds, and maps.

- **Logos Research Systems Inc.** (360/679-6575, 800/87-LOGOS) produces numerous electronic books that work with its *Logos Bible Software* (also called Logos 2.0) and *The Logos Bible Reference System*. For Bible teachers, the company also sells *Logos Lesson Builder*.

- **Loizeaux Brothers Inc.** (800/526-2796, 732/922-6665, 800/257-0775), sells the speedy and advanced *Bible Companion Series* (formerly SeedMaster) in Teacher's, Student, Family, and Inductive editions.

- **NavPress Software** (512/835-6900, 800/888-9898) sells the nicely integrated WORDsearch for Windows 95 and Macintosh, plus specialized tools for hands-on ministry such as *LESSON-maker*, *Youthworker's Library*, *Discipleship Library*, and the *Preacher's Outline and Sermon Bible* (STEP compatible).

- **Online Bible USA** (517/369-2195, 800/243-7124) sells the superbly designed DOS, Windows, and Macintosh versions of the *Online Bible*. Many add-on books are available at a nominal cost.

- **Rocky Mountain Laboratories** (970/679-1662) sells *Deluxe Bible for Windows*, which includes the KJV, NKJV, NAB, and JB translations.

- **Thomas Nelson Publishers** (615/889-9000, 800/933-9673, 800/251-4000) sells *Nelson's Electronic Reference Bible Library* (in Starter, Basic, Deluxe, and Professional editions with up to 76 electronic books in Logos format), *Hayford's Electronic Spirit-Filled™ Library*, and *Charles Stanley's Electronic Bible Study Library*.

- **Zondervan Publishing House** (a division of HarperCollins Publishers, 800/727-3480, 800/727-8004) sells its *NIV Bible Library* (in Basic, Study, Reference, and Complete editions, but formerly known as BibleSource for Windows) for PC users. *MacBible* comes with five Bible translations plus Greek and Hebrew texts. As one might expect, it is for the Macintosh crowd.

DEVOTIONAL

- **Alpha Omega Bridgestone Multimedia Group Inc.** (602/940-5777, 800/523-0988) sells *Bible Link*, a \$10 PC program that indexes the Bible's use of Greek and Hebrew words, and *Bibleware*, an inexpensive disc of PC shareware.

- **American Bible Sales** (714/879-3055, 800/535-5131) sells *BibleMaster 3* for Windows and *BibleMaster 4* for Macintosh, which present only the NASB in an easy-to-use program interface.

- **Expert Software** (a division of Softsync Inc., 305/569-1301, 305/567-9990, 800/759-2562) sells *Bible Explorer*, a KJV-only Bible for the PC on CD-ROM with 55 maps, photos of the Holy Land, 40 minutes of video depicting moments in the Bible, reproductions of 250 masterpieces of biblical artwork, audio narratives of 60 passages, and a scrolling timeline.

- Thanks to **K2 Consultants Inc.** (603/551-5544, 888/SKY-SCAPE), Newton users can read the KJV on their handheld devices.

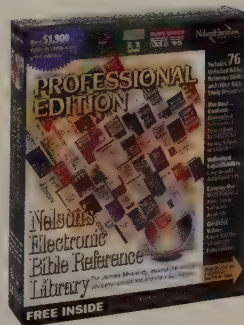
- For the PC only, **Liguori Faithware** (a division of Liguori Publications, 314/464-2500, 800/325-9521) sells *The Bible Library for Catholics* on CD-ROM. It includes the NAB and NRSV Catholic edition and RSV with Apocrypha.

- **Our Sunday Visitor Books** (219/356-8400, 800/348-2440) pub-

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lishes the NAB-only *Deluxe Bible for Windows*.

• **Oxford University Press** (800/451-7556) sells its *New Oxford Annotated Bible Reference Library* CD-ROM for the PC and Macintosh.

• **Parsons Technology** (319/395-9626, 800/644-6344) is the developer of the *QuickVerse Bible*, which can accept the *Ryrie Study Bible* and *PC Bible Atlas* (among other things) as add-ons.

• **Walnut Creek CD-ROM** (800/786-9907) sells *Bethany Bible*, a collection of 1,200 shareware Bible programs and texts for DOS, Windows 3.1, Windows 95, and OS/2 users.

• **Wisdom Tree Inc.** (520/825-5702, 800/772-4253) lets Game Boy owners read the KJV or NIV on their gadgets.

FAMILY/EDUCATION

• **ARK Multimedia Publishing** (804/838-2807, 800/552-2807) has published *ARK Multimedia Bible Interactive* for PC users only.

• For PCs running Windows 95, **Audio Bible** (a division of Alpha Omega Marketing Inc., 864/260-9977) sells *Audio Bible*, which contains 72 hours of narration recorded by **The Talking Bible's** Alexander Scourby. You can also listen to the entire Bible by visiting the company's Web site.

• Popular author Philip Yancey leads a chronological tour of each book of the Bible in *New Testament Foundations* and *Old Testament Foundations* from **Discovery Interactive** (a division of Discovery House Publishers, 616/942-9218, 800/653-8333). Both CD-ROMs are chock-full of photos, video clips, maps, and Bible studies (using the KJV and NIV translations). Another CD-ROM product, *The Life of Christ: An Adventure In Learning*, is a 40-lesson interactive survey of the life of Christ geared toward 7- to 12-year-old children.

• Windows users can read as well as listen to the Bible—even while another program is running in the foreground—with *HeavenWord* from **HeavenWord Inc.** (formerly White Harvest Software Inc., 919/876-2036,

888/726-4715). In addition, *The Message* (Eugene Peterson's Bible paraphrase) is available in audio format on CD-ROM.

• **Bible Net** (800/BIBLE-80) markets the impressive two-volume set of CD-ROMs, *Charlton Heston's Voyage Through the Bible* (Old Testament and New Testament).

• For PC users, *Scripture Sleuth: Rediscovering the Early Church* from **Liguori Faithware** (314/464-2500, 800/325-9521) lets adults play detective and engage in a Socratic dialogue with Scripture in order to "draw their own conclusions about speculative issues found in the Bible," such as "Case Four: When Jesus Sided with Women" or "Case Six: Collaboration as the Hallmark of Peter's Authority."

• **Logos Research Systems Inc.** (360/679-6575, 800/87-LOGOS) is the publisher of a historical CD-ROM called *The Dead Sea Scrolls Revealed*. Another disc, the *Conflict in Jerusalem*, allows users to role play the observers in Christ's final week.

• For the PC and Macintosh, **NavPress Software** (512/266-1700, 800/888-9898) sells *Giants of the Faith*, an interactive CD-ROM about the lives of great English preachers.

• **Parsons Technology** (319/395-9626, 800/644-6344) sells *A Walk in the Footsteps of Jesus*, a multimedia tour of the Holy Land, plus two interactive stories, *Jonah and the Whale* followed by *Noah and the Ark*.

• **Compton's Interactive Bible** from **Zondervan Publishing House** (800/727-3480, 800/727-8004) includes the NIV Study Bible with notes and maps, NIV Complete Concordance, and Nave's Topical Bible in addition to selected video clips and audio narration.

CHILDREN'S/ ENTERTAINMENT

• For PC-savvy kids, **Alpha Omega Bridgestone Multimedia Group Inc.** (602/940-5777, 800/523-0988) sells *Captain Bible* (an adventure game pitting Bible truths against the forces of deception), *Bible Builder* (quiz-based Scripture puzzles), and *Bible Time Fun*

Introducing the WWJD? New Testament



MATTHEW 5

Teaching about Anger

²¹"You have heard that the law of Moses says, 'Do not murder. If you commit murder, you are subject to judgment.'"

²²But I say, If you are angry with someone,* you are subject to judgment! If you call someone an idiot,* you are in danger of being brought before the high council. And if you curse someone,* you are in danger of the fires of hell.

²³So if you are standing before the altar in the Temple, offering a sacrifice to God, and you suddenly remember that someone has something against you, ²⁴leave your sacrifice there beside the altar. Go and be reconciled to that

5:21 Exod 20:13; Deut 5:17. 5:22a Greek your brother, also in 5:23. Some manuscripts add without cause. 5:22b Greek uses an Aramaic term of contempt: If you say to your brother 'Raca.' 5:22c Greek If you say, 'You fool.'

Conduct

Matthew 5:13-16

Let's face it. Doing what Jesus would do may make you different. You may end up doing just the opposite of everyone else. If your conduct pleases Jesus, but offends your friends, should you compromise and try to find an acceptable middle ground?

Jesus gave the two analogies of "salt" and "light" to show the importance of conduct. Salt is a seasoning, but it's also used as a preservative. Jesus wants you to be like a moral preservative, bringing a virtuous and ethical flavor to your culture. Jesus also wants you to shine into the darkness, not for your own publicity, but to bring credit to God. Salt doesn't do any good if it stays in the shaker. A candle doesn't do any good under a bowl. Jesus wants you to do the right thing—even if your friends are offended.

Also see Philippians 1:27

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(an activity center for reading, memorizing Bible verses, and painting).

- **Alphapoetic Resources** (a division of TMD Promotions Ltd., 888/POET-ICS, 905/637-8018) has produced *An ABCs of the Bible* for Windows and Macintosh owners. Attractive artwork presents rhyming couplets that introduce discussions about the Bible; clicking on the interactive animations invokes animation, sound, or a dialogue with the reader. The CD-ROM also contains prayer instruction videos and an original song. A Sunday school edition includes a music CD and teacher's materials.

- **ARK Multimedia Publishing** (804/838-2807, 800/552-2807) markets *Where's Noah?*, *Onesimus*, and *Journey to Promised Land*.

- **Bible Games Company & The Family Den** (divisions of Vozar Inc., 800/845-7415) produces *Bible Grand Slam*, a game that lets you "sharpen your Bible batting skills" by playing in teams or against one of six computerized opponents.

- For Windows only, **HeavenWord Inc.** (919/876-2036, 800/318-7333, 800/347-0077, 888/726-4715) has released *HeavenWord Children's Bible*. It holds 140 Bible stories and coloring-book pictures, five hours of narration, three hours of dictionary and background narration, 158 classic paintings to view or assemble as puzzles, and Bible quizzes.

- **Kidvision Software** (714/733-3446) sells the educational *Super Bible Kids* series for Windows 3.1 and Windows 95 users. It includes modules for teaching children letters, numbers, animals, music, and math using the Bible. Adam & Eve in the Garden of Eden, an interactive exploration of the story's characters and choices, contains music, graphics, animation, and voice narration. Other products under development are the *Bible Story Book* series, *Sound of Animals* series, and *Bible Arithmetic* series.

- **Kirkbride Bible & Technology** (317/633-1900, 800/428-4385) has published *Treasure Study Bible Multimedia CD-ROM* for Windows. Along with cartoon cohort Orville and

Friends and the Steven Curtis Chapman song "Treasure Island," it lets children select a Bible translation (NirV or KJV), click on words to learn more, click on names to hear how they're pronounced, take a quiz, and print certificates to show what lessons they've learned. It also includes a browser with Internet links to a protected kids' area for safe online fun.

- **The Learning Co. Inc.** (800/852-2255, 800/227-5609) has produced *Children's Bible Stories*, which contains 24 interactive Bible stories for Windows and Macintosh owners.

- **Logos Research Systems Inc.** (360/679-6575, 800/87-LOGOS) sells the interactive storybooks *Noah and the Ark* and *David and Goliath*.

- **NavPress Software** (512/266-1700, 800/888-9898) sells *Defender of the Faith* (a role-playing adventure based on the life of David) and *Amaz'n Blaz'n* (an adventure quest, coloring books, and Bible exercises).

- **New Kids Media** develops CD-ROMs in association with Baker Book House (616/676-9185). Macintosh and Windows 95 CD-ROMs sold exclusively through Baker include *The Amazing Expedition Bible* and *Bibleland.com* that lets children "surf" the Bible, Internet-style.

- **McGee's New Media Kids' Bible** from **Tyndale New Media** (a division of Tyndale House Publishers, 630/668-8300, 800/323-9400) lets children hear and read 75 Bible stories from the NLB through a colorful interactive setting that's modeled on the drawing table of the well-known video series "McGee & Me!" Whether they have a Macintosh or a PC, kids can also engage in a variety of fun activities including Professor McGee's Bible Brain Game, a McGee mini-movie viewing screen, McGee's board game, and drawing table. Not only that, but kids can read and listen to the full Bible story accompanied by an animated storybook about key Bible figures by getting the *Interactive Bible for Kids* series (The Life of Paul, The Life of Moses, The Life of David, Adventures with David, The Birth and Boyhood of Jesus, The Life and Ministry of Jesus,

Noah & the Ark, and Adventures with Jonah, Ruth, and Samson).

- For Windows users, **Wisdom Tree Inc.** (520/825-5702, 800/772-4253) sells *Bible Wonders* (a trivia game). To please DOS users and video-game players (Nintendo®, Super Nintendo®, Sega™, and Game Boy®), it offers *Super 3D Noah's Ark*, *Bible Adventures*, *Bible Buffet*, *Exodus*, *Spiritual Warfare*, *Sunday Funday the Ride*, and *Joshua*.

- **Zondervan Publishing** (800/727-3480, 800/727-8004) markets the *Bookie Bookworm* series of interactive storybooks (Noah and the Ark, David and Goliath, and Daniel in the Lions' Den) in addition to *Read With Me Bible*, a PC-only interactive presentation of the best-selling book's 22 Bible stories.

- In **Zondervan's** one-of-a-kind *Adventure Bible Handbook: The Rescue* (for PC and Macintosh), The Adventure Team leads children through a series of Bible quizzes imposed by Malicious Max, a computer virus who holds Froggo hostage and sets off bombs and hides in mazes until the correct answers are given and Froggo is rescued.

ADD-ONS/MODULES (SCHOLARLY/PROFESSIONAL)

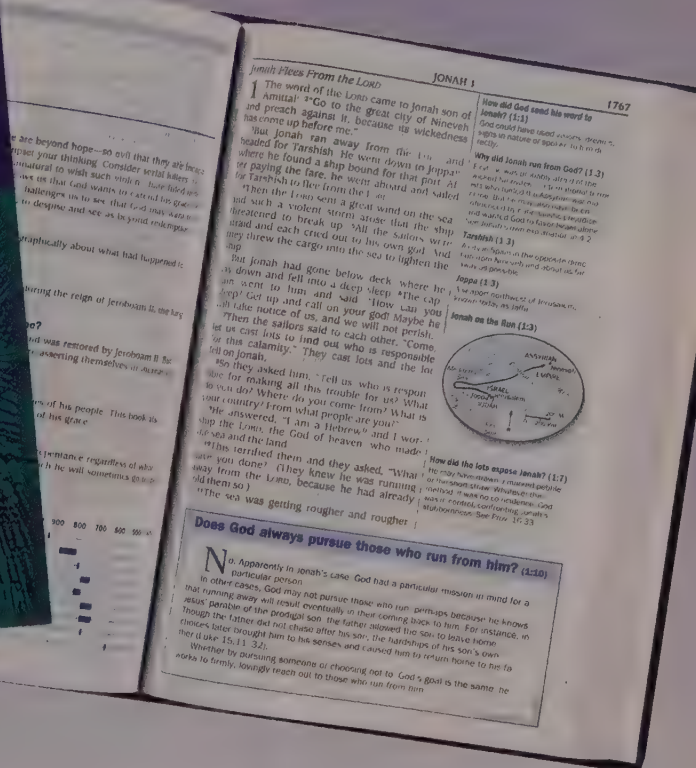
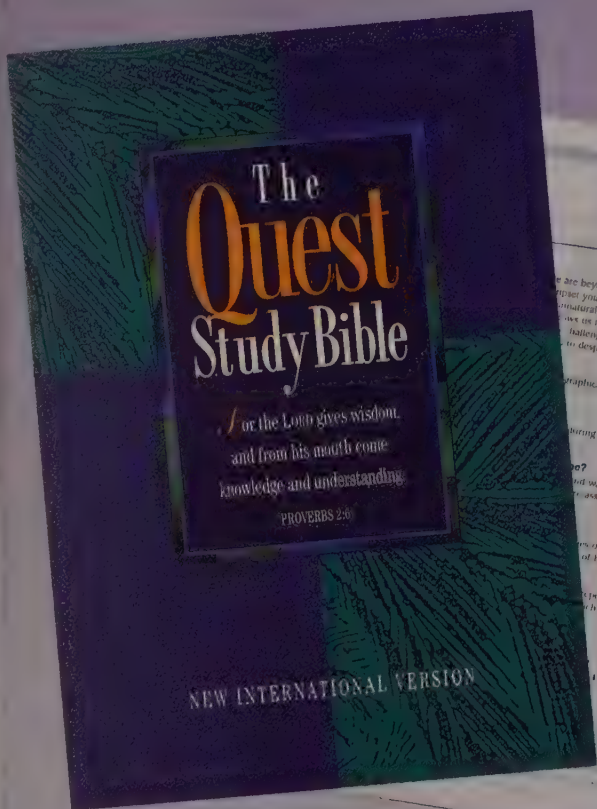
- **AGES Software** (formerly SAGE Software, 800/297-4435, 800/297-4307) has published its *Master Christian Library* (formerly SAGE Digital Library) of 330 reference works in Adobe Acrobat PDF (PostScript Display Format) for PC and Macintosh people. Its *Reformation History Library* contains more than 50 texts, including John Foxe's eight-volume *Acts and Monuments*.

- **Autoillustrator** from **The Auto-illustrator** (970/330-1925) for the PC and Macintosh comes with a library of homiletic anecdotes for busy preachers, teachers, and speakers, plus it stores additional illustrations for easy retrieval.

- For PC users running Windows 3.1 or Windows 95, **Baker Bytes** (a division of Baker Book House, 616/676-9185, 800/877-2665) sells *Topical Analysis of the Bible*, *Evangelical Commentary on the Bible*, *Hymn and Scripture Selection*

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• **Bible Research Corporation** (817/468-0982, 888/868-9029) publishes the *Classical Theological Library* of 261 indexed books, by authors from Calvin to Arminius, in Adobe Acrobat format, on one CD-ROM (in Introductory, Pastor's, Communicator's, and Master's Library editions).

• **Christian Classics Foundation** (864/963-7855, 800/94-CD-ROM) sells about 25 commentaries on two CD-ROMs in the Logos Library System, bundled with the KJV and the Logos 2.0 software.

• **The Electronic Bible Society** (972/407-9673) sells classic Christian electronic texts such as The Ante-Nicene Fathers on a donation basis to anyone, but if you want the best integration, these texts are best purchased as part of your favorite Bible-study program.

• **Galaxie Software** (972/414-5322, 800/GALAXIE) sells the *Bibliotheca Sacra* on CD-ROM.

• **Logos Research Systems Inc.** (360/679-6575, 800/87-LOGOS) has published the *Logos Bible Atlas*, *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, and *Early Church Fathers* in Logos Library System format.

• **MANNA** (630/585-1114) is the developer of *Bible Maps 4.01* and *5.0* for Macintosh users. A PC version is scheduled for release in May 1998.

• **Oxford University Press** (212/726-6000, 800/334-4249) makes its *New Oxford Bible Maps* available to Windows and Macintosh users.

• **Ron Rhodes** has produced Bible dictionaries for FileMaker Pro and the most popular Macintosh word processors, which are available to download from the World Wide Web.

• Free on its Web site, **Theological Research Exchange Network** (800/334-8736) offers the TREN database of 6,800 theological theses, dissertations, and conference papers, which may then be ordered online. (Documents are available only in the form of paper or microfiche.)

• **Woodlawn Electronic Publishing** (215/657-9935) has published *Great Electronic Books for Christians* in the

Logos Library System format.

• **Word Publishing** (800/251-4000) has just released the *MacArthur Study Bible* on CD-ROM.

• **Zondervan Publishing** (800/727-3480, 800/727-8004) has published the *Expositor's Bible Commentary* on CD-ROM.

ADD-ONS/MODULES (LANGUAGE-RELATED)

• **Broadman & Holman** (800/251-3225) has produced *That's Easy for You to Say* on CD-ROM, a guide to the correct pronunciation of more than 7,000 Bible names and places.

• **Ecological Linguistics** (202/546-5862) has a catalog of fonts and WorldScript modules.

• **Galaxie Software** (972/414-5322, 800/GALAXIE) sells *Bible Script 3.0* (Windows fonts with a right-to-left typing module).

• **HeavenWord Inc.** (919/876-2036, 888/726-4715) has released *GreekMaster*.

• **Neal Walters** (809/721-1956) has developed *Hooked on Hebrew*.

• **Linguist's Software** (206/775-1130) sells foreign language PostScript fonts and WorldScript modules, plus Greek and Hebrew scriptures for Windows and Macintosh users.

• **Living Israeli Hebrew** (602/998-9588, 800/998-5698) has produced *Hebrew World: Modern & Biblical Hebrew*.

• **The Packard Humanities Institute** (650/948-0150) distributes *PHI 5.3 Bible manuscripts* on CD-ROM.

• **Parsons Technology** (319/395-7300, 800/223-6925) sells *Hebrew Tutor* and *Greek Tutor* on CD-ROM.

• **Syracuse Language Systems Inc.** (315/449-4500) sells *Triple Play Plus Hebrew* for learning the language.

• **Thesaurus Linguae Graecae** (714/824-7031) has published *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* on CD-ROM.

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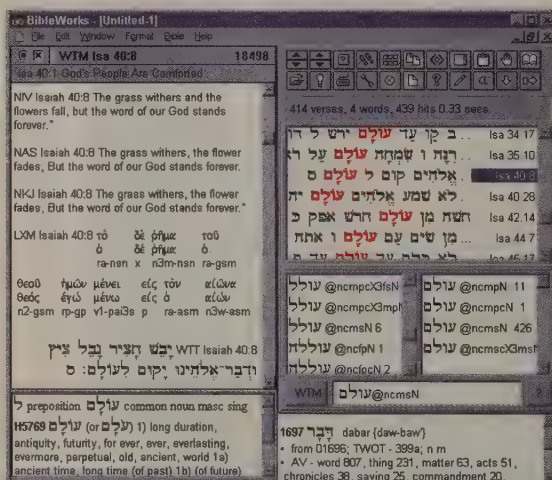
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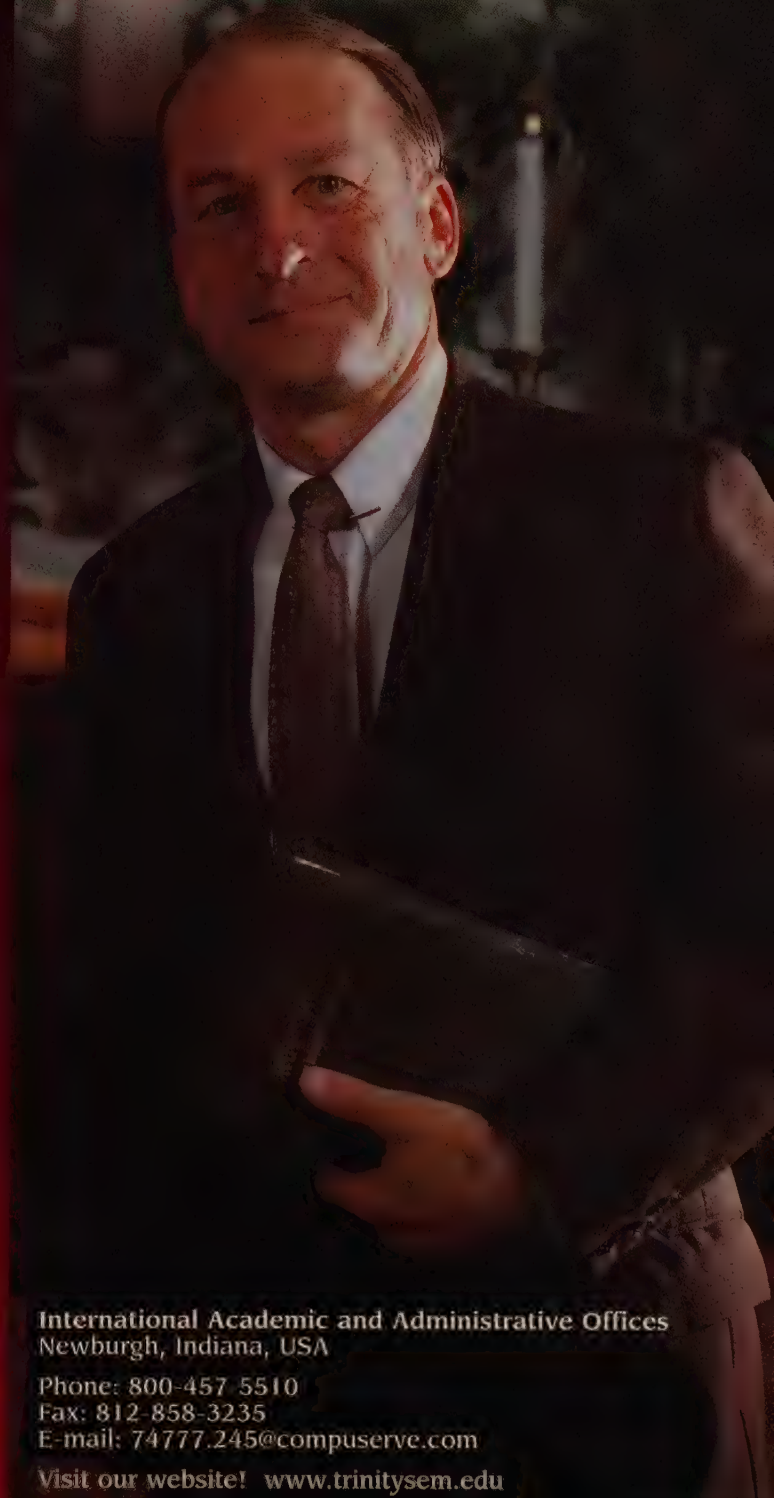
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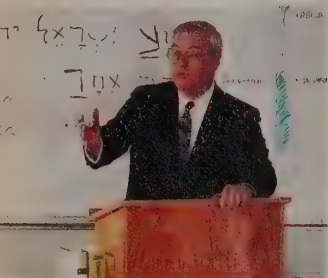
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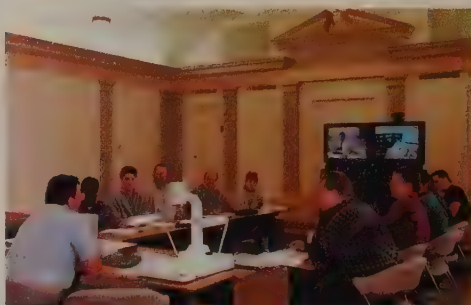
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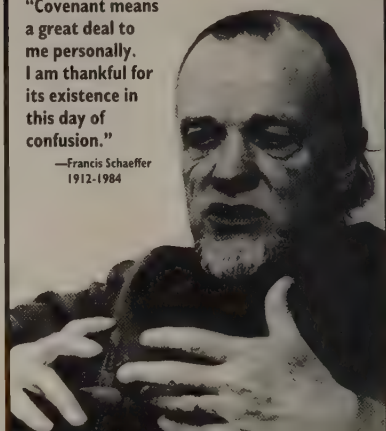


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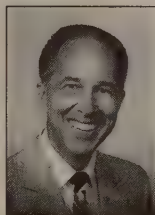
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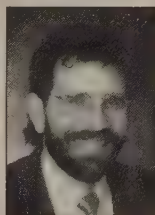
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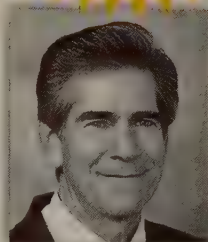
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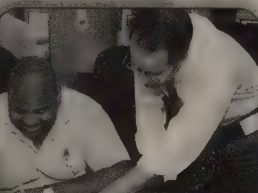


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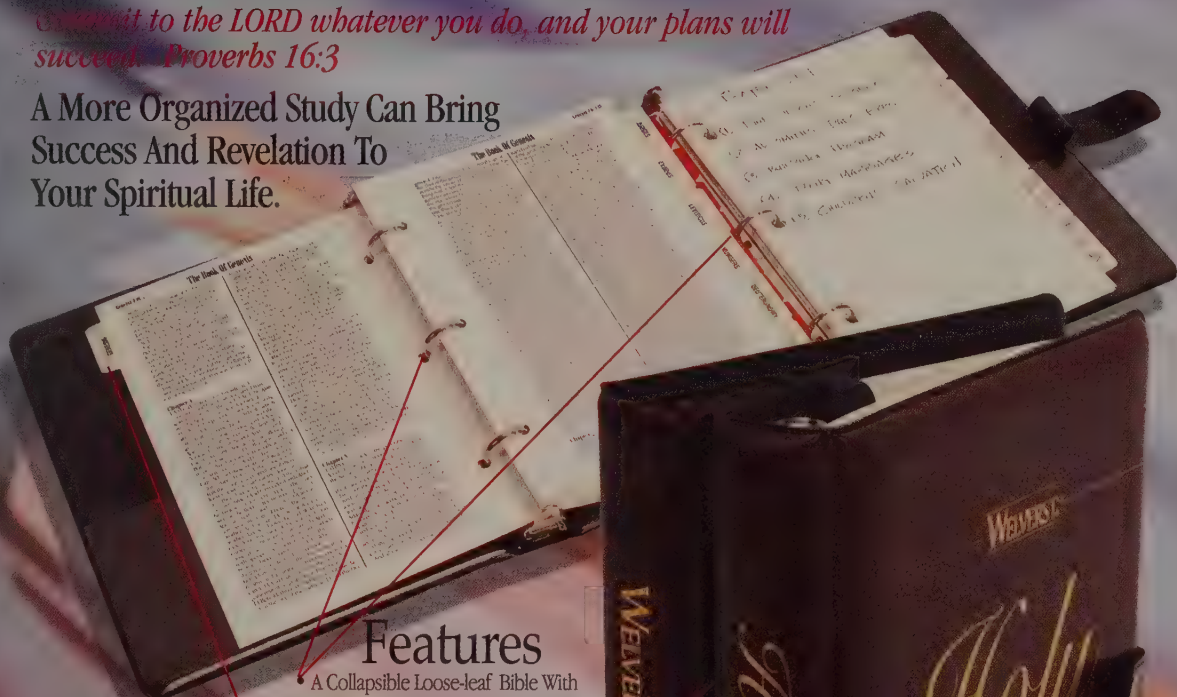
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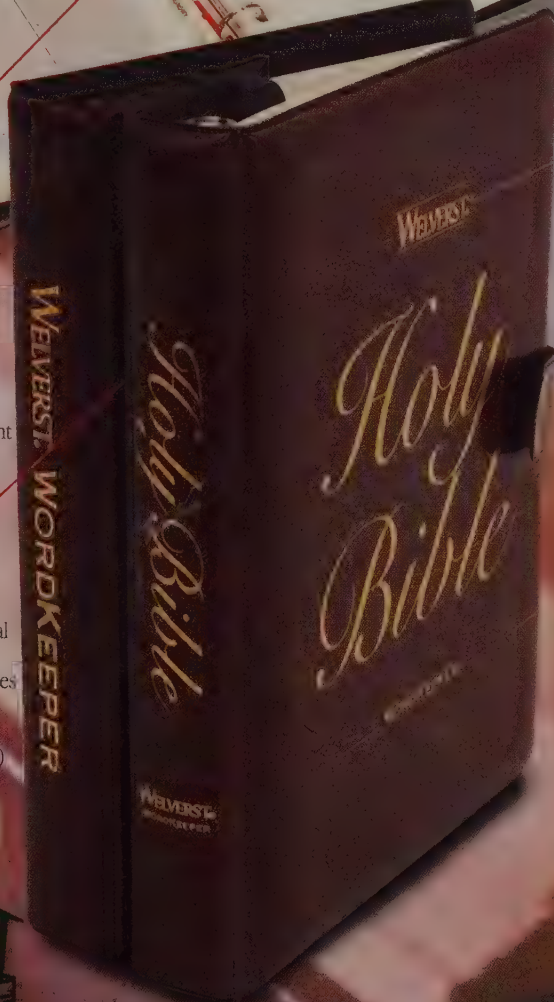
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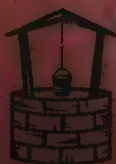


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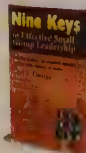
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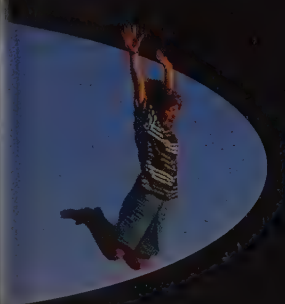
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LAUREN F. WINNER

Finding Power in SUBMISSION



Two feminist scholars write about women you'll recognize.

The evangelical women in Brenda E. Brasher's and R. Marie Griffith's recent books are not the cookie-cutter stereotypes you are acquainted with through the media, much recent scholarship, or the musings of Andrea Dworkin. They may instead be more like the women who sit next to you in church. For it is the goal of these books to challenge the flat cliché of evangelical women as participants in their own unadulterated oppression.

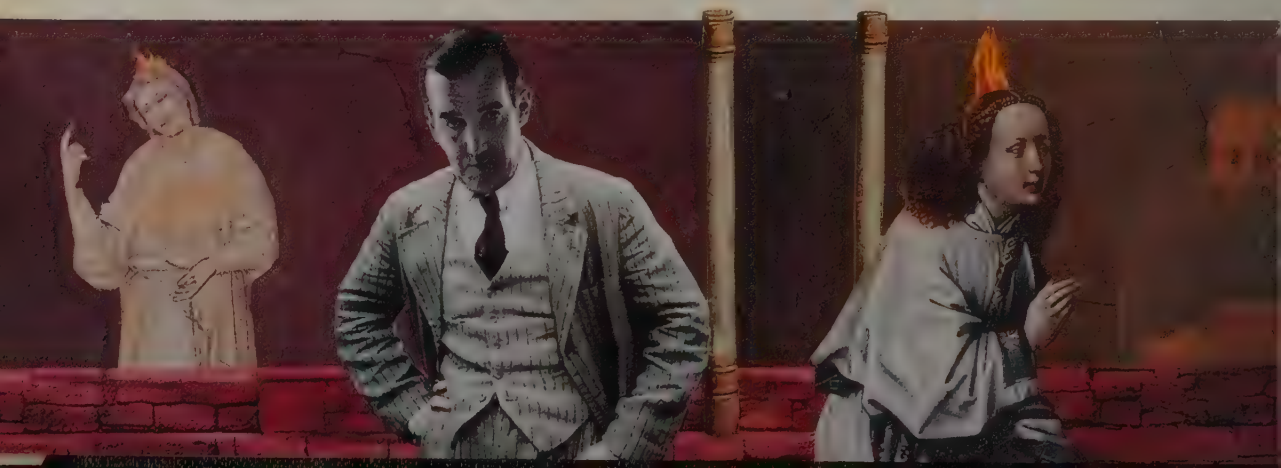
These new studies argue that, contrary to popular perception, evangelical women can, as Brasher puts it, "be powerful in a religious cosmos generally conceded to be organized around their disempowerment." Or, as the subtitle of Marie Griffith's book suggests, there is power in submission.

A colleague of mine recently complained that book reviews no longer do what they are supposed to do: tell you whether or not you should read the book. In an attempt to redress her grievance, I will be blunt. You should read Marie Griffith's book. If you teach a course on women's history or American religion, you should not only read *God's Daughters* but add it to your syllabus immediately. If you are a pastor, you should integrate Griffith's insights about prayer into your next sermon. And if you are stumped when the next occasion for gift giving rolls around, consider this book: It is one of those rare releases from an academic press that your sister or husband will enjoy reading in the bath or curling up with at night in bed.

In *God's Daughters*, Griffith examines the numerous ways in which members of the

Aglow fellowship—an interdenominational charismatic women's group—assert authority and exercise power even as they remain devoted to a religion that propounds a conservative ideology of gender. It is a superb exploration not only of evangelicalism and women but also of prayer, therapy, family, and dieting (yes, dieting—the dieting section was in fact one of my favorites).

In a number of ways, *God's Daughters* is a model of ethnography done right. It has become a requirement that, rather than try to achieve an impossible objectivity, ethnographers "situate" themselves, telling the reader up front what their own biases are and how these biases constrain the story they can tell. In the first few pages, Griffith honestly informs the reader (as she informed the Aglow women) of her more liberal Christian affiliations, and



she acknowledges that, as a committed feminist, her political and social views differ markedly from those of most of her subjects. She even considers the way her age—25 when she began research—might have affected her findings, given that the Aglow women she interviewed, on average twice her age, often interacted with Griffith in mother-daughter mode. Furthermore, in her introduction Griffith elegantly and painlessly limns the anthropological, literary, and political theory that has influenced her work, rendering accessible ideas that, in the hands of others, often appear abstruse and impenetrable.

Griffith also pulls off the rare feat of balancing ethnography with history. She places the Aglow movement in three different historical contexts: the development of Pentecostalism in the twentieth century, the therapeutic and recovery movement so pervasive in America today, and the changing understandings of women over the last hundred years. Furthermore, Griffith does not consider merely the Aglow women of the 1990s. Rather, she traces Aglow from its inception in 1967 to the present, showing that Aglow has changed over time in response to broader cultural shifts.

Although Aglow members are frequently critical of the culture of therapy in America, for example, Aglow has increasingly appropriated the language of the recovery movement: while through the 1970s Aglow women and Aglow publications presented anger as “a sin, pure and simple . . . by the mid-eighties . . . spirit-filled writers were beginning to interpret anger in increasingly therapeutic and sympathetic terms.”

Essential to Griffith's overall argument

is the changing understanding of submission among Aglow women. While the earliest Aglow members trotted out Colossians 3:18 and Ephesians 5:22 to encourage wives to submit utterly to their husbands, by 1995, Aglow International President Jane Hansen condemned the message as a distortion of the Bible and encouraged women and men to embrace instead the doctrine of mutual submission.

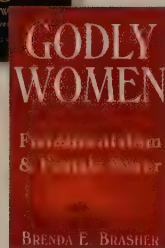
Aglow has also modified its rhetoric to accommodate the fact that most women now work outside of the home. A 1974 Aglow statement on hospitality said: “Because we, as women, are the homemakers, we have the blessing of opening our homes to God's people.” By 1985, the reference to “homemakers” had been dropped.

The only disappointment in *God's Daughters* is Griffith's somewhat anticlimactic concluding chapter. There she offers illuminating insights into both evangelical women's attitudes toward feminism and feminist women's attitudes toward evangelicalism. But she also spills a great deal of ink calling for “fresh ways to think about power and resistance . . . that would avoid the either/or perspective, by which practices are viewed as *either* opposing *or* conserving certain meanings and values, but rather understand them as doing both, upholding power arrangements even while exposing them to unexpected challenges.” Over 20 years ago, historians of American slavery pioneered exactly the type of analysis that Griffith calls for, and such an approach is now commonplace among feminist historians. Her vision of finding “a way of transposing this bifurcation, so deeply embedded in American thought, between resistance and subordination,” is not unique, but rather what Foucault and all the little



**God's Daughters:
Evangelical Women and the
Power of Submission**

By R. Marie Griffith
Univ. of California Press
275 pp.; \$24.95, hardcover



**Godly Women:
Fundamentalism
and Female Power**

By Brenda E. Brasher
Rutgers Univ. Press
217 pp.; \$48, cloth,
\$19, paper

Foucaults have seen as central to their mission for the better part of three decades. It is puzzling that Griffith ignores the rich historiographical precedents that have done no less than forge these “fresh ways” of thinking about power.

But this is merely a quibble with a magnificent book. Although Griffith may disagree with many of the religious and political commitments of her subjects, she never betrays any disdain for them. This is a rare trait in ethnographies, and it is always what separates the gold from the dross. Among studies of American Christians, only Randall Balmer's *Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory* and *Grant Us Courage* rival *God's Daughters* in this regard. Griffith transcends the differences between herself and the Aglow women to present a portrait of them that is both respectful and loving.

Rather than studying an all-women's parachurch organization, Brenda Brasher has written an ethnography of the women's ministries at two large, fundamentalist churches in Southern California (“fundamentalist,” incidentally, is her term, not mine, and I am

lement qui commencent
n les 2 des prophètes de la
jusqu'à la fin du monde
l'enfer. Lequel temps?



not convinced that she uses it appropriately). Like Griffith, Brasher argues that, contrary to what one might *prima facie* assume, women derive substantial power from their affiliation with evangelicalism.

Although glossed in the media and much scholarship as "anti-feminist" and "post-feminist," these women, Brasher finds, are ardently committed to many political issues that have been advanced by feminist groups, such as paid maternity leave, marital rape laws, equal pay for men and women in the workplace, and ending domestic violence. Furthermore, many women assume significant leadership roles in the women's ministries, and these leaders encourage other women to seize an active role in their families, telling women "that they could shape their husbands' actions and alter . . . familial behaviors."

The conclusion that evangelical women can carve out power in an oppressive atmosphere is all that Brasher's book and *God's Daughters* have in common. In contrast to Griffith's rendering of Aglow members, Brasher's description of the women she studied is often condescending. In her epilogue, for example, Brasher grapples with the question of why women enter evangelical religious communities in the first place, when there are so many other options that seem more welcoming to women. In answering this question, Brasher gives neither women nor evangelicalism very much credit: "With scant energy to expend evaluating alternatives, women are likely to favor religious alternatives that offer readily accessible, easily grasped answers."

It is not only the women that Brasher speaks about with condescension, but also the genuine power of belief. She seems uneasy discussing the transcendent—which is not the best trait in a scholar of American religion. After much hemming and hawing about the role of economics in dictating the religious choices of evangelicals, Brasher finally asserts: "I continue to think that the women and men involved in these congregations are motivated by something more than sheer economic functionality." This statement is neither terribly generous nor terribly bold. While scholars must acknowledge that religion is a complex problematic of socioeconomic, politics, geography, and so forth, but our descriptions of people's religiosity must be tempered by a respect for people's faith.

Although Brasher and Griffith are both forthright about their commitment to feminism, Brasher defines her primary mission as waging "the ongoing battle against sex-

ism." Griffith, on the other hand, sees her book as contributing to a different "central feminist goal: a heightened understanding of the 'other'—read 'nonfeminist'—women, who challenge particular assumptions and contradictions within feminist thought."

This subtle but critical difference in the authors' understandings of feminism lies at the heart of any comparison of the two books. Brasher takes a heavy-handed normative stand throughout *Godly Women* and ultimately concludes that "while I understand the pragmatic compromises many of the women I came to know during this study made, I do not believe they are the best long-term strategies for women." Griffith may well share this view, but if she does, she kept it out of the pages of *God's Daughters*.

Brasher's few references to herself as a "liberal Christian" and a feminist in no way compare to Griffith's earnest self-reflection, and rather than clarifying the theory that underlies her work, Brasher merely tosses around elusive jargon and self-consciously rephrases the straightforward "in more postmodernish terms." Brasher's historical lens is as narrow as Griffith's is wide. Beyond evincing familiarity with Betty DeBerg's and Margaret Lamberts Bendroth's important historical studies on evangelical women and gender, Brasher seems to have little interest in setting her ethnography in a wider historical framework—despite her claim to "take seriously the historical contexts" of her subjects.

Particularly disappointing in this regard is Brasher's failure to discuss Aimee Semple McPherson. One of the two churches that Brasher studied is a Foursquare Gospel church, and its current teachings about women and gender certainly differ from the days of McPherson's ministry. An examination of Foursquare Gospel churches' transition from their origins to their current commitment to "male headship" would have been fascinating. Brasher, however, only mentions McPherson once, in passing.

McPherson is alluded to a second time when Brasher quotes a female congregant as saying, "Some of the stances they've had in my tenure here are very ironic to me, seeing that the Foursquare church was started by a woman. They didn't want to have women in positions of leadership like a minichurch shepherd. I thought, well, that's pretty weird, pretty ironic." It is intriguing that this congregant drew upon the historical roots of her church to criticize the current "stances," but, as Brasher did not even comment on the congregant's reference to McPherson, she must not have

found this topic worthy of pursuit.

Finally, Brasher's purple prose rapidly becomes tiresome. In the first paragraph alone, we encounter such descriptions as "Elaine sweated as she spoke with incredible intensity" and "her phrases rolled out like a warm, wet cloud that appeared to pull most of the women around me into a cosmos of religious significance." The cloud simile is one of Brasher's favorites—we also learn that "As I conclude this story . . . the goals that inspired me to begin this research reconverge amid the lines of text like beckoning clouds."

Throughout, Brasher's diction is sloppy. One of an increasing number of writers who delight in misusing the word "paradox," she informs us that "the participation of contemporary women in North American conservative Protestant congregations presents a painful paradox to those committed to egalitarian relations between the sexes." Oh? In fact, there is no paradox there, painful or otherwise: said participation may present Brasher and fellow travelers with a quandary, or a challenge; evangelical women may be for some a source of confusion, frustration, even anger; but they are not, in this regard, a paradox.

Evangelicals owe Brenda Brasher and Marie Griffith a debt of thanks for amending the pervasive stereotype of evangelical women and showing, to borrow the title of Judith Stacey and Susan Elizabeth Gerard's article on feminism and evangelicalism, that evangelical women are not doormats. But evangelical readers ought not come away from *God's Daughters* and *Godly Women* thinking that, because many women have asserted power and authority within the confines of male headship, a broader critique of the gender roles in evangelicalism is to be dismissed. Although the women in these books are at ease with the precarious balance they have struck between submission and subversion, there are evangelical women and men for whom such a *modus vivendi* is insufficient. These are the evangelicals, represented in Brasher's and Griffith's studies no more than on the nightly news, who share an unwavering commitment to egalitarianism, taking their cues less from Patricia Ireland than from the radical ethics of Jesus Christ, who taught, as Paul reminds us in Galatians 3:28, "There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." C1

Lauren F. Winner is Kellett Scholar at Clare College, University of Cambridge.

A PRO-WOMAN POPE



Why radical feminists can't hear the good words

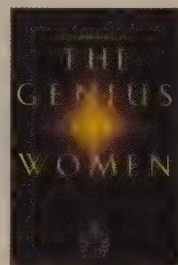
John Paul II has for women.

Pope John Paul II welcomed 1995, the year of the Fourth United Nations Conference on Women, as an occasion for Catholics to focus with special care upon the concerns, needs, rights, and mission of women throughout the world. Beginning with his World Day Message of Peace, delivered on January 1, the pope developed his thoughts about women in a series of Angelus reflections, culminating in his Letter to Women addressed to the women of the world on June 29. *Pope John Paul II on The Genius of Women* brings together excerpts from these writings to present a comprehensive picture of contemporary Catholic understanding of women's unique "genius."

Primarily, the pope intends

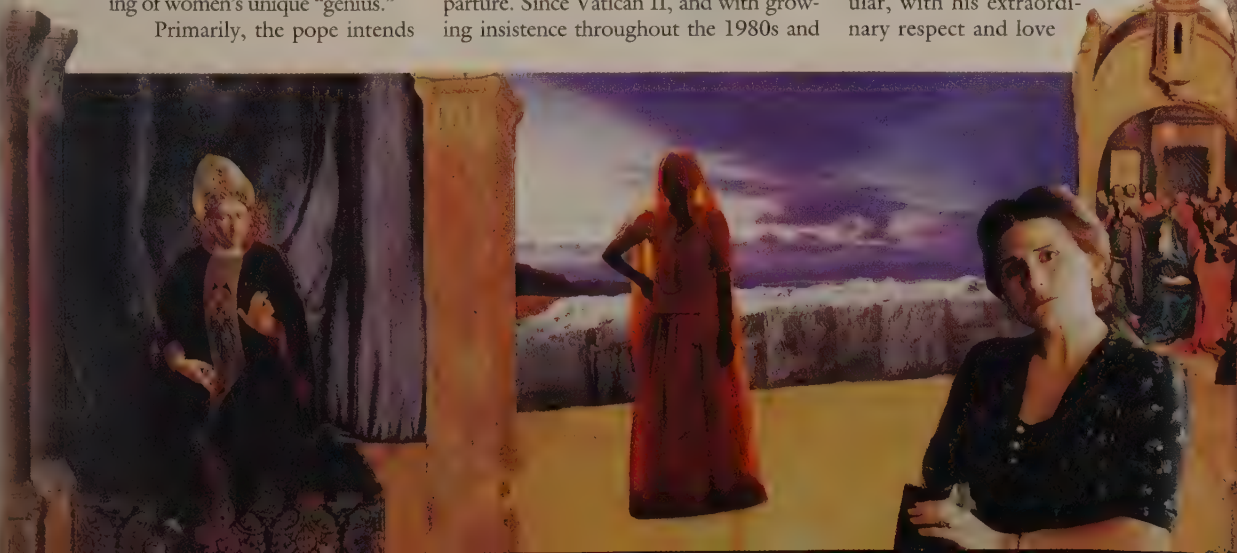
to encourage women to reflect upon their condition and vocation, but he also intends to challenge not merely radical feminists, who seek to abolish all differences between women and men, but those religious conservatives who seek to perpetuate women's subordination to and dependence upon men. Doubtless the then-impending Beijing Conference led him to shape many of his thoughts as a response to feminism, but no attentive reader will miss his determination to overcome all vestiges of traditional misogyny, including Christian.

John Paul II's writings on women reflect a new tendency in Catholic thought, but they do not constitute a radical departure. Since Vatican II, and with growing insistence throughout the 1980s and



**Pope John Paul II on
The Genius of Women**
*U.S. Catholic Conference
Publishing Services*
84 pp.; \$5.95, paper

1990s, he and his immediate predecessors have been elaborating an understanding of women that directly engages the social, economic, and sexual upheavals of recent decades. John Paul II in particular, with his extraordinary respect and love



for the dignity of each person, has regularly returned to the compelling importance of women's vocation for the health and peace of specific societies and the world. Even the skeptical will find it difficult to read these pages without acknowledging, however grudgingly, that their author has a deep respect for and sense of pastoral responsibility to women whom the world too often demeans and abuses.

Radical feminists, however, intransigently refuse even to concede the pope's good intentions. They regularly dismiss him with anger and contempt, protesting everything from his opposition to abortion to his devotion to the Virgin Mary. Other women and men, including many Christians, too readily assume that the Catholic church's opposition to abortion and defense of the male priesthood necessarily brand it as fundamentally hostile to women.

John Paul II's words do not invite this hostility. In his welcome to Gertrude Mongella, secretary general of the Beijing Conference, he claims that there can be no "honest and permanent" solutions to the issues and problems that affect women if they are not "based on the recognition of the inherent, inalienable dignity of women, and the importance of women's presence and participation in all aspects of social life." Indeed, recognition "of the dignity of every human being," he insists, "is the foundation and support of the concept of *universal human rights*."

In calling for women's equal opportunities in the world of work, the pope specifically underscores the imperative of combating all forms of discrimination against women, writing, "As far as personal rights are concerned, there is an urgent need to achieve real equality in every area: equal pay for equal work, protection for working mothers, fairness in career advancements, equality of spouses with regard to family rights and the recognition of everything that is part of the rights and duties of citizens in a democratic state." And, with respect to political life and leadership, including "the highest levels of representation, national and international," he holds that "women are showing that they can make as skilled a contribution as men."

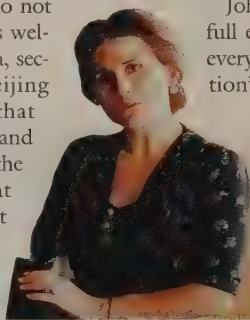
Throughout these writings, the pope returns to the special "genius" of women for peace, which the world needs today more than ever. Yet authentic peace can

never flourish unless "the dignity of the human person is promoted at every level of society and every individual is given the chance to live in accordance with this dignity." Even today, in many parts of the world, women are denied acknowledgment of and respect and appreciation for "their own special dignity," and, in the measure that they are, society suffers. John Paul II deplores the "abominable custom" that persists in some places of "discriminating, from the earliest years, between boys and girls," and he insists that the tendency to demean girls or regard them as inferior will inevitably compromise their healthy development. As adults, women "have a full right to become actively involved in all areas of public life, and this right must be affirmed and guaranteed, also, where necessary, through appropriate legislation."

John Paul II views respect for "the full equality of man and woman in every walk of life" as "one of civilization's great achievements." But he

to the full—in the world as well as in the family. Many also retain a sense of specific ways in which they differ from men. The significance of those differences may have vastly diminished, but the core remains, notably in their most intimate relations with others. The pope's reflections upon women—their vocations, their rights, their needs—thus intervene directly in the contemporary debates about women, feminism, and the postmodern world.

These statements and others like them do not obviously label the pope as an enemy of women's interests, and some women may well understand them as "feminist" in the sense of advocacy for women. Yet radical feminists, with Catholic feminists in the lead, take them as incontrovertible proof of the pope's determination to condemn women to the subordination from which feminists are trying to rescue them. According to these critics, the pope betrays his true intentions by his frequent evocation of women's special vocation as wives and mothers and by



The essential complementarity of the sexes persisted after the Fall, but its fulfillment has suffered innumerable setbacks.

attributes the inherent equality of man and woman to God's divine plan, asserted from the beginning of the biblical narrative of Creation. Equally with man, woman bears the imprint of the image of God. Before the Fall, man acknowledged the equality of woman, whom he welcomed with wonder and joy as "bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh" (Gen. 2:23). Sin, however, disrupted God's plan for the full and equal communion between the equally independent beings of woman and man. The essential complementarity of the sexes persisted after the Fall, but its fulfillment has suffered innumerable setbacks, frequently manifest in the denigration of women or the willful crippling of their talents.

Some, like myself, see this simultaneous affirmation of woman and man's complementarity and their equality as a compelling expression of the complex reality of contemporary women's lives and sense of self. Women today appropriately insist upon their equality to men in most realms, and they passionately defend their right to develop and exercise their talents

his reverence for the Virgin Mary. Such models of womanhood, they angrily charge, unmistakably concede that women may never hope to equal men and do not deserve support for their attempts to do so. As a rule, feminists, including those who sometimes insist upon the ways in which women differ from men, remain fiercely attached to the secular ideal of radical individualism: Women, like men, should be free for the unencumbered pursuit of any pleasure, occupation, or worldly success. And, more often than not, they argue that this freedom must begin with the freedom from the bearing and rearing of children as well as from the domination of men.

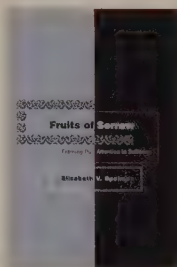
Feminists rage at the pope's claims that "woman's singular relationship with human life derives from her vocation to motherhood," that "the maternal mission is also the basis of a particular responsibility," or that "the woman is called to offer the best of herself to the baby growing within her" since "it is precisely by making herself 'gift' that she comes to know herself better and is fulfilled in her femininity." Many deplore his insistence that

women's employment must always respect the "fundamental duty" of the "most delicate tasks of motherhood." Most do not like the notion that women's rights include any binding duties at all. Rejecting the pope's vision of the responsibilities that accompany women's rights, feminists promote an unrestricted freedom that disconcertingly resembles equal membership in what he has called "the culture of death."

The crux of the difference between the radical feminists and the pope lies in their respective and antagonistic understandings of women's nature and mission. Feminists dismiss injunctions to service, binding obligation, and loving self-sacrifice as so many hypocritical pieties designed to perpetuate women's subordination to men. The pope, in contrast, views them as fundamental Christian precepts that require the compliance of men as well as women. Complication arises primarily because he believes that those precepts apply differently to women and men: no less compellingly to one sex than the other, but differently. Feminists see that acknowledgment of difference as a capitulation to received prejudice. And only the complacent or the unreflective can deny that throughout the centuries the evocation of difference has frequently served to justify women's subordination and to restrict their freedom. Some might find a trace of support for this view in the pope's appeal to Catholic universities and centers of higher education "to ensure that in the preparation of the future leaders of society they acquire a special sensitivity to the concerns of young women." And, occasionally, words like these do suggest that he may not view women as fit for full participation in the corridors of power and influence—that he expects few, if any, women to figure among society's future leaders.

The experience of recent years has blindingly exposed the agonizing difficulty of attempts to combine responsibility to a family, especially children, with a professional fast track, or simply with full-time employment. The pope is effectively arguing that wives and mothers have a moral obligation to put their family first. Feminists argue that women have no greater obligation to do so than men. Unfortunately, when parents struggle over who should be freer to do less, the children get less and less, with ominous consequences for the human and moral fabric of society as a whole. Normally, few would fault the pope's quiet insistence that the abundance of love and peace in

RECOMMENDED READING



David Heim, managing editor of the *Christian Century*.

"Weep with those who weep," enjoins Saint Paul. Or, as we might put it these days: Show solidarity with those who suffer.

But recognizing others' suffering is not always easy. As Elizabeth V. Spelman shows in **Fruits of Sorrow: Framing Our Attention to Suffering** (Beacon Press, 1997, 206 pp.; \$24, hardcover), in acknowledging others' suffering we often find ways to appropriate their suffering to

serve our own interests. A crass example is the infamous advertisement for Benetton clothes that featured a multicultural array of impoverished children. Benetton was paying attention to suffering in order to suggest that consumers could feel good about purchasing items from such a compassionate company.

A more subtle case of appropriation is the way some historians have talked of slavery in the United States as "the American tragedy"—the great flaw in America's otherwise noble experiment in freedom. The protagonist in this tragedy, Spelman observes, is America, not the slaves. Even as we acknowledge the limits of the Founding Fathers, we assert that they are the really important historical actors; it's their struggle, not that of the slaves, that attracts our interest.

In wondering whose suffering merits our attention and why (the evening news gives one kind of answer to that question), Spelman is interested not in heaping up guilt but in having us face moral facts. In a graceful, charitable style, she examines moral and emotional evasions, including, for example, the evasions of feminists who extol a female "ethic of care" over a male ethic of moral rules but ignore the fact that some kinds of people receive more of this care than others.

The moral rhetoric of our time would accord the voices of victims and sufferers a decisive weight. After reading Spelman, it's much harder to be complacent in absorbing or employing that rhetoric. CT

the world ultimately depends upon the personal education each child receives in the family. Such education, however, depends upon service—the service of parents, frequently mothers, to children—and upon a willingness to forgo or postpone acquisition of the signs of status most valued by the world.

Feminists are not alone in protesting the assumption that women are naturally called to sacrifice ambitions that men are free to fulfill. Many women wonder why they should be called to a service that men and many other women disdain. The pope's recurring demand that the world accommodate women's needs as wives, mothers, and workers, like his insistence upon women's right to equal dignity and opportunity, testifies to his understanding of the difficulties and the pain. But he insists that to surmount these conflicts women must cultivate the peace of heart that frees them to be teachers of peace: "Inner peace comes from knowing that one is loved by God

and from the desire to respond to his love."

For Christians, this injunction applies as much to men as to women, but Christian teaching has traditionally held that it applies to them differently. In these writings, John Paul II seeks to reaffirm the difference while he combats the oppressive and exploitative uses to which it has been put. In a corrupt world, his admirable vision remains elusive and formidably difficult to realize. Women will understandably continue to wonder how much they can afford to sacrifice without the assurance of support for themselves and their children. These legitimate worries admit no easy answers, but, in facing the risks, we might profitably reflect upon the pope's essential message: The rising tide of the culture of death will not be stayed until individuals, one by one, begin to repudiate its claims upon their souls. CT

Elizabeth Fox-Genovese teaches history, literature, and women's studies at Emory University.

ROBERT H. GUNDRY

RECONSTRUCTING JESUS



*The rewards of N. T. Wright's historical recovery of Jesus are great—
but he raises more questions than he answers.*

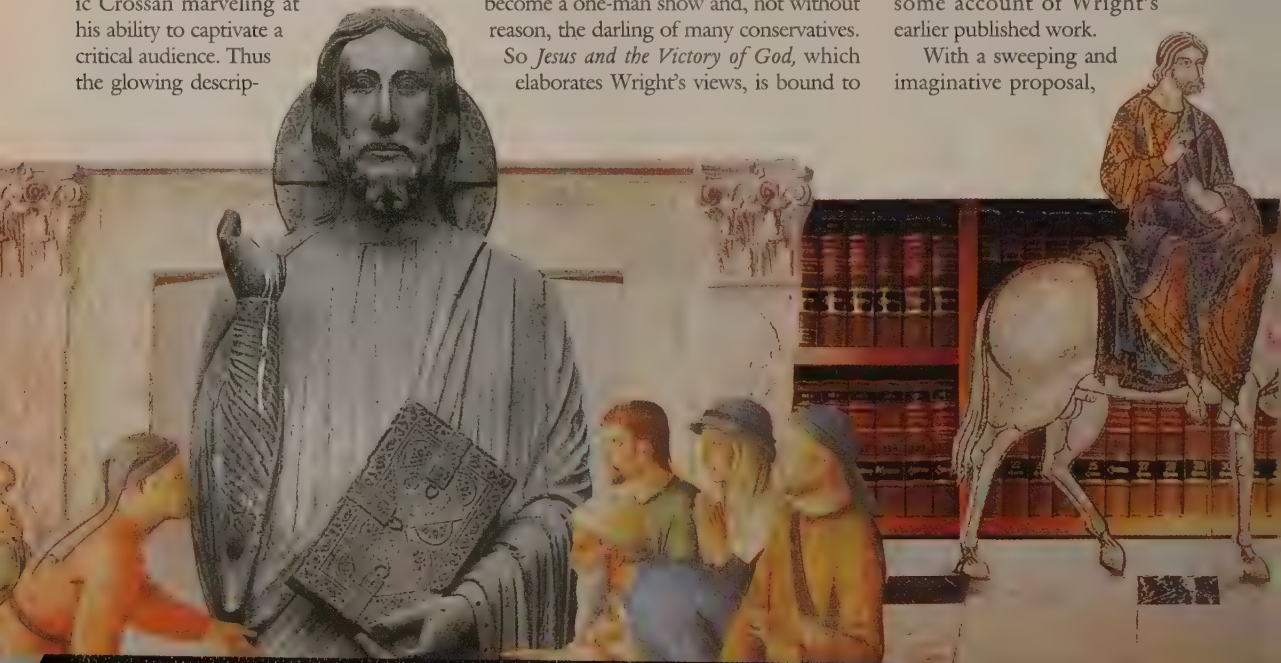
In the past several years, New Testament scholar Tom Wright has stepped forward as the most scintillating champion of belief that the canonical Gospels, at least the first three of them, give us a reliable record of what Jesus of Nazareth actually said and did. A modern-day Saint George, Wright slays the dragon of skepticism with a flair that leaves even an antagonist like John Dominic Crossan marveling at his ability to captivate a critical audience. Thus the glowing descrip-

tion of Wright in an advertisement for his far-flung seminars: "Internationally acclaimed as today's most exciting communicator and most inspiring interpreter of the New Testament" as well as "most popular lecturer in the University of Oxford's Faculty of Theology." No longer lecturing in Oxford, Wright jets here, there, and everywhere from the deanery at Lichfield Cathedral to make his case before scholarly elites and popular audiences alike. He has become a one-man show and, not without reason, the darling of many conservatives. So *Jesus and the Victory of God*, which elaborates Wright's views, is bound to

attract a lot of attention.

The book makes up volume 2 in a series titled *Christian Origins and the Question of God*, ambitiously projected to run to five volumes. Volume 1, *The New Testament and the People of God*, occupied itself mainly with background and method. Later volumes will take up the Gospel of John through the Book of Revelation—above all, the letters of Paul. In addition to the volume under review, I will take some account of Wright's earlier published work.

With a sweeping and imaginative proposal,



Jesus and the Victory of God treats the figure of Jesus as portrayed in the synoptic Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Arguably, nevertheless, and despite some self-description to the contrary, the treatment does not represent biblical theology in a strict sense. For Wright is not interested in the synoptic portrayals of Jesus for their own sake so much as for what they can tell us about the Jesus of history who stands behind them. As already implied, Wright sees little difference between those portrayals and the historical Jesus, so that for the most part biblical theology and history merge into each other. But this merger prompts, in turn, another merger, that of the plural Jesuses of Matthew, Mark, and Luke into one synoptic Jesus. Thus the distinctive lineaments of the various portrayals are blurred almost to the vanishing point; Wright's main interest remains historical rather than biblical, and historicity is insulated against the doubts that differences between the Synoptics often raise (to say nothing about greater differences between these Gospels and the Gospel of John).

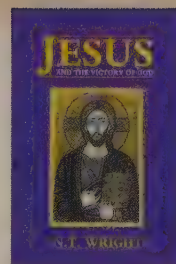
To some, the insulation will seem facile insofar as the neglected differences fall into patterns, suggesting that other-than-historical concerns led the evangelists to write unhistorically more often than Wright concedes. Repeatedly, for instance, he explains differences between parallel sayings of Jesus as due to Jesus' own variations, spoken on more than one occasion, and neglects the significant fact that, throughout, the sayings in Matthew tend toward rigorism, those in Luke toward humaneness, and so on.

Given his main interest, though, Wright starts appropriately with the nineteenth-century quest of the historical Jesus

and moves next to the new quest inaugurated in 1953 by Ernst Käsemann and revived more recently by the Jesus Seminar. Wright's skewering of that seminar and its construction of a nonapocalyptic, almost non-Jewish Jesus occupies considerable space and shows Wright at his jousting best. Lastly, he associates himself with the third quest, represented also by E. P. Sanders and others who, on the whole, value synoptic historicity higher than does the Jesus Seminar and see the historical Jesus as solidly Jewish in outlook. The rest of Wright's book is devoted to spelling out the details of that outlook. What are they?

They are, Wright proposes, that, whereas the Jews regarded themselves as still living in exile because of Roman domination, Jesus announced that the divinely promised and long-awaited restoration was under way. (So he appeared less a teacher of wisdom than a prophet.) According to him, moreover, the restoration was taking place in and through his ministry. How so, given that he was not throwing off the Roman yoke?

Well, Jesus had redefined the problem of Jewish exile and its solution. The problem lay, not in Roman domination, but in the Jews' satanically inspired zeal to free themselves from it by armed revolution instead of carrying out their divinely appointed task of leading Gentiles to worship the one true God. The solution lay in repentance from that nationalistic sin and in belief in Jesus as the focal point of a renewed people of God that included



Jesus and the Victory of God

By N. T. Wright

Fortress

741 pp., \$65, hardback;

\$39, paperback

Jewish outcasts and Gentiles. As such a focal point, Jesus spoke and acted messianically as well as prophetically, though neither for him nor for the Jews did messiahship entail deity.

To renew God's people more inclusively, Jesus also redefined the Torah along lines of mercy and forgiveness as opposed to Israelite ancestry, food laws, and such like. The temple he redefined in terms of himself and his followers. And so it became unnecessary to obtain forgiveness through offering a sacrifice at the temple in Jerusalem, to observe Mosaic restrictions on diet, or to observe other practices demarcating Jews from Gentiles.

No wonder that the leaders—Torah-centered Pharisees and temple-centered chief priests alike—opposed Jesus. He was dismantling the main symbols of Jewish national identity! It did not take omniscience for him to see the opposition mounting; so he made his last journey to Jerusalem under the conviction that there he would be put to death and



thus suffer the great tribulation that was expected to befall Israel just before God ushered in his kingdom.

Then Jesus did something that galvanized his opponents, especially the chief priests. He physically assaulted the sacrificial system of worship that took place in the temple. The assault was no mere attempt at reformation. No, it was an acted-out prophecy of judgment, of coming destruction. And reports came that Jesus had predicted such destruction verbally, too.

In fact, he had. Earlier warnings of coming wrath had dealt, not with the eternal judgment of individual sinners hereafter, but with God's using the Romans to judge the Jewish nation here and now for their insurrectionism. More recently and specifically, Jesus had cleared the ground for a redefined temple by predicting that the old, corrupt one would be destroyed within a generation. Furthermore, this destruction would make obvious that he and the renewed people of God now constituted the true temple, that God had returned to it, and that for his renewed people, the exile, the real one, had ended.

What to do with Jesus? Get rid of him, naturally, and use the Romans to do so. His constant talk of God's kingdom and his own kingly deeds and words could be misrepresented as insurrectionary. The Romans crucified Jesus as King of the Jews, then. Only it was not so easy to get rid of him. He rose from the dead. That event, too, Wright treats as historical, not as fictional or eschatologically excluded from critical investigation.

Finally, Jesus came again at the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in A.D. 70. Not in the way a traditional view of the Second Coming has it, of course. All that language about the sun's darkening, the moon's turning to blood, the stars' falling, and the Son of Man's coming in clouds derives from the Old Testament, where it is used metaphorically, not to describe an end to the space-time universe, but to invest human events with theological significance.

Thus, talk of celestial disasters painted the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in colors of divine judgment, and seeing the Son of Man coming in clouds meant a recognition that the destruction both demonstrated Jesus' having already ascended to God's right hand, as distinct from descending to earth in the future, and vindicated God's renewed people still

living on earth. So Jesus did not make a chronological mistake when he said that everything would happen before the contemporary generation passed away. Everything did happen, right on schedule. For the events of A.D. 70—the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple—were all that Jesus was predicting, and they took place within a generation of his prediction. Furthermore, those events marked the victory of God over those who had engineered the death of his son Jesus (hence the title of Wright's book).

There is much to learn from this reconstruction of the historical Jesus, and we may laud Wright for some sterling contributions: his calling attention to the neglected motif of exile and return; his maintaining Jesus' Jewishness; his defending Jesus' messianic self-consciousness (though self-consciousness of a uniquely divine sonship gets shortchanged); his resisting the separation of faith from history; his enlarging the historical base of our knowledge concerning Jesus; and his sharpening our tools of historiography, especially his developing a criterion of double similarity-cum-double dissimilarity: what is credible in first-century Judaism and as a starting point for Christianity, but sufficiently unlike both to be a mere reflection, is likely historical.

But there is also much to question. Most of it has to do with the possibility that Wright presses his thesis too far, makes it all-encompassing when, in fact, it validly covers only one aspect of Jesus' ministry. In other words, can all the synoptic and related texts tolerate the controlling story of reinterpreted exile and restoration that Wright places on them? For example, can the prodigal son, who wanted distance and wasted his substance in riotous living, represent Israel, who did not want to go into exile and had no substance to waste there? Or can the sower's sowing of good seed stand for God's causing true Israel to return from exile, even though Jesus describes as good, not any seed, but soil?

Why are Jesus' sheep scattered when he is struck? Is not the striking of the shepherd supposed to effect the opposite, their being gathered from exile? How is it that the elect are not gathered till after the great tribulation—that is, till after the Jewish War of A.D. 66–74, in Wright's view—if Jesus was already gathering them from their exile 40 years earlier? How is it

that Paul put "our gathering together to him" not till a future "coming of our Lord Jesus Christ"? How is it that James and Peter addressed the recipients of their epistles as exiles in the Diaspora rather than as returnees from it?

According to Wright, Jesus thought that in his Passion he would suffer the great tribulation vicariously and thereby enable his followers living in Judea to escape the coming Roman slaughter, as they later did by fleeing Jerusalem before its destruction. Is not this restriction of the benefits of his suffering to Judean disciples too severe? Does not his expanding to "all" the address of his command, "Watch," imply a larger group? The destruction benefited disciples outside Judea by putting a stop to persecution emanating from there, yet this benefit did not derive from Jesus' suffering but from that of unbelieving Jews; and the benefit was erased by a shift to Roman persecution.

If Jesus he would suffer the great tribulation for his disciples, why did he put it after the abomination of desolation and link it with their later experience rather than with his own immediate experience? And how is it that he called on them to take up their crosses and follow him? Of what did their restoration from exile consist if they were not only going to continue living under Roman domination but also endure persecution for Jesus' sake? Does not answering that their restoration consisted in deliverance from the sin of insurrectionism spiritualize the restoration in a way analogous to the doctrine of "abstract atonement" on which Wright pours scorn? Does not most of Jesus' pacifistic teaching have to do with nonretaliation against Jewish persecutors rather than with nonrebellion against Roman overlords?

Does it not turn scriptural emphasis upside down to interpret the plural "sins" that people repentantly confessed as primarily the singular sin of nationalistic insurrectionism, only secondarily of individuals' sinning in various ways that Jesus discusses at length in his moral teaching? And has not Wright's fixation on redefined exile and restoration likewise led him to ignore and even deny Pharisaic legalism as an object of Jesus' critique?

If Jesus' charge that the temple had become "a den of robbers" meant that it had become "a den of revolutionaries," why did Jesus drive out the buyers and sellers of sacrificial animals and birds? In what way did their activity represent insurrectionism? And if Jesus meant to do away with the temple and its sacrificial



worship, why did he tell a cleansed leper to go show himself to the priest and offer the things commanded by Moses? Why did Jesus say to offer your gift at the altar after reconciliation with your brother? Why did Jesus clear the outer court of the temple to enable Gentiles to pray there?

Why should we regard the mountain being cast into the sea as Mount Zion, where the temple was located, when that mountain has not been mentioned in the context, when the Mount of Olives has been mentioned recently, when "this mountain" refers more naturally to the Mount of Olives, right where Jesus and his disciples were located, than to Mount Zion in the distance, and when he hardly meant that the destruction of the temple would happen because some disciple of his was actually going to tell Mount Zion to be thrown into the sea?

If in speaking of judgment to come Jesus did not refer to the last judgment but to the destruction in A.D. 70, what are we to make of the Ninevites' and queen of the south's being raised "in the judgment with the men of this generation"? Did he think the Ninevites and queen would rise from the dead at the destruction? And in what sense did the destruction fulfil the judgment of "all the nations," a judgment issuing in "eternal life" for "the sheep" and "eternal punishment" for "the goats," not in temporal survival and death, as in A.D. 70? Did the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple really exhaust Jesus' warnings of judgment?

Does the accusation that Jesus said he would destroy the temple and in three days build another one form "the rock of history" on which, "ironically enough," we may stand? Is not the irony rather that Wright takes as rock solid a testimony whose wording differs seriously from passage to passage and whose description as false he freely admits? Solid but slippery? How can the house built on the rock be "a clear allusion to the temple," that is, "the true temple" built by Jesus, when the wise man who builds that house is a person who "hears and does" Jesus' words, not Jesus himself?

Can it be that no first-century Jew would take Daniel 7:13 as the Son of Man's descent from heaven? What of John 3:13, "And no one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man"? Does not Wright's way of saving Jesus from making a mistake about the occurrence of "all these things" within a generation come at the price of subverting the natu-

RECOMMENDED READING



Frederica Mathewes-Green, National Public Radio commentator and author of Facing East: A Pilgrim's Journey into the Mysteries of Orthodoxy (Harper-SanFrancisco)

I'm fed up. Are you fed up? Let's secede.

There are times when that looks like a pretty good last-ditch strategy. Novelist Walker Percy suggested that Christians and defenders of tattered morality would eventually gather in the fictitious town of Lost Cove, Tennessee, and leave the rest of the world to continue its handbasket journey. In *The Revolt* (Word, 1996, 425 pp.; \$12.99, paper), first-time novelist Susan Wise Bauer has relocated that encampment to the state of Virginia—or rather the Commonwealth of Virginia, which flies the brand-new flag of the Reformed American States.

In this lively political thriller, Bauer has assembled a cast of characters who actually move the plot by force of their character: psychologically complex figures make decisions, and make mistakes, that make things happen. It is a refreshing change from the puppet-fiction that dominates this genre—indeed, from most modern fiction.

Another quality that sets *The Revolt* apart from most of its classmates is that it never loses touch with believable reality—in part because Bauer has done an extraordinary amount of nuts-and-bolts research. The plotlines include a love story, paramilitary plotting, panicky White House strategy sessions, and behind-enemy-lines detective work at risk of death. There is something for everyone in this novel, and it is all refreshingly well done.

Give *The Revolt* to your favorite Clancy or Grisham fan. It's just the thing to educate a palate. **CT**

al meaning of Jesus' other eschatological pronouncements?

If Paul agreed with Jesus by referring the Day of the Lord to the destruction of Jerusalem rather than to the end, as Wright avers, how is it that Paul made that day an object of watchfulness and source of comfort for Christians living far off in Greece, and described the day as one in which the Lord himself will descend from heaven, the dead in Christ will rise, and living Christians will be caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air? How can Wright allow that Paul was describing Jesus' return to earth yet affirm that Paul thought of the Day of the Lord as entailing intermediate destruction rather than final return?

Wright also avers that later Christians invented the doctrine of Jesus' return because they could not conceive that he was resurrected if not to join those who will yet be resurrected to populate the coming new earth. But where is the evidence for any puzzling over the problem

of Jesus' absence from the new earth—tell someone hit on the solution of a return? For that matter, why could not Jesus himself have followed the line of reasoning that Wright ascribes to later Christians?

Maybe Wright can answer these and similar questions. It is a compliment to him that his writing provokes them; but because the questions are serious, they need not only answers, but convincing ones. Otherwise, readers who are understandably eager to celebrate Wright's demolition of the Jesus Seminar and its anemic Jesus might think twice before accepting the Jesus that Wright has reconstructed as an alternative. **CT**

Robert H. Gundry is Kathleen Smith Professor of Religious Studies at Westmont College in Santa Barbara, California. He is the author of commentaries on Matthew and Mark and other scholarly works. His most recent book, written for a lay audience, is First the Antichrist: Why Christ Won't Come Before the Antichrist Does (Baker Book House).

How Evangelicals WON THE SOUTH



And what they lost in the process.

Evangelical Christianity seems as natural to Southern culture as grits, stock-car racing, and tobacco farming. But in this sweeping reinterpretation of the origins and growth of evangelical religion in the land of cotton, University of Delaware historian Christine Heyrman persuasively argues that things have not always been that way. Indeed, evangelicalism proved a latecomer to Southern life, not gaining a firm foothold until nearly the middle third of the nineteenth century.

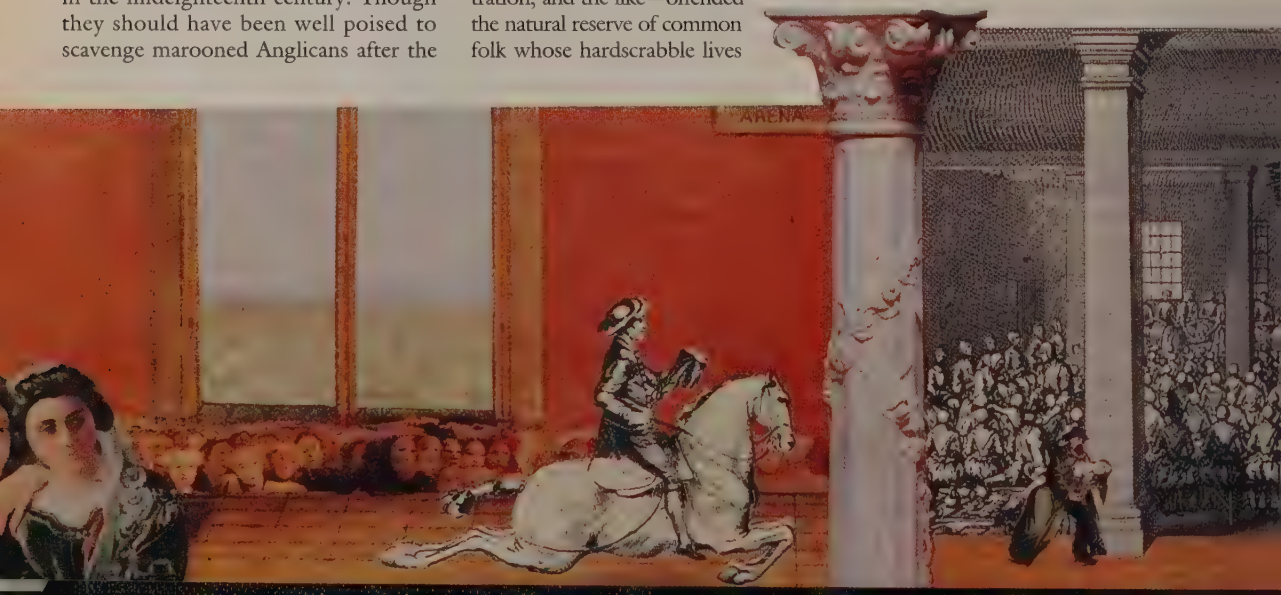
Evangelical shock troops, mostly Methodists and Baptists, arrived in Dixie in the mideighteenth century. Though they should have been well poised to scavenge marooned Anglicans after the

Revolutionary War, plus the very large number of “worldlings” lacking any semblance of a church affiliation, they nonetheless faced an uphill battle all the way. So the question is, Why did they have such a hard time for so long?

Heyrman contends that the majority of Southerners found evangelicals too countercultural, too subversive of conventional mores—in a word, too odd—to take seriously. For one thing, in the beginning evangelicals seemed excessively introspective, overly concerned to chart the slightest variations in the temperature of their souls. Their propensity toward extreme emotion—weeping, fainting, prostration, and the like—offended the natural reserve of common folk whose hardscrabble lives

offered little room for such luxuries. And evangelicals seemed to many to spend entirely too much time worrying about the meaning of dreams, apparitions, natural portents, and the ever-present threat of a physical Devil.

More crucially, early evangelicals offended social mores in countless ways. They countenanced the religious views of women, especially mature matrons. They encouraged converted women to teach and to speak publicly of their religious experience (though they rarely permitted any to preach). Evangelicals urged men of all ages to avoid the pastimes cher-



ished by the majority of Southern males, including fighting, gambling, drinking, parading, cockfighting, and horseracing. They refused to pay the customary deference to the gentry. And they disrupted timeless protocols about the family, too. Men and women sat apart in worship; evangelical churches placed discipline in the hands of church elders rather than patriarchs of households; and they made clear that the bonds of faith took priority over kith and kin—with the result that evangelical fervor sundered families as often as it bound them. White evangelicals denounced slavery and, in limited ways, even subordinated themselves to the spiritual mentoring of blacks. Little wonder, then, if common folk worried that evangelicals threatened the tacit understandings on which Southern culture was founded.

In the most arresting chapter of *Southern Cross*, Heyrman shows that evangelicals particularly aroused antagonism by their willingness to give authority to brash young men—Methodist itinerants and Baptist farmer preachers still in their twenties and early thirties. These “young gifts,” as believers often called them, possessed a degree of spiritual leverage unparalleled in living memory. Methodist itinerants, in particular, held the very keys to the kingdom in their callow hands, baptizing, marrying, burying, controlling access to the Communion table, and, most portentously, guarding the power to expel the wayward from the body of Christ. All too often, it appeared, the zealotry of youth turned into the zealotry of the crusader. Where the seasoned pastor might have tempered justice with

mercy, the young gift administered justice by the letter of the law—then rode away heedless of the human consequences.

But things did not remain such. Evangelicals did win the South, albeit ever so gradually. And they won, Heyrman argues, by selling out. She never puts it quite this baldly, but that is what it amounts to. In almost every respect, she contends, evangelicals—at least white ones—imperceptibly accommodated themselves to prevailing social conventions. Hence, by the midnineteenth century, they had tempered the display of emotion in their meetings, downplayed the physical reality of the Devil, relegated women to subordinate positions in the church and in the home, gave fathers control over the spiritual discipline of their families, and compromised their resistance to slavery. Above all, they replaced a clergy corps of young gifts, as rigid as they were rigorous, with a new one drawn from the ranks of mature men sensitive to the pragmatic necessities of accommodating human frailties.

Heyrman's argument, bold and powerful though it is, invites critique. For one thing, she pays little attention to the role of theology. She rightly insists that the heart of evangelicalism lay in the “language of Canaan,” the language of the contrite soul seeking reconciliation with God through the submission of the mind, heart, and will. Yet Heyrman barely acknowledges that theological structures might have prepared the way for the contrite heart to emerge in the first place, or that theological ideas might have structured religious life and debates long thereafter. Nor does she allow much room for the possibility that evangelicalism grew partly because outsiders came to believe the truth of



**Southern Cross:
The Beginnings of the
Bible Belt**

By Christine Leigh Heyrman
Alfred A. Knopf
336 pp.; \$27.50, hardcover
Univ. of North Carolina
Press, \$16.95, paper

their message. After all, evangelicals were good preachers and furious publicists, and it strains common sense to think that outsiders dismissed all those words as only “flapdoodle and wind.”

Still more problematic is the Edenic model that underlies the entire book. In the beginning, Heyrman effectively says, there were giants in the land, men and women who rode tall in the saddle, heedless of popular opinion. But little by little, the desire for social approval and numerical success tempted them to crouch lower and lower until they had rendered themselves virtually indistinguishable from the mass of worldlings around them.

The problem with this model is that if it were fully valid, evangelicals should have self-destructed long ago. But they have had a remarkable way of coming back in full force decade after decade. Heyrman nearly admits this point in the epilogue, where she acknowledges the countercultural character of contemporary movements like Promise Keepers.

Such questions pale, however, in the face of Heyrman's achievement. For one thing, most historians, not to mention most theologians and journalists, could take a writing lesson from this scholar. Many of her sources, she tells us with characteristic verve, consisted of clergy journals



and diaries, "weatherbeaten books no larger than the palm of a hand, their stained, brittle pages packed with daily entries scrawled in a tiny, cramped hand, a barely legible script blotted with phonetic spellings." Methodologically, too, Heyrman proves herself a free spirit. And though she offers no hint of personal affiliation with the evangelical tradition, she takes it seriously as an important social movement worthy of study on its own terms. The book reveals not a trace of economic or psychological reductionism.

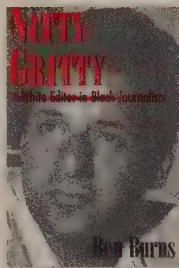
Of greatest interest to readers of CHRISTIANITY TODAY, perhaps, are Heyrman's insights into the dense realm of perception—how outsiders perceived evangelicals, how evangelicals perceived outsiders, how evangelical clergy perceived laity, and the reverse. As a case in point, we learn, through story after story, that the mass of antebellum Southerners resisted revival, not simply because they cherished their own cussed ways more (although some did), but also because they truly feared that evangelicals' ideological fervor would undermine the stability of social conventions hard won through generations of precarious living.

We learn, too, that evangelical firebrands followed the ever-moving line of westward expansion, at least partly because revivals caused so much dissension in local churches that young pastors needed to keep moving in order to find fields of labor that hadn't already been worked over by older pastors. And we learn that pastors of all generations perennially had to cope with obstreperous members who challenged their sermons, criticized their personal habits, and, of course, kept them appropriately impoverished and thus, presumably, humble.

Though no area of American religious history has received more careful attention than antebellum evangelicalism, Heyrman has moved the story forward in ways both subtle and important. We come away from her book realizing that for all their faults, evangelicals still sought (in a classic phrase) to bear the hot coal of God's Word upon their lips and in their lives. For those of us who count ourselves latter-day heirs of those angular partisans, the reading of this powerful book should prove as unsettling as it is rewarding. **CT**

Grant Wacker is associate professor of the history of religion in America at Duke University and a member of Orange United Methodist Church in Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

RECOMMENDED READING



Daniel Pawley, associate professor of journalism at Northwestern College in Saint Paul, Minnesota

On an overcast afternoon in 1954, John Johnson, publisher of *Ebony* magazine, fired Ben Burns, his longtime executive editor. Burns left the *Ebony* offices with tears clouding his eyes, only to break into "convulsive" weeping when his wife, Esther, met him at the door of their home.

Why had Johnson done it? Burns was never sure. Was it simply the logical conclusion to Johnson's and Burns's endless bickering over how *Ebony* should read and what it should cover? Or was something rotten here: perhaps the fact that the FBI had been trailing Burns for 15 years (because he had once been a member of the American Communist party); might the J. Edgar Hoover machine have pressured Johnson into cutting Burns loose? Only Johnson could tell us now.

The Johnson-Burns story is the main element of Burns's must-read memoir, **Nitty Gritty: A White Editor in Black Journalism** (University Press of Mississippi, 1996, 230 pp.; \$27.50, hardcover), but along the way he provides a superb anecdotal history of black American journalism—a world that is still terra incognita to most white readers.

The Johnson-Burns team seems an almost mythical embodiment of the editor-publisher relationship in American journalism. Here was Burns, a fatherless Jew from the Chicago slums, teaming up with Johnson, a fatherless African American from "Jim Crow" Arkansas, first on *Negro Digest*, then on *Ebony*. In at least 84 tries, there had never been a successful black magazine in America until these two got together.

We see Burns fighting furiously to get up to speed on black issues: learning culture and history, becoming street-smart, acquiring the vocabulary of "jive." We see Johnson at the Chicago newsstands, "priming the market" with his own money; inducing friends to buy his magazines; using his business savvy to get racist distributors to keep pace with *Ebony*'s rapid growth.

After the flurry of those fun, early times, however, we see the ideological bone each man had to pick with the other. The essence of the problem was this: Johnson's ultimate goal in publishing was to escape the black press's radical label, and Burns was a radical. Together, they nobly charted a moderate course, which made *Ebony* during its heyday one of the great magazines of the century—but at what expense to the sandpaper relationship between editor and publisher?

Burns's orientation toward the black press had been strongly influenced by the great African-American intellectual Metz T. P. Lochard, who had received his Ph.D. from the Sorbonne. From his early editorial work at the *Chicago Defender*, one of the nation's leading black newspapers, through his long tenure at *Ebony*, Burns never lost the radical edge that led him to attack racial discrimination wherever he found it. Johnson, on the other hand, simply wanted to publish a "black *Life* magazine" that would explore "the happier side of Negro life," and as the man with the money, he squelched Burns's activist spirit at every turn.

Like partners in a troubled marriage that nevertheless gives the world a fine child to ponder, Burns and Johnson ground each other into helplessness right up until their divorce, yet gave the world *Ebony*. And the child appears to be doing just fine these days.

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INTERVIEW
BY WENDY MURRAY ZOBA

ABORTION'S UNTOLD STORY



How journalist Cynthia Gorney has helped both sides of the abortion debate to view the other side honestly.

In 1989, after the Supreme Court agreed to hear the pivotal abortion case *William L. Webster v. Reproductive Health Services*, reporter Cynthia Gorney was dispatched by The Washington Post to “do a curtain raiser” on the law that was at issue. That law had been fiercely debated in the Missouri general assembly, passed in 1986, and was to become the centerpiece for the *Webster v. Wade* case. It seemed, at the time, that the Supreme Court entertained the possibility of overturning *Roe v. Wade*, but wanted each side to make its case about the validity of the Missouri law before making a ruling.

Gorney had not written in depth about abortion before. Nor had she encountered the energy that “strong religious faith” brings to this issue. Her unrelenting desire to understand the nuts and bolts of the controversy and the passion behind it compelled her to “press the flesh.” (She integrates over 500



interviews into her narrative.)

When she began the formidable task of gathering background material from archives, she looked for an objective account of the evolution of the thinking on both sides. She needed a book, she says, “whose mission was not to convince but rather to explain.” That’s when she discovered that such a book “did not exist.”

Now it does. Gorney’s *Articles of Faith*, recently published by Simon & Schuster, offers an unprecedented fair-minded account of the passion and conviction that inspired people on both sides to become activists, leaders, and volunteers in this wrenching debate. She organizes the book around the two real-life figures of Judy Widdecombe and Sam Lee, vigorous activists in opposing camps. Putting human faces on this ideological battle has had the surprising effect of evoking empathy for both sides from both sides.

Gorney is a writer living in California. *Articles of Faith* is her first book.

How would you characterize the heartbeat of the pro-life movement?

There were a couple of revelations I had in the course of the reporting, which I hadn't seen anywhere else and which changed my view of how the right-to-life community developed and grew. The first decade of right-to-life work, from about the mid-1960s on, was dominated by Roman Catholics. The right-to-life effort, it has to be remembered, did not begin with *Roe v. Wade* but with the early attempts to change state abortion laws around the country way before *Roe*.

The first right-to-life groups were local groups. One great misconception is that bishops were urging their parishioners to rise up. That's not the case at all. In many regions, Catholic people banded together to oppose changes in their own state abortion statutes.

What motivated them?

The thing that fascinated me as I interviewed those early right-to-life advocates, that I kept hearing over and over, was: "Yes, I was Catholic. Yes, I was educated Catholic. But, no, I was not doing it because I was Catholic. It was not my Catholic faith that I was trying to promote."

Everything they knew in the world they knew as Catholics. They knew geometry as Catholics. They knew American history as Catholics. They knew catechism as Catholics. They had learned all their lives to separate out religious training from what was general training applicable in the world and in a secular society.

So there was a collection of lessons they had learned as Catholics that they understood to be part of their Catholic faith. There was another collection of lessons that they had learned as moral people in the world. Into that second collection went a whole list of broad principles.

One of those broad principles was, You don't kill innocent life. The notion that what is in the womb constitutes human life that is indistinguishable morally from born life was so basic to their understanding of biology—and everything—that it never seemed to them that this could be regarded as dependent on their distinctively Catholic convictions. It seemed to them obvious, scientifically provable.

So, in the early stages of the debate, it was not broached as a "religious issue"?

No, it wasn't. Take, for example, the *Handbook on Abortion*, written by J. C. Wilke, who was a Catholic general practitioner and one of the influential early leaders in the right-to-life movement. That book was the teaching guide for many right-to-life speakers and organizational groups. It's done in Q&A form, and it gives right-to-life speakers a logical, historical, and persuasive guide to the nature of their argument. You will not find God mentioned anywhere in that book. It asserted: *This is clearly a human life because of the chromosomal development.* It's very deliberately nonreligious, which was the broad intent when the national right-to-life committee was formed.

And the second revelation?

The second thing I learned, which really surprised me—and evangelicals with long memories will already know this—is that when *Roe v. Wade* came down in 1973, evangelicals did not shout out in opposition. You find editorials, in *CHRISTIANITY TODAY*, for instance, saying that this is a bad decision. But if you read the editorials carefully the tone is clearly, "Hey, folks! This is not just a Catholic issue. You should pay attention to this."

The Southern Baptist Convention (this factoid always floors people) endorsed *Roe v. Wade* in 1973. They saw it as a furtherance of the separation of church and state. The Southern Baptist Convention's Christian Life Commission was headed at that time by a pastor from Texas who actually thought *Roe v. Wade* was a pretty good thing because it removed government from this decision. His position, which was reaffirmed annually at the Southern Baptist Convention's meetings for the next four or five years, was that abortion is a very serious thing, it's not a good thing, it's a very prayerful matter, and it basically needs to be left to the prayerful consideration of the woman and her pastor and her physician.

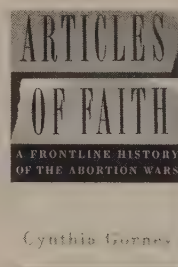
When did evangelicals become galvanized on this issue?

A combination of things that took place from 1978 to 1981 really hauled evangelicals into this struggle. There was great upheaval in the Southern Baptist Convention, and a faction that was much more conservative, theologically

and politically, took over the leadership. But this was only one influence on the abortion issue. The others were, first, two very influential evangelicals, C. Everett Koop and Francis Schaeffer, who felt very strongly about abortion and what they saw as a slide toward a devaluing of human life.

They were concerned that evangelicals seemed to be ignoring this issue. Part of this was because there was genuine confusion about what posture to take, and part of it, clearly, was because of a thick strain of anti-Catholicism.

So Koop, who had been working as



Articles of Faith

By Cynthia Gorney
Simon & Schuster
575 pp., \$27.50,
hardcover

a surgeon in Philadelphia doing repair on neonates—doing all this work to keep tiny babies alive when they were aborting babies not much younger—got together with Francis Schaeffer. And together, along with Schaeffer's son, Franky, they drew up plans for a film series called *Whatever Happened to the Human Race?*

Audiences were not crazy about the movies, and Schaeffer and Koop didn't get the kind of attendance that they had hoped they would. But the very presence of these films, and Koop and Schaeffer urging people to become concerned about these issues, was quite influential in and of itself.

What was the other factor that galvanized evangelicals?

In addition, there was a concerted political effort going on directed from Washington, between 1978 and 1981, to rouse evangelicals into a powerful voting bloc. The small coterie of New Right people in Washington, D.C., who started this effort—Paul Weyrich, Richard Viguerie—themselves were not all that agitated about abortion. They cared about international politics, taxation, more Washington-oriented subjects.

But they figured out that the way to rouse a community that wasn't particularly politically oriented into their voting

bloc was to put together a social-issues agenda that included abortion, homosexuality, feminism, taxation, and Taiwan. They saw clearly that abortion was going to be the top item on this agenda because it could be portrayed as the most alarming factor in a whole bunch of slides toward immorality.

So they rounded up Jerry Falwell and a number of other preachers who had abortion on their minds. Falwell had been preaching about abortion ever since 1973. His Moral Majority campaign, and the deliberate attempt to make this into a political agenda with religious people at its core, was drummed up by these

no problem with saying, "It's bad because God says it's bad and because Scripture tells us that it's bad." This brought in a great influx of people of faith, but it also unnerved some people of the previous generation who had been working to make this look like a secular wrong, not a religious wrong.

Would you characterize the evangelical presence in this debate as monolithic?

What was interesting to me was discovering that there was still a great deal of dispute and debate among evangelicals about how abortion ought to be viewed,

When Roe v. Wade came down in 1973, evangelicals did not shout out in opposition.

organizers out of Washington. At the same time, certain evangelical leaders, like James Dobson, were putting abortion at the top of their list of concerns, and radio audiences were multiplying rapidly. So really, from 1978 to 1981, there was a giant infusion of new energy into the right-to-life movement. That was very successful in rousing evangelicals. It worked.

Did evangelicals then join forces with the Catholics who were already mobilized?

There were a lot of ways in which the evangelicals didn't get along with the Roman Catholics. It wasn't just the old religious tensions; the agendas were quite different. The Catholic right-to-life movement included many activists with a strong "social justice" commitment who didn't see eye-to-eye with the more conservative evangelical activists.

Were the evangelicals using the name of God in a way that the Catholics weren't?

Very explicitly. This made a lot of the Catholics uncomfortable. The evangelicals, for the first time in this debate, were relying on Scripture. As you know, the word *abortion* never appears in the Bible. But the standard roster of scriptural quotations used to buttress the right-to-life position started to emerge in the late 1970s. When the evangelicals spoke about why abortion was bad, there was

what the law ought to say, and about what a person's responsibility was in the public arena. The majority of right-to-life people in this country, I think, are still uncomfortable with the notion of civil disobedience, and the vast, vast majority are horrified by violence. There's a great deal of dispute about tactics and compromise. There are, I think, large numbers of evangelicals who don't necessarily support a purist right-to-life position. But, by nature, evangelicals are people who argue broadly amongst themselves. There is no official line or mutual authority. So you've got people with all kinds of different views on it.

One of things that many nonreligious newspaper reporters tend to do is misuse the word *evangelical*. Many people who are not familiar with religion tend to say *evangelical* and *fundamentalist* in the same breath and not understand what *evangelical* means and how broad a brush that really is. There are many reasons for this, but one small part is the abortion movement. People have allowed a very narrow stereotype to become the defining image for the right-to-life person. That stereotype is somebody who is unable to talk about anything except what God wants and has a crazed look on his or her face and is blocking the doorway to an abortion clinic.

I've observed in reading newspaper accounts that it seems to be impossible for persons of strong religious convictions to hold a Bible; they are always "clutching" a Bible.

Did you come into this project with this kind of predisposition?

No. I'm used to being impressed by my own ignorance. One of the things that pulled me into this book project was discovering not only how little I knew about the origins of the right-to-life movement and the nature of right-to-life thinking, but what surprised and upset me was how little I could find that was written in a clear, dispassionate, nonde-meaning voice to make these ideas accessible to me. Everything I could find about the right-to-life movement fit into one of two categories: One was "preaching to the choir" books, written by right-to-life people for right-to-life people; the other was books written by the other side that professed to be objective accounts. Almost without exception I found those to be silly, demeaning, careless, and clearly written with the intent to describe these people as fairly stupid, easily misled, religious zealots. That made me mad, because I needed to understand things better than that.

That was when I began thinking that this was a book somebody needed to take on. It seemed terribly important to tell the stories of these people in a longer format.

How has your book been received by both sides of this debate?

I expected people to be mad because, whichever side they were on, the book made their enemies look like human beings. I expected this more from the pro-choice community than the pro-life community, because the pro-life people are accustomed to being treated in a hostile way in the secular press. I thought I would be going on radio shows and getting pro-choice people calling in saying, "How could you make those bad guys look like good people? They're bombers, they're name-callers. They throw things at us as we walk in."

None of that has happened, to my astonishment. Instead, as I go out and speak, people from both sides have said, "I really don't get it. Can you explain why they think this or why they do that?" The tone has been one of baffled interest.

What do you say to people who support abortion on demand who ask you, "Where are these people coming from?"

What I say is this: "The Supreme Court has just decided that states have to make it legal for women who are in a ter-

rible situation to dispose of their three-year-olds in medical clinics. It's a grave and serious matter, but ultimately, the three-year-olds are the offspring of those women, and it must be up to the women and their doctors to decide when, and if, those three-year-olds get terminated. That is how *Roe v. Wade* looks to right-to-life people. It's that horrifying.

"If that happened tomorrow, would you try to overturn it or stop other people from doing it?"

That's the way I tend to explain it. There is often a stunned silence and they'll say, "Really? It really looks like that?" And then they rethink a lot of things that they have thought about pro-life people. The thing that is hardest for pro-choice people to understand is that most pro-life people are in this because it is genuinely clear to them that once conception or fertilization takes place, you're talking about a human life that is as individual and as different as a born life; that this is the central motivation, not taking women back to the 1950s or overturning the advances of the last 20 years or making sure people don't have sex.

What do you say to pro-lifers who can't fathom the mind of abortion advocates?

A lot of pro-lifers don't see that for most pro-choice people there is something between life and nonlife, which sounds nonsensical to pro-life people. Everybody that I know who is pro-choice believes that there's something going on in the uterus that's "potential life." The in-between stage is mysterious to the pro-life person and totally clear to the pro-choice person.

How does late-term abortion look according to that line of reasoning?

Many pro-choice people are uncomfortable with late-term abortions, especially with what are variously called partial-birth or D&X abortions. Nobody likes this kind of thing, and most pro-choice people who defend it are holding their noses. At that point, a lot of the people who think of themselves as solidly pro-choice suddenly begin wavering.

Would you characterize a lot of these people as being more conservative than the vocal leadership?

The difficulty right now—the political difficulty—is that if you take apart the polls, it looks like a majority of Americans are willing to keep abortion legal,

but only in certain fairly rare circumstances. The polls show that a majority of Americans think abortion ought to be *illegal* in the very circumstances in which most abortions are actually done. They reject the reasons most often given by women who choose abortion: it should be illegal, for instance, to have an abortion just because you feel that you can't afford the child. It should be illegal to have an abortion so that you can continue your education, with which a child would interfere.

But there's a big catch. What Americans say in a poll is very different from what a lot of them will actually do when it's their sister or their daughter who's in the same situation.

How has writing this book changed you?

The whole issue now, morally, is infinitely more complicated to me than it was when I began. There was one review that almost made me cry. Someone who thought very highly of the book said in the last couple of paragraphs of the review: "Here's what really bothers me about this book. She seems to know more about this issue than anybody else in the country. Why doesn't she tell us what to do? We need to get some guidance from her on where we ought to go."

about the fact that there clearly exists a tiny faction of the right-to-life effort that has argued its way toward violence against persons.

I think also—though I know this is a very difficult subject for a lot of right-to-life people—that right-to-life people need to sit down and think out publicly their positions on contraception. I understand the reason for the silence on contraception. The pro-life movement includes people of all persuasions on this issue, and to address this would be divisive. But the silence on contraception seriously reduces the credibility of the right-to-life position in the mainstream and in the pro-choice communities. One of the questions I'm asked most frequently on radio shows by pro-choice people is, "Why won't they help us on contraception if they think abortion is bad?"

What advice would you give the abortion advocates?

They were formed as a battle group, but battle isn't the right metaphor anymore. They need to get out of the defensive crouch and understand that in the fundamental ways now—in the courts and in Congress—they've won. The battle is over. There is not going to be a constitutional amendment protecting life from conception. So I wish they would

I expected people to be mad because, whichever side they were on, the book made their enemies look like human beings. None of that has happened, to my astonishment.

I thought, "I wish I could." But there's a way in which I'm the least capable person right now. The intensity of both sides makes such sense to me.

If you were to offer advice to pro-lifers about what they can do to move the discussion forward, what would that advice be?

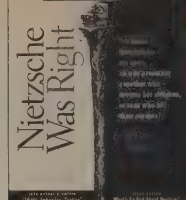
I wish right-to-life folks would think about stepping up repudiation of the violence in a more public way. I understand that every right-to-life group, whenever there's a bombing or physical attack, immediately says, "This is awful. This is not us." But I think there needs to be a more collective rethinking of what to do

stop labeling everybody either only pro-choice or anti-choice. Somebody who thinks abortion should be legal but that a 48-hour waiting period is okay is not anti-choice.

I also would urge them to acknowledge publicly that there are a lot of people out there who are opposed to abortion who are good people, who could be reached out to and worked with; that not every abortion opponent is the guy with the bomb on the steps of your clinic. There's a huge community of pro-life people who are very sorry that the doctors are having to go to work wearing bulletproof vests and still think abortion is very wrong.



Christian Celebrity: An Oxymoron?



While we are crucified with Christ, some of us are also pitchmen for Christ—such is the fate of the Christian publicist. Carol DeChant is head of DeChant-Hughes & Associates, a leading public relations firm in Chicago. Her ruminations are excerpted from BOOKS & CULTURE, a companion publication of CHRISTIANITY TODAY.

Ushering a bishop into a big autographing event, I give him a four-inch button imprinted with the title of his book. He winces. "Won't wearing this be incredibly self-serving?" "Yes, of course," I nod, grinning.

In 20 years as a publicist, I've seen changes in how media perceive religion. Faith was once a talk-show taboo. Media now realize religious topics can hook audiences, especially when advocates become hostile. Many media, however, also appreciate our longing for inspiration. What builds ratings today reflects this ambivalence of seeking heroes yet being suspicious of the noble. Working with inspirational books, I am enmeshed in this conflict.

The pastor didn't project the energy which radio producers believe lights up the phone lines. ("We love religion," one of them says. "It makes people fight.") And the pastor declined to let me use what would have been the headline material—the Names who had abandoned him. I had to sell what they call a soft segment: a good man's faith helped him endure evil and forgive his unnamed persecutors. Sales of his book were modest. The PR was handicapped by humility.

A publicist in my office sits beside an eager-to-learn intern, who is soaking up the real and often peculiar PR world beyond the classroom. The publicist hangs up after talking to a lawyer who had hired a ghost writer to package his story. "So, what was the matter?" asks the intern.

The publicist explains, "He's disappointed because the guy who interviewed him for the radio show hadn't read his book."

The intern is puzzled: "Why? He didn't write it!" A Chinese woman wants feedback on a press release for her pastor's book. It's about holiness, heaven, wisdom. Media won't buy these abstract notions, I warn. Americans need to know: how does that impact me?

No, it doesn't matter that your pastor has hundreds of thousands of followers abroad; what can he say to people in Nashville? Unless . . . are there any famous followers? Is there a Richard Gere or a John Travolta?

She wants me to understand that her faith is grander than this. I explain that in America, she

needs a hook. She blinks. Embarrassed, I tell her the comic's bit about the evolution of our culture as seen in our magazines: from Life to People to Us to Self. She wonders how she will explain this to her people.

Perhaps our ambivalence about heroes indicates vestiges of a culture that identified heroism with the once-manly courage of attack. Onto that cultural heritage add today's worship of self-actualization—make that speedy self-actualization. Perseverance and humility now seem like wimpy virtues. "Blessed are the meek"? Not on this planet. In volume 3 of his *Companion to the Summa of Aquinas*, Walter Farrell notes that when we let others provide our heroism, we resign ourselves to abandoning the possibility of the heroic in ourselves. For my heroes out there I cheer, "Go for it." To the hero in me, I mutter, "Chill out."

Yet vicarious heroism is always unsatisfying, Farrell points out. "Courage is as necessary for the living of human life as air, food, or drink; not only the courage of the venturesome, but also that principal courage that holds on, even when holding on is the best [a person] can do." Human life is the real adventure, and genuine heroes are those who possess "the courage that refuses to relinquish the good."

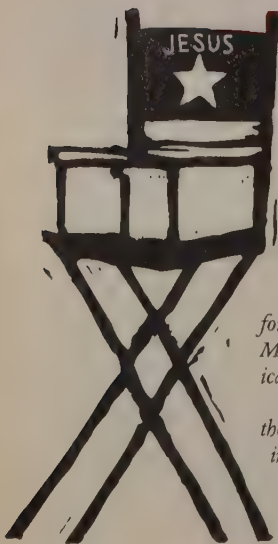
As a publicist, I notice how often after Jesus healed, resurrected, or exorcised he said, "See that you don't tell this to anyone" (Mark 1:43). It was a tall and always impossible order. (How does one respond to "What happened to your leprosy?" or "Weren't you, uh, just dead?") So those who were healed publicized the matter, and then "Jesus could no longer enter a town openly but stayed outside in lonely places. Yet the people still came to him from everywhere" (Mark 1:45).

I see myself in the leper and in the crowd. I hope to encounter the incarnation of all that I might strive toward. I seek truth and charity in this world. Worthy books and humble authors are often a source. Still, I'm attuned to the buzz of that skeptic in the wings. Can anything good come from Nazareth? Watts? Orange County? Doubleday?

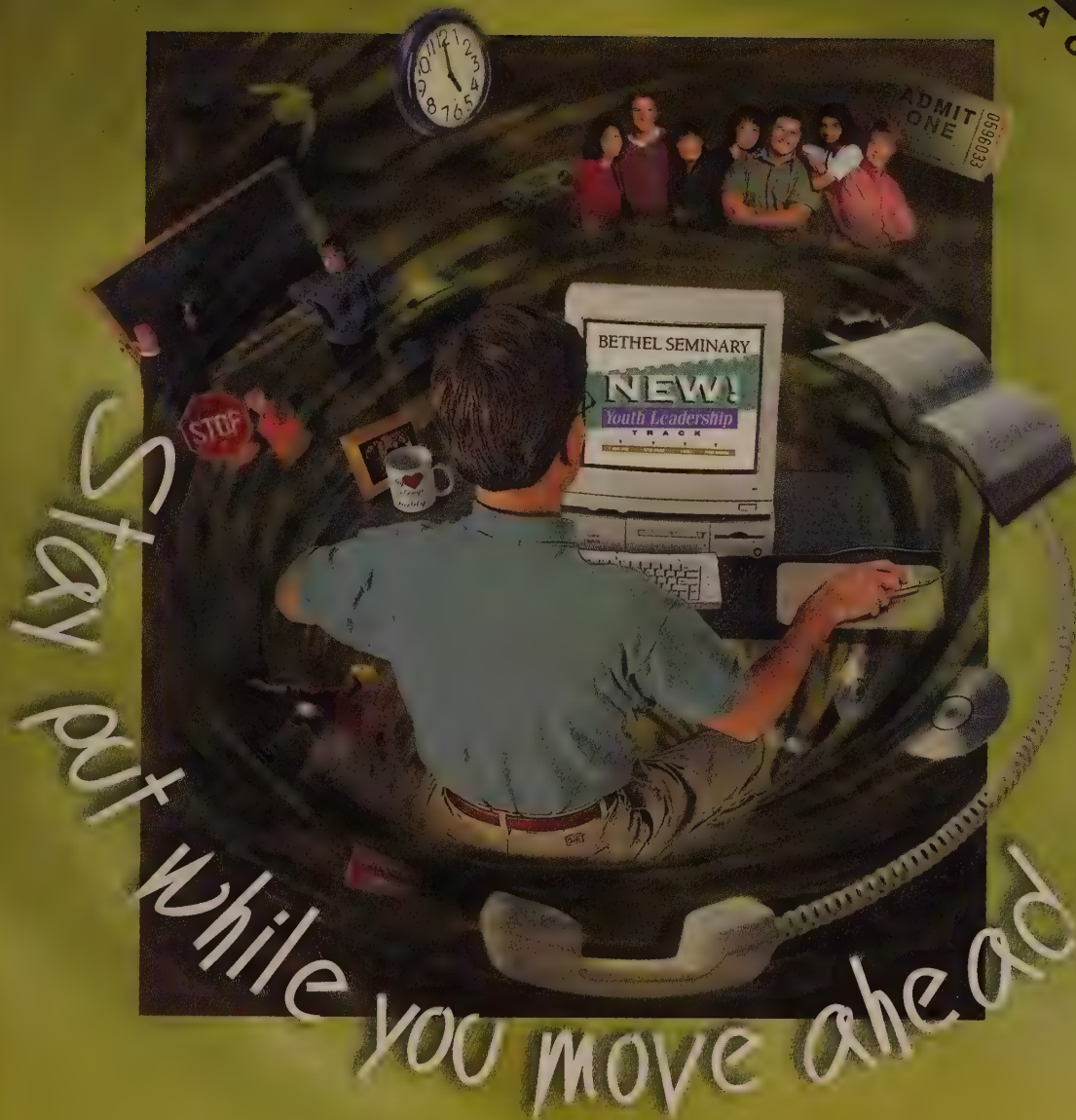
When I use the Bible as something other than a weapon for my petty agenda, I find stories of incredible human courage, of valor that amazes even the frail people who exhibit it. The ultimate Hero asks me to build that courage within my vain, idol-worshipping, fearful, mean, impatient self. Heroism is within our power, through grace. It allows us to seek out and to accept no substitutes for the good and the true in our sorry, silly, and sometimes wonderful world. **CT**

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Amistad's Unsung Hero

Tim Stafford

Stephen Spielberg's *Amistad* is based on a famous historical case—a slave ship that, after mutiny and months of wandering, reached the coast of Long Island. There the Africans were arrested and charged with piracy and murder.

The *Amistad* had, as it happened, sailed right into the middle of a raging American struggle over slavery. Antislavery abolitionists took up the Africans' case, contending that they had been illegally kidnapped and, by mutinying, had merely exercised their right to self-defense. Against them stood President Martin Van Buren, determined to send the Africans back to sure death in Cuba.

While *Amistad* takes some liberties with the facts, it is mostly faithful in illuminating this dramatic part of America's story. Most abolitionists were Christians, as *Amistad* plainly reveals, and wanted not only to free the *Amistad* captives but to tell them about Jesus Christ.

One remarkable scene shows one of the Africans grasping the gospel story from looking at pictures in a Bible. Many of the Africans did, in fact, become Christians and went back to their native Africa with the intention of spreading the gospel.

Unfortunately, the man who did most to free the *Amistad* prisoners, Lewis Tappan, gets cursory treatment in the film. His most memorable scene is an invented conversation with a black abolitionist, in which Tappan suggests that it would be preferable for the blacks to be martyred than to be set free. The scene paints Tappan as something of a racist, a complaint nobody ever made about the real man.

Lewis Tappan had no use for the gingerly way most abolitionists treated black-white relations. He quarreled with evangelist Charles Finney over Finney's insistence that blacks occupy separate seating in his huge Broadway Tabernacle. Even interracial marriages did not bother Tappan in the least. "In a thousand years," he wrote Lyman Beecher, "probably all the inhabitants on this continent would be of one color, neither black nor white . . . but copper colored."

That was startlingly frank language, for miscegenation, as it was called, was considered the last horror. Tappan, however, always said what he thought, without much concern for public relations. He was quintessentially a businessman, a very successful one who, with his brother Arthur, built up the largest silk-importing firm in New York City. The firm went bankrupt in the Panic of 1837, after which Tappan worked hard to repay all debts and went on to found the world's first credit-rating organization, one that

still survives under the name of Dun & Bradstreet.

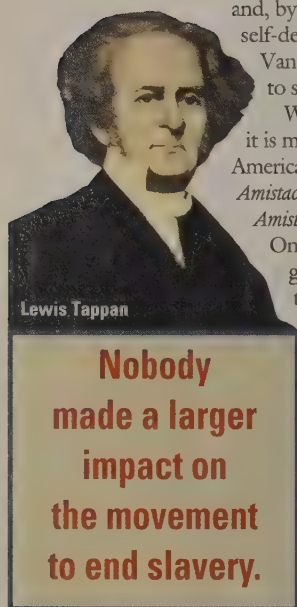
Tappan made a great deal of money, but he lived simply and gave a great deal away. Extraordinarily hard-working, blunt to a fault, intelligent but without subtlety, a kind of human steam engine, Tappan was always outshined by more charismatic abolitionists like Theodore Weld or Frederick Douglass. Nobody, however, made a larger impact on the movement.

That was so regarding the *Amistad* captives, too. As soon as he heard of them, he formed a committee to free them. Visiting the Africans in prison, he launched into an impromptu sermon on the Providence of God, even though none of them spoke English. He then arranged for Yale divinity students to continue visiting the prisoners while he began publicizing their plight and raising money for their defense. He searched the wharves of New York to find someone who spoke the prisoners' language and hired the best lawyers he could find to take on their case. For almost two years he was tirelessly vigilant on their behalf, until news came that the Supreme Court had set them free. Then he set to work raising funds to send them back to their homes in Africa.

All this he did at the same time he was untangling his silk-importing company from bankruptcy, starting Sunday schools for New York blacks, and sitting daily with his beloved daughter Eliza, who was dying of tuberculosis. Six hours a day were enough for office work, Tappan believed; the rest of a Christian businessman's time should go to help others who were less fortunate. He liked nothing better than to use his spare time in wandering the New York waterfront, handing out tracts and talking about Jesus. More often, though, he worked behind the scenes, doing office work, editing publications, writing letters, arranging funds, sitting on committees.

Five years before the *Amistad* was captured, a Manhattan mob broke into Tappan's house and burned all its contents, right down to doors and window frames, while police stood by. He was routinely insulted by strangers and threatened in anonymous notes. Somebody sent him a Negro's ear through the mail, with a note recommending it for his "collection of natural curiosities." His business struggled when Southerners and their supporters refused to trade with a firm identified with abolition. Yet Tappan continued, faithful to Christ and unstoppable in his activism, for over 30 years. He lived to celebrate Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, and as one of the founders of the American Missionary Association, helped send missionaries south to help the new citizens.

So go ahead and enjoy a worthwhile movie, but thank God for a largely unthanked yet worthy man. **CI**



Lewis Tappan

Nobody made a larger impact on the movement to end slavery.

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Survivors of the Maraghar Massacre

The ancient kingdom of Armenia was the first nation to embrace Christianity—in A.D. 301. Modern Armenia, formerly a Soviet republic, declared autonomy in September 1991 and today exists as a member of the Commonwealth of Independent States. There you find many of the oldest churches in the world, and a people who have upheld the faith for nearly 1,700 years, often at great cost.

Nowhere has the cost been greater than in the little piece of ancient Armenia called Nagorno-Karabakh, cruelly cut off from the rest of Armenia by Stalin in

and left with all the pickings from the looting.

I, along with my team from Christian Solidarity Worldwide, arrived within hours to find homes still smoldering, decapitated corpses, charred human remains, and survivors in shock. This was truly like a contemporary Golgotha many times over.

I visited the nearby hospital and met the chief nurse. Hours before, she had seen her son's head sawn off, and she had lost 14 members of her extended family. I wept with her: there could be no words.

With the fragile cease-fire that began in May 1994, we have been able to visit survivors of the massacre at Maraghar. Unable to return to their village, which is still in Azeri hands, they are building "New Maraghar" in the devastated ruins of another village. Their "homes" are empty shells with no roofs, doors, or windows, but their priority was the building of a memorial to those who died in the massacre.

We were greeted with the traditional Armenian ceremony of gifts of bread and salt. Then a dignified elderly lady made a speech of gracious welcome, with no hint of reference to personal suffering. She seemed so serene that I thought she had been away on that terrible day of the massacre. She replied: "As you have asked, I will tell you that my four sons were killed that morning, trying to defend us—but what could they do with hunting rifles against tanks? And then we saw things no human should ever have to see: heads that were too far from their bodies; people hacked into quarters like pigs. I also lost my daughter and her husband—we only found his bloodstained cap. . . . We still don't know what happened to them. I now bring up their children. But they have forgotten the taste of milk, as the Azeris took all our cows."

How can one respond to such suffering and such dignity? Since the cease-fire, we have undertaken a program to supply cows. On our last visit, we met this grandmother, and, smiling, she said: "Thank you. Our children now know the taste of milk."

Nagorno-Karabakh is a place where we have found miracles of grace. The day of the massacre I asked the chief nurse, whose son had been beheaded, if she would like me to take a message to the rest of the world. She nodded, and I took out my notebook.

With great dignity, she said: "I want to say, 'Thank you.' I am a nurse. I have seen how the medicines you have brought have saved many lives and eased much suffering. I just want to say, 'Thank you,' to all those who have not forgotten us in these dark days." 

The Baroness Cox is president of Christian Solidarity Worldwide, P.O. Box 99, New Malden, Surrey, KT3 3YF, England.



PHOTO COURTESY OF CSW

**It was
truly like a
contemporary
Golgotha
many times
over.**

1921, and isolated today as a Christian enclave within Islamic Azerbaijan. Only 100 miles north to south, 50 miles east to west, there are mountains, forests, fertile valleys, and an abundance of ancient churches, monasteries, and beautifully carved stone crosses dating from the fourth century.

This paradise became hell in 1991. Vying with Armenia for control of this enclave, Azerbaijan began a policy of ethnic cleansing of the Armenians of Karabakh, and 150,000 Armenians were forced to fight for the right to live in their historic homeland. It was a war against impossible odds: 7 million—strong Azerbaijan, helped by Turkey and, at one stage, several thousand mujahideen mercenaries.

On April 10, 1992, forces from Azerbaijan attacked the Armenian village of Maraghar in north-eastern Karabakh. The villagers awoke at 7 A.M. to the sound of heavy shelling; then tanks rolled in, followed by infantry, followed by civilians with pickup trucks to take home the pickings of the looting they knew would follow the eviction of the villagers.

Azeri soldiers sawed off the heads of 45 villagers, burnt others, took 100 women and children away as hostages, looted and set fire to all the homes,

Classic and contemporary excerpts



Our Power Center

We can choke God's word with a yawn; we can hinder the time that should be spent with God by remembering we have other things to do. "I haven't time!" Of course you have time! Take time, strangle some other interests and make time to realize that the centre of power in your life is the Lord Jesus Christ and His Atonement.

—Oswald Chambers in
Run Today's Race

The Soul's True Home

Prayer is not a strategem for occasional use, a refuge to resort to now and then. It is rather like an established residence for the innermost self. All things have a home; the bird has a nest, the fox has a hole, the bee has a hive. A soul without prayer is a soul without a home. Weary, sobbing, the soul, after roaming through a world festered with aimlessness, falsehoods, and absurdities, seeks a moment in which to gather up its scattered life, in which to divest itself of enforced pretensions and camouflage, in which to simplify complexities, in which to call for help without being a coward. Such a home is prayer.

—Abraham Joshua Heschel in
Moral Grandeur
and Spiritual Audacity

We Need More of God

I want to simplify your lives. When others are telling you to read more, I want to tell you to read less; when others are telling you to do more, I want to tell you to do less. The world does not need more of you; it needs more of God. Your friends do not

need more of you; they need more of God. And you don't need more of you; you need more of God.

—Eugene H. Peterson in
Subversive Spirituality

All Is Vanity

The world passes away with all its concupiscence and deceitful pleasure.

—Thomas à Kempis in The
Imitation of Christ

Road to Unbelief

What a man does not want to believe, he can find a way to deny.

—Michael Ignatieff in
The Needs of Strangers

No Four-Letter Words

I have a strong dislike for vulgar phrases and find that the terms "good grief" and "rats" will cover virtually anything that happens.

—Cartoonist Charles Schultz
interviewed in Vanity Fair
(Oct. 1996)

God's Promise

God . . . is not in the business of granting wishes. God is in the business of raising the dead, not all of whom are willing. . . . There is nothing

wrong with letting God know what we want, as long as we do not mistake our list for the covenant. The covenant has no conditions. The covenant is no deal. It is God's promise to be our God, which contains within it the promise that we shall be God's people—not by our consent but by our creation.

—Barbara Brown Taylor in
Gospel Medicine

The Anger Barrier

There is no greater obstacle to the presence of the Spirit in us than anger.

—John Climacus in The
Ladder of Divine Ascent

A Greater Harm

In the more virtuous days of the Roman empire the Roman citizens feared harm only from their enemies, but when those days had become degenerate, they had to endure greater misery from their fellow citizens.

—Saint Augustine in
The City of God

When New and Improved Isn't

What is so often missing from much of contemporary worship is a sense of the beauty, the blessing, and the being of God. . . . As long as the church continues to confuse the hunger for God, extant in every human heart, with the same yearnings that drive a market culture and a consumerist society, its worship will remain irrelevant at best, and an outright impediment at worst.

As long as the church insists on serving up "Twinkies," even new and improved ones, many of those once-churched-now-unchurched will continue to seek their bread in the world at large, wherein a still-living, all-loving God continues to reveal self day by day in 10,000 marvelous ways.

—Craig Rice in Circuit Rider,
quoted in Context
(July 1, 1997)

Real Wisdom

Seek wisdom, Scripture says—and wisdom includes sanctified "street smarts." Wisdom starts in heaven but works at street level, where we bump shoulders with others. It isn't satisfied with information retrieval: You can't access wisdom by the megabyte. Wisdom is concerned with how we relate to people, to the world, and to God.

—Edmund P. Clowney in
Tabletalk (March 1995)

Our Greatest Evil

The worst sins of men are spiritual.

—C. S. Lewis in
The Four Loves



"I don't know you from Saddam."

THE SPECTATOR (UK), AUGUST 11, 1990

THE MARKETPLACE

Cost: 46 cents per character (each space & punctuation counts as a character); avg. 45 characters per line. Min. \$39.10 (85 characters). CT blind box number available at \$6 each insertion; checkmark box ☒ \$14 each insertion. Supply permanent street address and phone number. Ads set display style: \$276/column inch. Combination package available for CHRISTIANITY TODAY, CHRISTIAN READER, & YOUR CHURCH: 2 magazines—44 cents per character per insertion; 3 magazines—42 cents per character per insertion. Display style: 2 magazines—\$263 per insertion; 3 magazines—\$252 per insertion. **All classified ads will now be automatically placed on CHRISTIANITY ONLINE at no additional charge. IMPORTANT: Prepayment & written confirmation required to process ads.** Visa, MasterCard, or personal check accepted; fax (630) 260-0114. Employment ads are given priority. All other ads will be placed in first available issue. Deadline for reservation or cancellation is seven weeks prior to actual issue date. Address correspondence to: Classified Advertising, Christianity Today, 465 Gundersen Dr., Carol Stream, IL 60188.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

SENIOR PASTOR

Wortley Baptist Church, London, Ontario, a growing Canadian city of 326,000, is seeking a senior pastor to give strong leadership to its fine pastoral team and congregation of about 600. Excellence is required in Bible-based preaching/teaching, with contemporary relevance. Graduate training in theology desirable. Contact: Robert Kline, Chair of Search Committee, Wortley Baptist Church, 250 Commissioners Rd. East, London, ON N6C 2T1; (519) 439-7355.

SENIOR PASTOR

Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church of Deephaven (AALC) is seeking a full-time pastor. Ten years work experience desired, including experience as a senior pastor. Should have strong skills in preaching and teaching God's Word, a desire for outreach and evangelism, and experience in leading young people of all ages. Weekly average church attendance is approx. 300. Interested candidates should send résumés to: Pastor Calling Committee, Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church of Deephaven, 18360 Minnetonka Blvd., Wayzata, MN 55391.

MINISTER OF FAMILY LIFE. Innovative mainline congregation seeks second pastor to lead creative ministries to children, youth, and parents. Lead small groups, small-group leaders, and worship (on occasion) also. We're looking for someone who loves Jesus, students, and their families. Full-time. Excellent package includes salary, housing, and all benefits. Contact Rev. Jim Morse, First UCC, P.O. Box 222, Bremen, IN 46506; (219) 546-2459.

DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT for Pioneer Clubs, dedicated to the Christian education of children through the local church. Seeking experienced development professional who can manage the total development program, with special emphasis on major donor/planned-giving program. Resp. for increasing revenue from churches, individuals, and foundations. Candidate should have experience with a variety of acquisition techniques. Should have ability and vision to build a long-term development plan. Experience with Pioneer Clubs at local-church level a plus! Salaried with benefits. Send résumé to: Mary Hackman, Pioneer Clubs, Box 788, Wheaton, IL 60189. No phone calls please.

DIRECTOR OF DISCIPLESHIP We're a growing and dynamic PCA church in the Chicago suburbs, looking for a creative, experienced person with a desire to be on staff at a church with a vision of being a regional resource church in church planting and renewal. Should have a passion for seeing Christ formed in people and a heart for both nominally church people and nontraditional ministry. Send résumé to Art Wittmann, Naperville Presbyterian Church, 943 Sanctuary Lane, Naperville, IL 60540.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

MALONE COLLEGE is seeking candidates for the following three president's cabinet-level positions:

- Vice President for College Advancement: reports to the president; experienced in college/institutional advancement/development; capital-campaign experience, and master's degree desired. Applications to Mr. Richard A. Pakel, Executive Vice President Administration.
- Academic Dean—reports to the provost; seeking a dynamic academic leader with vibrant Christian faith and strong commitment to Christian higher education. Must possess an earned doctorate and leadership experience at least at the department chair level. The dean will provide immediate oversight for all activities of the undergraduate offerings of the college. Applications to Dr. Robert C. Suggs, Provost.
- Dean of Student Development—reports to the provost; seeking an effective student-development professional with a broad range of student-development-related experience, a commitment to Christian higher education, and demonstration of effective integration of Christian faith and higher education. Applications to Dr. Robert C. Suggs, Provost.

Candidates should submit a letter of application, résumé with three references, and statement of Christian commitment to the administrator named above. Malone College, 515-25th Street N.W., Canton, OH 44709-3897. Review of applications begins immediately and will continue until the position is filled.

MINISTER OF MUSIC, full-time for fast-growing Presbyterian Church in Lady Lake, Florida. Experience in adult and children's choirs, handbells, and instruments preferred. Résumé to North Lake Presbyterian Church, 40404 First Street, Lady Lake, Florida or fax: (352) 753-3982.

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

Second Presbyterian Church, Memphis, Tennessee, a 3,400-member, 154-year-old evangelical church in the Reformed tradition, is seeking a director of music. We have a 100-member adult choir, brass, handbell, and string ensembles, and youth and children's choirs. We have a rich tradition of special programs of great composers' works, with full orchestral accompaniment and a 100-rank pipe organ. There are four paid music staff. Applicant must possess ability to develop excellent choral sound and build solid program with willingness to develop expertise in drafting liturgy. Will be responsible for two morning worship services, which are primarily traditional, but with some contemporary music. Will also assist with evening contemporary service. Ministering to those in the music ministry while working closely with the entire church staff is important. Send résumé to: John C. Adamson, Executive Administrator, Second Presbyterian Church, 4055 Poplar Avenue, Memphis, TN 38111.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

HEAD OF STAFF

"Wow, What a wonderful Pastor!"

If this is said about you, and you have had some (8) years of a glorifying God ministry, then READ ON. If you can (1) inspire a 1,000-member congregation to seek the Lord's will; (2) train a well-informed lay leadership to even higher Christ-centered service; (3) shepherd the spiritual needs of a growing year-round church family and a most responsive group of "snow birds"; (4) meld all currently viable ministries within our historically dynamic, Christ-centered, biblically directed and human-need-driven congregation; and (5) acclimate to our beautiful Coachella Valley located some 120 miles southeast of Los Angeles. The Palm Desert area is famous for pleasant climate, country clubs, 100 golf courses, hospital specialties, higher educational opportunities, cultural events, charity drives, and other features elucidated in our CIF. We are anxious to hear from you! A top Presbytery salary and benefit package is available. CIF upon request. Send PIF to: Armond Deane, Chairperson, PNC, P.O. Box 1896, Palm Desert, CA 92261; fax: (760) 346-8173.

PASTOR OF MUSIC AND WORSHIP is needed at College Park Church in Indianapolis, IN. Church of 1,700 searching for spiritually mature, trained, and educated in music person to take over entire ministry. Individual should be skilled in leading and teaching congregation to worship our Heavenly Father. He must also be able to lead choirs, ensembles, and other special music groups in preparation for presentation. Position will be part of full-time staff. Must be a team player. Send résumé to College Park Church, Indianapolis, IN 46268, Attn. Elliott Archer or call (317) 875-0282.

WHEATON COLLEGE seeks candidates for the position of Director of Human Needs and Global Resources (HNGR) Program. The HNGR program is an undergraduate Third World Studies program designed to increase understanding of global poverty and development through on-campus course work and a six-month internship in an international setting. Academic administrative staff position with faculty status. Preference for doctorate, field experience in development and fluency in Spanish. Send letter of interest, résumé, and reference to Ward A. Kriegbaum, Dean of the Faculty, Wheaton College, Wheaton, IL 60187. Application forms will be sent to promising applicants, and applications will be accepted until the position is filled. Duties will commence early spring semester, 1999. Wheaton College is an evangelical Christian liberal arts college whose faculty and staff affirm a statement of faith and adhere to lifestyle expectations. The college complies with federal and state guidelines for nondiscrimination in employment. Women and minority candidates are encouraged to apply.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

PRESIDENT

Prairie Bible Institute invites nominations and expressions of interest for the position of president. As chief executive officer of the Prairie Schools, the president reports directly to the board of directors. PBI is an independent, evangelical Christian educational institution. Prairie Schools include a graduate school/theological seminary in Calgary, AB, accredited four-year baccalaureate Bible college, and elementary, junior, and senior high schools on one campus in Three Hills, Alberta, 75 minutes N/NE of Calgary. Total enrollment stands just over 1,400. Alumni of the secondary and postsecondary schools serve in 114 countries. The qualities desired in the successful candidate for president are the ability to identify with and promote Prairie's mission as an evangelical institution. Christian character and integrity. We are looking for a proven leader whose experience, skills, and qualifications are particularly well suited to the PBI Schools and the opportunities they face in the 21st century. Candidates should possess an earned doctorate, demonstrated leadership skills in an academic environment, and the ability to work with the board, faculty, staff, and students to further the institution's mission. Nominations or letters of interest should be sent to: Dr. Paul Virts, Chairman, Presidential Search Committee, PBI Board of Directors, P.O. Box 4000, Three Hills, AB, Canada T0M 2N0. Copies of the president's job description, qualifications, and application procedures can be obtained from: Office of the President, PBI, P.O. Box 4000, Three Hills, AB, Canada T0M 2N0. Review of applications will begin immediately and continue until the position is filled. By law, preference will be given to qualified Canadians.

SOJOURNERS, a faith and social justice nonprofit, seeks development officer to initiate and oversee cultivation and solicitation strategy for all major donor prospects and foundations, along with budgetary and staff responsibilities. Salary negotiable, plus excellent benefits. Send cover letter and résumé to Publisher/Managing Director Job Search, Sojourners, 2401-15th St. NW, Washington, DC 20009.

SENIOR WRITER

The Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN), headquartered in beautiful Virginia Beach, Virginia, has an immediate opening for a seasoned senior writer to work in its Direct Marketing Department. We are seeking a highly innovative and creative individual to write inspirational appeals. The successful candidate will have experience as a writer of direct mail, advertising, or marketing materials, preferably for a nonprofit organization. A degree in journalism, English, or marketing is required. Ability to work as a part of a creative high-energy team a must. CBN offers a competitive salary and excellent benefits package, including relocation allowance. If you meet the listed qualifications and share our vision and purpose, call our 24-hour line, (800) 888-7894, to request an application. Résumés can be faxed to (757) 579-3899.

MINISTRY PLACEMENT for pastors & associates or churches. Call (503) 357-7830 or Believer's Dynamics, POB 596, Forest Grove, OR 97116. Since 1977.

CHRISTIAN SCHOOL in scenic Galena seeking administrator and position in K-12. TSCS, 11084 Hwy. 20 W., Galena, IL 61036; (815) 777-3800.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

FACULTY POSITIONS

WAYNESBURG COLLEGE

COMMUNICATION—radio emphasis; teaching communication and advising student radio station. Master's required, practical experience desired, doctorate preferred.

COMPUTER SCIENCE—two positions possible (one may be combined with mathematics); teaching all levels of programming and/or applications. Master's required, varied computer experience desired; doctorate preferred.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE—possible opening; likely to include forensic accounting.

EDUCATION—possible appointment as department chair; teaching (elementary or other specialties), and supervising student teachers. Doctorate strongly preferred; school experience as administrator required.

MATHEMATICS—teaching range of mathematics courses, including algebra, precalculus, calculus, differential equations, college geometry, statistics, number theory, and numerical analysis; position possibly combined with computer science.

MUSIC—band and other instrumental ensembles; teaching range of music courses; responsible for music program, including recruiting, programs, part-time faculty.

See home page (<http://waynesburg.edu>). All positions require commitment to Christian higher education and breadth of teaching skills, plus normal full-time faculty responsibilities. Send CV, copies of transcripts, letter addressing qualifications and philosophy of education, and three references to Richard Stanislaw, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Waynesburg College, Waynesburg, PA 15370 or rstanislaw@waynesburg.edu.

LIFE-CHANGING TEACHERS

Wheaton Academy believes teachers must have a growing relationship with Christ, must be excellent in their field, must believe biblical integration and scholastic excellence are inseparable, must hold high standards, must be capable of motivating a range of students, and must enjoy working specifically with teenagers. Our mission to "nurture growth in students through excellence, relationships, and service, all to the glory of God," is truly the foundation and philosophic centerpiece of everything we do at Wheaton Academy. Founded in 1853 and accredited since 1911, we serve Christian families with a traditional college preparatory curriculum, an innovative January term (Winterim), and comprehensive extracurricular programs (15 sports). Our growing student body (400+) benefits from a personal environment, a mature student culture, and regular opportunities for leadership training. Our school is located on a beautiful, country-style 43 acres in Chicago's western suburbs. A 6-year, 15M Learning Resource, Field House, Fine Arts expansion plan begins this spring.

1998-99 OPENINGS: Science (chemistry emphasis), math, Spanish/other combination, contact Jon Keith, Principal, at (630) 231-0727, ext. 16, or write: 900 Prince Crossing Road, West Chicago, IL 60185 for an information packet and application.

ASSOCIATE PASTOR needed for a growing (350+) church in a growing area near Indianapolis. Recently completed building project attests to our commitment to grow. We seek someone who loves the Lord and years to lead and equip our youth and adults. M.Div. preferred. Join our team, to help lead us upward and onward! Contact John Van Namen, c/o Community Congregational Church, 4592 Hurricane Road, Franklin, IN 46131.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

CHRISTIAN ED. DIRECTOR: 850-member nondenominational community church in suburb between Cleveland and Akron metro areas seeks full-time DCE. Résumé to: Search Committee, The Church in Aurora, Box 244, Aurora, OH 44202.

COLLEGE & YOUNG SINGLES PASTOR

We are seeking a person who has a pastor's heart and a passion for ministry to college and young singles to join our energetic ministry team. He should have an appropriate education, prior effective ministry experience, and be a gifted communicator with strong organizational skills. Our college ministry includes students from nearby Wheaton College and other regional college campuses. Address inquiries to: Pastor Gary Dausey, Wheaton Bible Church, Main at Franklin Street, Wheaton, IL 60187.

YEW CHUNG EDUCATION FOUNDATION
We operate bilingual international schools (preschool through secondary level) in Hong Kong, Shanghai, Beijing, Chongqing, and USA, providing students with quality education within a Christian environment. Enthusiastic Christians who have visions and missions in education ministry are welcomed to apply for the following positions:

- Western Primary/Secondary School Co-Principals (Primary: Beijing & Chongqing; Secondary: Hong Kong). Yew Chung schools are administered by two co-principals, one Western and one Chinese, working in consultation and collaboratively in a multicultural education environment. Qualifications include: Degree or higher or equivalent, teacher qualifications, and considerable classroom practice, substantial experience in school administration.
- Admission Officers (Congqing, China). Degree or equivalent, substantial experience in public relations or media, administrative experience in education.
- Secondary Science Teachers (all campuses). To teach General Science (junior high level) and either Biology or Chemistry or Physics (higher level), degree in science and teacher training, substantial classroom experience.
- Music Teachers (all campuses). Degree in music or equivalent and teacher training.
- Class teachers (General Education). Degree and teacher training.

Send full résumé with names & addresses of 2 referees to: Human Resources Division, Yew Chung Education Foundation, 20 Somerset Road, Kowloon Tong, Hong Kong; fax: (852) 2338-4045; email: issic.leung@ycef.com; web page: <http://www.ycef.com>

DUE TO GROWTH AND EXPANSION, Belhaven College seeks those faculty who are excited to serve in the following areas at a college that prepares students to serve Christ Jesus in their occupation, relationships, and in the world of ideas.

- Director of the Library (Librarian master's required)
- Sports Science Faculty (PhD & Athletic Training Certification required)
- Theater Department Chair (MFA required)
- English Department Chair (Ph.D. required)
- Business Administration Faculty in Memphis (DBA or Ph.D. required)

Send vita to Daniel C. Fredericks, Provost, 1500 Peachtree St., Jackson, MS 39202. Minorities are encouraged to apply.

INTERNATIONAL, interdenominational, English-language church in Egypt seeks a mature and experienced pastor. Travel costs, apartment, car, and monthly stipend are provided. Please e-mail: rcapp@compuserve.com

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

SENIOR PASTOR. An innovative, biblically conservative, growth oriented, mid-America, SBC community church is seeking a gifted pastor. Details at: www.LakelandChurch.org

SOJOURNERS, a faith and social justice nonprofit, seeks publisher/managing director to occupy the number two position within the organization, oversee all day-to-day operations, and serve as publisher of *Sojourners* magazine. Salary negotiable, plus excellent benefits. Send cover letter and résumé to Publisher/Managing Director Job Search, Sojourners, 2401-15th St. NW, Washington, DC 20009.

NATIVE-SPEAKING ENGLISH TEACHER for Hong Kong Christian schools: 2-year English-teaching experience required. U.S. \$5,000/mo. Call: (630) 942-0000.

CHRISTIANITY TODAY, INC. seeks to fill the following positions:

- Advertising Sales Manager: Degreed individual with 5-10 yrs. sales-management experience in the Christian market to provide day-to-day management of advertising account executive staff and departmental sales efforts.
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- Market Research Analyst: Degreed analyst with 2-3 years experience in market research analysis. Should be skilled in PC & Mac software, survey development for both qualitative and quantitative research, data analysis.
- Director of Marketing: Degreed individual with 8 years experience (preferably in magazine/book publishing) to provide strategic direction for ancillary product direct-mail marketing, supervise marketing managerial staff, and give input to new product R&D. Must have proven experience managing direct-mail marketing efforts.

To combine career with ministry, mail/fax résumé with cover letter detailing salary history to: Christianity Today, Inc., HR Dept.-CT, 465 Gundersen Dr., Carol Stream, IL 60188; fax: (630) 260-0114; E-mail: CTIHRDept@aol.com.

U.S. DIRECTOR

Our client is a Christian, nonprofit, international social-development organization. We are seeking a U.S.-based, experienced fundraising professional who will feel comfortable working in a variety of cultural contexts. The successful candidate will be responsible for setting strategy and implementing all U.S. fundraising activities. The position reports to the U.S. board of directors and will implement major gift, direct-mail, special-event, and grant-proposal strategies. Please send résumé and current salary information in confidence to: Van Dyke Associates, 1755 South Naperville Road, Suite 100, Wheaton, Illinois 60187.

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EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

PASTOR OF YOUTH AND CHILDREN Arlington Countryside Church, an independent evang. church in suburban Chicago seeking godly leader with proven ability in developing youth programs and supervising children's ministries. Successful candidates are creative, enthusiastic, relational, organized, and focus on outreach and spiritual growth. Ron Hall, ACC, 916 E. Hintz Rd., Arlington Heights, IL 60004; fax: (847) 255-7986; e-mail: acchurch@flash.net

FOUNDATION PRESIDENT for well-known mission organization. Must have knowledge of planned giving and experience in raising endowment funds. Able to manage office and enjoy contacting donors. Salaried with benefits. Fax response/résumé to: (714) 654-9197.

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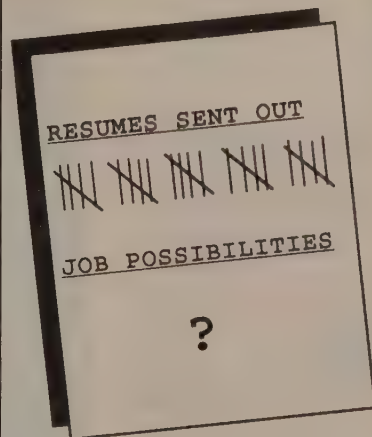
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1998 BIBLE COLLEGES

Four Myths About Bible Colleges

Mythology is not restricted to the ancient Greeks. America has developed its own "urban legends"—legends like the microwaved poodle, the angelic hitchhiker, or the cat in the shopping bag, all of which get recycled regularly.

Unfortunately, there is an unfortunate mythology abroad about Bible colleges, and it seems intractably lodged in the collective subconscious. Let's explore and explode four of these myths.

MYTH #1:

THE FULL-TIME MINISTRY MYTH

Some believe Bible college is only for those who are called into so-called full-time Christian ministry. Go only if you want to become a pastor, youth minister, or missionary, students are told. Furthermore, its gender corollary says that Bible college is only for women who wish to become a pastor's wife.

This myth confuses "full-time" ministry with "vocational" ministry. Unabashedly, Bible colleges are in the business of equipping men and women to minister "full-time," because that is every Christian's mandate as a servant of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Bible college curriculum is certainly geared to train students who have vocational ministry aspirations. But Bible colleges also equip Christian

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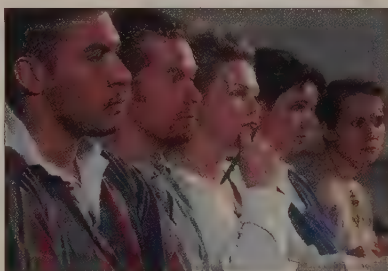
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Many Bible colleges have graduate programs or seminaries for professional, vocational ministry. But what Bible colleges do offer is a collegiate experience in the Word, in worship, and in ministry that enriches as well as equips. Most Bible colleges would agree with a motto at Multnomah Bible College: "We deal in life change."

MYTH #2:

THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL MYTH

This myth maintains that the Bible college is an academic lightweight—simply an advanced Sunday school masquerading as a baccalaureate institution. If you come from a strong Bible-preaching church or are a graduate of a Christian elementary or secondary school, it goes, you don't need Bible college.

It's hard to know who perpetuates—or even believes—this myth. It's definitely not the Bible college student or graduate. Most have found the curriculum is just as demanding—often more so—as that of its public counterparts.

This is true for two reasons:

1. Practically, state and federal agencies, as well as accrediting institutions, stipulate specific institutional and academic standards. Accredited institutions must meet and maintain these standards, and lack of accreditation often spells disaster.

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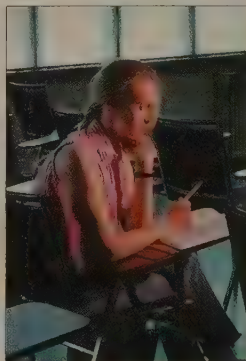
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members at a Bible college teach there because of their intense and serious commitment to God's Word, church ministry, and mission. Their commitment inevitably raises the academic quality of the curriculum apart from any external requirements.

MYTH #3: THE BIBLIOLATRY MYTH

At best, this misguided view sees the Bible college and its curriculum as too narrow. Studying the Bible is fine, it says, but young people need a broader educational exposure and focus. At worst, the Bible college engages in "bibliolatry"—worshiping the Bible. It is said that so much emphasis is placed on Bible study that Jesus, worship, and practical service are ignored.

But nothing could be further from the truth. Historically, the Bible college movement has always stressed a love for the Savior and an urgency to equip and deploy laborers into a ripe harvest field. But a deep love of God grows out of a knowledge of God, just as effective service stems from an informed understanding of human need and Christian hope. At Bible colleges, God, not the Bible, is worshiped. But they recognize that their only infallible source of information about our God resides in his Word.

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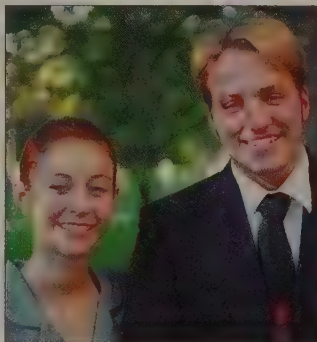
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MYTH #4:

THE CULTURAL BUBBLE MYTH

Perhaps the most common objection to a Bible college is that it isolates its students from the real world. Bible colleges create an unrealistic and sheltered environment, claim the naysayers, one that not only ill prepares students for life but may in fact be damaging.

Frankly, I wish it were possible to provide such a sheltered environment. After all, horticulturists value greenhouses as essential for bringing tender plants to maturity. But unfortunately, in a world of mass media and computers, such insulation is impossible. In fact, students who are willing to invest in a Bible-focused education often discover the spiritual battle actually intensifies. Temptations, financial obstacles, stress, and physical difficulties do not evaporate; they often seem to escalate.

What Bible college provides is community—a place where students and faculty can work, study, worship, and live together in an environment that fosters accountability, fellowship, mentoring, and mutual edification.

SEEK TRUTH, NOT MYTH

The Bible college offers a unique and important kind of collegiate experience. It may not be for everyone. But if you are making a choice about your education, make sure that choice is informed by truth, not myth.

By Daniel R. Lockwood, president of Multnomah Bible College and Biblical Seminary, Portland, Oregon.

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If Americans truly understood what adultery does—that it leads to the dis-integration of the human being—they would not dismiss it so lightly.

Writing about a fast-breaking news event for a magazine with six weeks lead time is risky business. By the time you read this, the salacious charges involving the President and Monica Lewinsky may have faded like a bad dream, or possibly taken even more bizarre turns.

But whatever the facts turn out to be, there will remain disturbing questions about one aspect of the scandal: the astonishing public response. At this writing, the President's approval ratings continue to soar with each new accusation. In an NBC/*Wall Street Journal* poll, a whopping 66 percent said the President should not be impeached even if the accusations prove true. Man-in-the-street interviews reveal a general indifference. Even the usually indignant feminists opine that since the alleged sexual relationship was consensual, it is no big deal.

How could so many shrug off such charges?

I put the question to Robert George, professor of political philosophy at Princeton.

"It's because they've lost a sense of the sacredness of human life," he replied.

"I'm not talking about abortion," I said, puzzled. "I'm talking about adultery."

"Both derive from the same world-view," George explained. Modern secular orthodoxy splits the human being, dividing the person from the body. The body is treated as an instrument for getting what the self wants—pleasure, emotional satisfaction, whatever.

This may sound abstract, but the consequences of a person/body dualism are painfully concrete. It follows that the body is not really "me" but something other than my real self—something like a possession to be deployed or disposed of. Thus abortion: Secularists insist that a human embryo is merely a body, not a full person, and can be readily discarded. Thus assisted suicide: Secularists who decide the body is giving them too much pain or bother may opt for suicide—and even demand that a physician help out. Thus sex outside marriage: The sexual union of two bodies does not necessarily mean the union of two persons on all levels of their being (marriage), but only that two selves are using their bodies for mutual pleasure or affection.

We will not understand the secular position on these contentious moral issues unless we grasp the underlying person/body dualism. The idea that sex outside marriage is morally okay implies that the body is merely a vehicle for getting what you want—just as you use a car to get where you want to go.

This runs totally against the grain of the Christian world-view. Since the apostles, the church has opposed dualist heresies. We believe that God created

each individual as a unity—body, soul, and spirit. At the end of time, our bodies will be raised to life eternal. We affirm this whenever we recite the Apostles' Creed: "I believe . . . in the resurrection of the body." Christianity grants the body extraordinary dignity. What we do with our bodies expresses who we are as full persons. We utterly reject any dualism that breaks up the individual and relegates the body to a merely instrumental role.

This explains why God speaks so strongly against sex outside marriage. The sexual unity *is* a unity of two whole persons. That's how we were made. If we engage in sex outside marriage—if we form a bodily union apart from a union of whole persons—we violate our wholeness.

That is to say, we violate our integrity (which literally means wholeness). We dis-integrate ourselves. That's why sex outside marriage is so devastating: It shatters the integrity of our being.

In our sex-saturated society, Christians cannot simply proclaim that adultery is against the Bible and stop there. We will be accused of "imposing morality." Instead, we must explain the contradictory understandings of the human person.

And we must press upon people what is really at stake. First, a person/body dualism is radically dehumanizing. It provides the justification for a host of pernicious practices—not only guilt-free adultery but also homosexual acts, abortion, fetal experimentation, euthanasia, assisted suicide, and disregard for human rights. These practices strip the body of its intrinsic dignity and treat it as a commodity to be used, managed, even disposed of to suit our desires.

Second, if we engage in these practices, we deceive ourselves by embracing a false view of human nature. We sever the body from the self, destroying our integrity, our wholeness. We experience dis-integration. If Americans truly understood what adultery does—that it leads to the dis-integration of the human being—they would not dismiss it so lightly.

Finally, we must constantly expose the secular myth that personal behavior has no effect on public morality. For the dis-integrated individual is incapable of forming and sustaining virtuous character, because the self abdicates moral control over the passions and impulses. And without character we cannot maintain relationships of trust, so that dis-integrated individuals in turn create dis-integrated communities.

This is what we are witnessing today: The spectacle of the President in the dock, with more than half his cabinet, should awaken us to the disastrous consequences of the modern secular world-view. That is something Americans cannot afford to shrug off. **CT**

Gambling: None Dare Call It Sin • News: Colombia's Newest Martyrs

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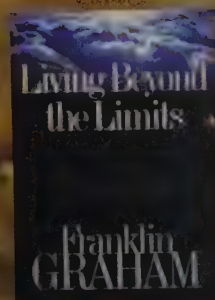
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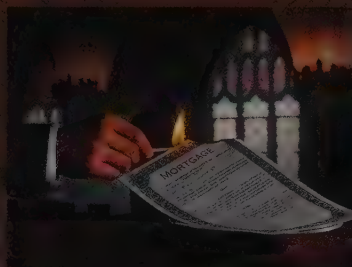
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CHRISTIANITY TODAY

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A Magazine of Evangelical Conviction

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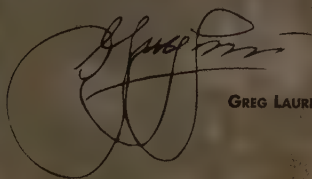
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David Neff,
Executive Editor

Bright Lights, Big Pity

INSIDE CT

Last year Tim Stafford was asking himself lots of questions about gambling: Why does anybody get involved in such a losing proposition? Can our state governments do anything more obscene and decadent than to entice their citizens to throw their money away?

But Tim's most burning question about gambling had to do with the apparent lack of resistance from Christians. To be sure, there are Christian activists who fight gambling, but given the rapid spread of casino gambling throughout the U.S., Tim thought he wasn't hearing nearly enough protest from the churches.

Why not visit someplace notably religious, he thought, some spot in the Bible Belt that had been invaded and co-opted by casinos, and see just how the churches were handling it. As CT's California-based senior writer, Tim has a license to travel, so he considered Iowa first, and then settled on Mississippi—on Gulfport, near Biloxi, and Tunica County, just a short drive from Memphis. (You can read Tim's account of his trip, beginning on p. 34.)

In Las Vegas and in Reno, gambling is blended with entertainment: It peeks out from behind circus acts and showgirls and magicians who make elephants vanish and singers with lowest-common-denominator

appeal. The bright lights and the fanciful architecture and the showgirls and the cheap meals all allow visitors to construct their own reasons for being there, and to make themselves believe, if they want, that gambling is marginal to their holiday.

But in Tunica County, there are no scantily clad cocktail waitresses and no lavish shows in glitzy nightclubs. Tunica is about gambling pure and simple. There is little entertainment and no sleaze. It is family friendly, complete with childcare facilities. This is where us rubes from fly-over land, with our loosely cut Kmart clothes for our more ample forms, can feel comfortable feeding the slots. The casinos attract all kinds, including a good many low rollers from towns where the coffee shop that serves biscuits and gravy is the biggest attraction around, says Tim.

But for all its appeal to the middle-American comfort zone, the Bible Belt gambling business is not family friendly. And it is not church friendly. It paralyzes churches—churches that have a moral witness but whose members rely on the service jobs created by the casinos. The gambling business devastates some lives and it co-opts others into complicity. After observing thousands of middle Americans clutching their plastic cups of quarters under the glaring casino lights, Tim still doesn't get it: Why *do* people follow the siren song of Lady Luck when they know she's all show and no go?

CT

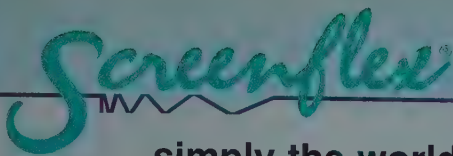
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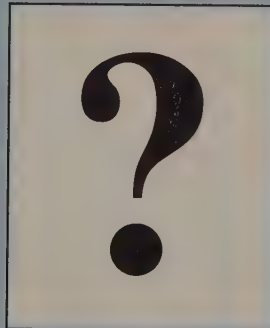
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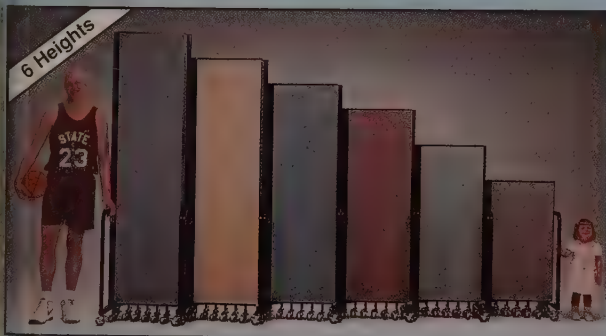


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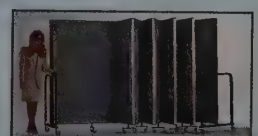
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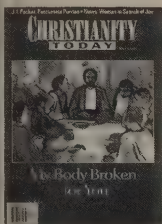


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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



The Power of Art

■ I am a hopeless non-artist from a family of artists. I am hung up on the cognitive and the analytical. My right brain is usually foreign territory for me to traverse. But when I am suddenly surprised by the power of aesthetic passion (the arts), as I was in the April 6 issue, I am amazed at how my life, my mind, my spirit are so enriched. "Were You There?" is a fabulous addition to CT's pages. Please, sir, I want some more!

*Chip Moody
Phoenix, Ariz.*

■ Another wonderful, thought-provoking, spiritually stretching issue! Many thanks! But when will an artist realistically portray the Last Supper and include the women (and children) who were undoubtedly there?

*Millie Samuelson
McPherson, Kans.*

Justice and the Death Penalty

■ The editorial ["The Lesson of Karla Faye Tucker," Apr. 6] asserts that "Christians know that we all deserve death," implying that capital punishment is unfairly reserved for murderers. But this gives short shrift (pun intended) to the legal distinction between innocence and guilt that is required of our earthly communities by God.

The justice of capital punishment becomes evident when we ask not, "Does a murderer deserve to die?" but rather, "Does a murderer deserve to live?" This focuses attention on the innocent life that was stolen by the murderer, and hence why society requires the forfeiture of the murderer's life. The Bible, in more places than CT cares to cite, suggests this answer, and makes deterrence, unequal enforcement, and consolation of the victim's survivors ancillary issues at best, and rhetorical red herrings at worst. May CT continue this conversation by doing justice to the best arguments for the death penalty, and extending mercy to those of us still beholden to the biblical concept of retributive punishment of wrongdoers.

*Lucas Morel
Siloam Springs, Ariz.*

■ While it may be popularly true that there is a (sinful) instinct to want some-

one to suffer what they have caused someone else to suffer, the biblical principle of punishment has a different feel. As Paul notes in the passage the editor mentions, the magistrate has divine sanction for punishment. It goes without saying that a private morality, free of a vengeful and grudge-bearing spirit, is God's purpose on a personal level [that] is commanded. The biblical mandate for public relationships is different, and in that setting a dispassionate application of punishment for public order is appropriate.

*Rev. Bill Fennema
Grand Rapids, Mich.*

■ I have long believed that the biblical mandate for capital punishment has nothing to do with vengeance, justice, or deterrence. I believe it has to do with mercy. It is not for the benefit of society. It is for the benefit of the murderer.

Barring a radical conversion such as that of Karla Faye Tucker, what are the options available to a murderer? (1) An empty life of perpetual uselessness extended indefinitely by incarceration; (2) An unreformed return to society where one must live always with fear and with the knowledge that one cannot atone for a heinous act; (3) Death.

I really believe that an all-wise, all-loving God, knowing the relative insignificance of this life compared to eternity, provided capital punishment as an act of mercy to the perpetrator. This belief has not, unfortunately, helped me resolve my ambivalence about capital punishment. But it has given me a less selfish perspective from which to view it.

*I. Dale Carroll, M.D.
St. Joseph, Mich.*

I appreciate the fact that your editorial on the death penalty reminds the reader that God extended grace with consequences to the first murderer, Cain. Our Heavenly Father came to the garden seeking the sinner after the first sin, and he later came to the scene of the first crime seeking to relate with both the criminal and the victim. We, following this example, need to be seekers of those hiding from God and seekers of the ones who fail to relate lovingly in the problem situations of life. Meanwhile, as those in the business of reconciliation, we can trust God for the vengeance that is his and his alone.

*Deborah J. Smith
Cincinnati, Ohio*

J. I. Packer As Mentor

■ Wendy Murray Zoba's article "Knowing Packer" [Apr. 6] was such a gift. I became a Christian in 1970, began my "growing up" in Jesus in the 1970s in InterVarsity Christian Fellowship in college—and J. I. Packer, through his book *Knowing God*, was one of my "mentors." Not only do I feel like I now know him, but I am even more grateful to God for his sovereignly leading me to read Packer's book and to start my journey to God's heart through it.

*Gerrie Riihimaki
Eugene, Oreg.*

I am a retired seminary professor who used Packer's books as collateral reading in many of my courses. I join a host of others in appreciating many of his insights and contributions.

I respectfully and strongly differ with his evaluation of the Keswick tradition and emphasis. Contrary to its tradition being "pietistic goofiness," as Packer called it, the Keswick emphases ultimately were attempts to unfold and apply the very teaching of mortification of sin for which Packer extols Owen, the great Puritan. I hardly think that some of the better known speakers at Keswick, including F. B. Meyer, H. C. G. Moule, Andrew Murray, John R. W. Stott, Hudson Taylor, and R. A. Torrey, can be linked with such terminology. As Ian Sellers states: "Keswick maintains that the Christian's tendency to sin is not extinguished but merely counteracted by victorious living in the Spirit" (The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church, Zondervan, 1975).

*Frederic R. Howe, Th.D.
Cincinnati, Ohio*

Thank you for the excellent article about James I. Packer and for the stimulating photographs that accompany it. Surely his services to the evangelical community and his steadfast commitment to the Word of God deserve such a tribute as well as Dr. McGrath's fine biography.

*Roger Nicole
Reformed Theological Seminary
Orlando, Fla.*

Women Getting Together

The movers come tomorrow, but I just had to respond to the Special News Report: "Good News for Women?" [Apr. 6]. I'm thrilled that women are getting together in many excellent conferences. I

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CLOTHBOUND NONFICTION

- (5) 1. **What's So Amazing About Grace?**, Philip Yancey, Zondervan
- 2. **Final Dawn Over Jerusalem**, John Hagee, Nelson
- (8) 3. **Joy for the Journey**, J. Countryman/Word
- (1) 4. **Streams in the Desert**, Updated Edition, L.B. Cowman & edited by James Reimann, Zondervan
- (3) 5. **The Great House of God**, Max Lucado, Word
- (2) 6. **The Weigh Down Diet**, Gwen Shamblin, Doubleday
- (9) 7. **Prayers That Avail Much**, commemorative gift edition, Word Ministries, Harrison House
- (13) 8. **Boundaries**, Henry Cloud & John Townsend, Zondervan
- (4) 9. **Lay Aside the Weight**, T.D. Jakes, Albury Publishing
- 10. **The Mom Factor**, Henry Cloud & John Townsend, Zondervan

PAPERBACK NONFICTION

- (1) 1. **Stories for the Heart**, Alice Gray, editor; Multnomah
- (6) 2. **Victory Over the Darkness**, Neil T. Anderson, Regal (Gospel Light)
- (13) 3. **And the Angels Were Silent**, Max Lucado, Multnomah
- (2) 4. **Apocalypse Code**, Hal Lindsey, Western Front Ltd.
- 5. **Six Hours One Friday**, Max Lucado, Multnomah
- (15) 6. **No Wonder They Call Him the Savior**, Max Lucado, Multnomah
- (17) 7. **God Came Near**, Max Lucado, Multnomah
- 8. **More Stories for the Heart**, Alice Gray, editor; Multnomah
- (7) 9. **The Fear of the Lord**, John Bevere, Creation House
- (4) 10. **A Divine Revelation of Hell**, Mary Baxter, Whitaker House

CLOTHBOUND FICTION

- (1) 1. **Nicolae**, Tim LaHaye & Jerry Jenkins, Tyndale
- 2. **Beyond the Picket Fence**, Lori Wick, Harvest House
- (2) 3. **This Present Darkness/Piercing the Darkness**, Frank Peretti, Inspirational Press
- 4. **The Tender Years**, Janette Oke, Bethany House
- (3) 5. **Only the River Runs Free**, Bodie & Brock Thoene, Nelson

PAPERBACK FICTION

- (1) 1. **Left Behind**, Tim LaHaye & Jerry Jenkins, Tyndale
- (2) 2. **Tribulation Force**, Tim LaHaye & Jerry Jenkins, Tyndale
- (3) 3. **The Confession**, Beverly Lewis, Bethany House
- (4) 4. **Redeeming Love**, Francine Rivers, Multnomah
- (5) 5. **The Shunning**, Beverly Lewis, Bethany House

* Indicates last month's position.

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hope someone like Mary Cagney will take note of the growing numbers attending the AD2000 Women's Track Conferences.

Two books (*Women As Risk-takers for God*, by Lorry Lutz, and *Our Time Has Come*, edited by Judy Mbugua) show there are women not avoiding hot-button issues.

Pat Argue
Kirkland, Wash.

Repentance and Accountability Needed

■ The review of *The Apostle* [Apr. 6] did a great thing by encouraging Christians to attend a viewing of this film, especially in light of all the negative publicity given to other movies. Thank you.

However, only a superficial, thoughtless viewer could conclude that the reason for E.F.'s crisis was the sudden realization of his wife's adultery and her usurping of authority at his (sic) church. What preceded her adultery was his womanizing, the battering, emotional, and spiritual abuse of her and the two children. What led to others' voting him out of the church was his absence for his "solo" evangelistic meetings, though ostensibly the present issue was the (unspoken) charges of his wife. E.F.'s lust for accomplishment was the sin this viewer was never wholly convinced that he ever repented of. Nor was it clear whether he ever repented of his murderous beating of the youth pastor.

The polity issues made me glad to be part of a connectional denomination. Neither the minister nor congregation were accountable to another body of spiritual leaders outside of this congregation.

Dawn Swartz
Wichita, Kans.

■ Although I know too little about films to be a movie critic, Randall Balmer's comments about Hollywood's Renegade Apostle aroused my warm admiration. The final paragraph is a gem of wisdom millions of Christians could benefit by reading.

Gerald Wright
Cambridge, Ontario,
Canada

King and the Evangelical Church

Thanks for the insightful cover write-up on Martin Luther King, Jr., evangelicals, and race relations in the United States [Mar. 2]. As an African evangelical, I believe candidly that the church's task of evangelism carries along with it the mandate from God to speak against social injustice wherever it is found—whether it is racism in America or tribalism in Africa.

What we cannot fathom is why the

conservative/evangelical church's relative silence over the civil-rights movement of the 1950s and '60s and all it sought to achieve. Was this reticence due to Martin Luther King's alleged promotion of the "social gospel," "communist involvement," or sexual impropriety? Granted that these allegations are true, the question still remains: Were the concerns Dr. King raised genuine and ones the church as the beacon of light should have been addressing?

Nathan Irmija Elawa
Jimeta-Yola, Nigeria

America has admitted and tried to deal with the primary racism of the white community. Meanwhile, the secondary problem of black racism has not only been ignored, but actually encouraged to where it has become institutionalized in our society. Like some others who strongly supported civil rights and opposed white racism in the 1960s, I don't feel hypocritical in opposing black racism now. Blacks have had their agendas supported and funded by government for nearly 30 years and are worse off than before. They got what they wanted, but not what they needed; what the integration movement was all about: the elimination of racial barriers so that blacks would be treated as individuals. Your article laments that evangelicals missed the chance to confront white racism. The irony is poignant that you now miss the opportunity to confront black racism. Once again, social acceptability takes priority over social justice.

Stanton Carter
Livermore, Calif.

It's not enough to catch up to Dr. King's dream. Rather, believers must surpass his vision in a new commitment to the costly discipleship required to redeem these times. His ministry was not about dreams and feel-good pieties, but about a transformative faith that reconstructs lives and systems in obedience to Jesus' reign. Christians might more fully identify with King's work by seriously reappropriating the fundamentals of his spiritual formation—the prophetic Scriptures, the pacifism of A. J. Muste, the socialism of Norman Thomas, the charisms of all who've borne the burden of unmerited suffering.

Carol Davidson
Battle Creek, Mich.

Forgiven Trespasses

I opened your March 2 edition to read the article "Still Wrestling with the Devil," by Randall Balmer, with myself fully dressed in my sanctimonious Sunday's best! Half-

way through the article, I found myself being delicately disrobed by the Holy Spirit. I have oftentimes believed that I had forgiven trespasses as the Lord had forgiven mine, but Balmer's article made it painfully obvious that I had not.

Thank you for printing such a balanced article. I pray that God reaches out and restores Jimmy Swaggart 100 percent in both the spiritual and ministry efforts. As Balmer points out, humanity has us all in its clutches! God bless Jimmy for "staying the course."

Larry Elsey
Millville, N.J.

Accountability is appropriate for behavior but not for condemning personal traits. Balmer's article is slanderous, but I would stop short of accusing him of being a slanderer. You can say that Swaggart looks like an actor, but to call his preaching "performing" is a slam on the sincerity of his character. Balmer may have started the article with good intentions but should have deserted it once Swaggart refused to be interviewed. We Christians insist on feeding upon our own wounded. The fact that Balmer was amused reveals his less than encouraging intentions. The sins dug up again here are the type that are usually symptomatic of greater personal problems, which may have been the only angle worthy of meaningful exploration. Balmer brings no integrity to the piece in the last two paragraphs where he attempts reconciliation.

Derek Lehman
Winnipeg, Man., Canada

What a magnificent piece of journalism on Jimmy Swaggart. Balanced yet truthful, it breathes the down-home culture that he was raised in. As one raised in the Assemblies of God in the 1940s and '50s, but now a Presbyterian, I agree with Randall Balmer's suggestion that free-flowing ecclesiastical styles of Pentecostalism may have led to Swaggart's excesses. However, that characteristic is also Pentecostalism's strength.

The article's best part is Balmer's observation of the demons that we all wrestle with. We see ourselves in Jimmy Swaggart, and if we're honest, we too are in need of amazing grace.

Gary W. Collins
Boulder, Colo.

[I read] this amazing statement run in the March 2 issue of Christianity Today: "Surely the transgressions of Bakker and Swaggart were not that much more egregious than Pat Robertson accepting Rupert Murdoch's millions for the sale of the Family Channel, a property that Robert-

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—From the Foreword by RICHARD FOSTER

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From the Author of *The Spirit of the Disciplines*

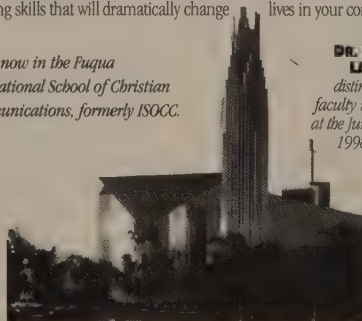
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son developed from tax-deductible contributions of the faithful." Frankly, I am shocked that a Christian publication of your stature would put out anything as misleading as this. The truth is:

1. The Family Channel was not sold to Rupert Murdoch. Murdoch's company bought International Family Entertainment, a New York Stock Exchange publicly traded company with a number of divisions and corporate subsidiaries.

2. What Murdoch bought was not "developed from tax-deductible contributions of the faithful." International Family Entertainment was financed by Telecommunications, Inc., Mario Gabelli, Alliance Capital, and many other investor companies and stockholders.

3. The Family Channel was sold in 1990 to International Family Entertainment when the Internal Revenue Service forced CBN to divest it because the Family Channel was too profitable to keep within a nonprofit charity.

4. When it was sold there were absolutely no "contributions of the faithful" that had not been repaid to CBN dozens of times over.

5. The entire transaction was described by our Washington counsel as a "dream deal." Out of it Regent University now has a \$305 million endowment, which makes it the best-funded evangelical educational institution in the country. CBN has received at least \$250 million, which has enabled it to win well over 100 million people to faith in Jesus Christ around the world to date. CBN is the remainder beneficiary of a trust which I set up, which hopefully will bring it as much money as it has already received. On top of that, CBN has retained in perpetuity 17.5 hours of extremely valuable air time each week on the Family Channel for its religious programs.

Pat Robertson
The Christian Broadcasting
Network, Inc.
Virginia Beach, Va.

Randall Balmer responds:

I am willing to concede Pat Robertson's point. Yes, it is technically true that "The Family Channel was not sold to Rupert Murdoch." Rupert Murdoch's corporation purchased International Family Entertainment, of which Mr. Robertson and his son, Tim, had a considerable financial stake, and IFE, in turn, owned the Family Channel. Beyond this obfuscation, however, the central question remains: Did Mr. Robertson and his son, Tim, or did they not garner "a personal profit of \$227 million from the sale of the parent company

of the Family Channel," as reported in the *Norfolk Virginian-Pilot* and elsewhere? And isn't it true that this property was developed out of the 700 Club or CBN, which in turn was built from, in my words, "the tax-deductible contributions of the faithful"? To put it another way, is there any way that Robertson could have realized millions of dollars in profits had his charitable organizations not received countless checks for 10, 20, and 50 dollars?

Libertarians and government

I am grateful to Ronald J. Sider and Fred Clark for addressing the issue of libertarianism ["Should We Give Up on Government?" Mar. 2]. I was disappointed, however, at their failure to provide persuasive scriptural support for their position against it. After stating that there is a "large body of biblical teaching that says the government has a responsibility to care for the poor," the authors quote seven passages of Scripture to support this assertion. Upon closer scrutiny, however, most of these passages state only that government has a responsibility to protect the poor from injustice—this being a proper function of government according to the libertarian view. Not a single passage cited constitutes a clear biblical mandate for the redistribution of wealth through the power of government—which is what I assume the authors mean by "caring" for the poor.

There may be a biblical case against libertarianism—and even for providing for the needs of the poor through the power of government—but I do not think that Sider and Clark have succeeded in presenting it.

Michael S. Iachetta
Plano, Tex.

One of the critical issues of our day is the increasing concentration of power in the hands of the central government and its increasing reach into every aspect of our lives. "Conservatives" in general and the so-called Christian Right in particular have failed to resist that behemoth in a serious way. They have been rendered impotent because they have succumbed to the most transparent seduction of political power—one that the liberals gave in to long ago. Sometimes called the "golem temptation," it is the dream of using the behemoth's mighty power to do good on a lavish scale (shades of the Grand Inquisitor!). Libertarians, in contrast, make resisting the behemoth their central and focused goal—an attitude that (in my opinion) is necessary to any hope of success against it.

Libertarianism isn't workable as a way

of life. It is inadequate as a basis for society. But no Christian need buy into it at that level in order to affirm it as an effective tool for critique and deconstruction. As an ideology of politics it will (like any other) produce abominations if it is applied with enough consistency over a long enough period of time. But right now, that is a contingent danger. Right now, all of us face dangers that are much closer and more concrete. In that context, Sider's and Clark's plea that we "not give up on government" seem a perverse entreaty to those who are caught in the jaws of the behemoth. It seems a bit like asking David not to "give up on Goliath."

Why are Christians attracted to the libertarian agenda? The answer is simple. Against the relentless encroachments of centralized power, libertarians have a pruning hook that might actually trim some of it back. Nobody else does. *Brooks Alexander*
Berkeley, Calif.

The attempt to discredit libertarianism by informing us that a millionaire pornographer has libertarian sentiments is unworthy of serious thinkers.

Also egregious is the exegesis of the Hebrew scriptures on which Sider and Clark seek to ground their assertions that libertarianism violates biblical principles. No doubt, we can discern general principles in the history of God's dealings with Israel: faith in God calls for just treatment of the marginalized. But the facile move from what God prescribed for a theocratic monarchy to the specifics of what's morally proper for a modern secular state belies an unprincipled, opportunistic use of the biblical text.

In the ideal, as Sider and Clark point out, government is God's servant for good. But, as Augustine saw, in reality it is often little more than a den of thieves. Which it is will in part depend on whether its Christian citizens testify to the moral bounds within which ought to operate, rather than acquiescing to the statist idolatry of the dominant culture.

Prof. Donald H. Wacome
Northwestern College
Orange City, Iowa

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LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

Falwell Denounces Operation Rescue

Operation Rescue (OR) is accusing Liberty University and its chancellor, Jerry Falwell, of being soft on child pornography.

At the entrance to the Lynchburg, Virginia, school on March 19, three dozen protesters held placards showing photographs of nude children from a book they claimed was available at the campus bookstore.

Falwell quickly and angrily called the demonstrators "thugs and thieves." The protesters took part in ten days of rallies and prayer vigils for OR national director Flip Benham, jailed in Lynchburg for trespassing during an anti-abortion protest (CT, Apr. 6, 1998, p. 19).

Patrick Mahoney, director of the Washington, D.C.—

based Christian Defense Coalition, and Keith Tucci, Benham's predecessor at OR,



Targeting Falwell: Tucci leads a protest at Liberty.

led a series of demonstrations in Benham's support. At the March 19 rally, Mahoney held a copy of the book *Age of Innocence*, by photographer David Hamil-

ton, which he said had been ordered at the campus bookstore operated by Barnes & Noble. Although the store does not carry the book, it had been ordered through the store by an OR worker.

However, Mahoney admitted, the store manager canceled the book order and refunded the deposit money upon discovering its contents. The copy displayed had been purchased elsewhere.

The relationship between Falwell and OR, both longtime abortion opponents, turned contentious after Falwell distanced himself from Benham after the local protest.

Falwell denounced Benham's tactics, apologized to city officials, and reimbursed the city for the costs incurred from Benham's protest.

*By Christopher Calnan
in Lynchburg,*

Leaders Retain 'Chastity' Vow

Mainline Presbyterians have rejected an effort to loosen their official standards on who may be ordained and on clergy sexuality, effectively banning ordination of practicing homosexuals.

In late March, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (PCUSA) announced that the denomination's regional bodies had defeated by a 2-to-1 margin the "fidelity and integrity" amendment. As a result, the PCUSA will retain its "fidelity and chastity" amendment, approved at last year's general assembly (CT, Aug. 11, 1997, p. 56).

More Light Churches Network, a group of 95 congregations that openly ordain homosexuals, is not expected to abide by the reaffirmed amendment, which states that clergy are expected to demonstrate "fidelity within the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman or chastity in singleness." The defeated replacement amendment said, "Among these standards [for church office] is the requirement to demonstrate fidelity and integrity in marriage or singleness, and in all relationships of life."

According to Presbyterian News Service, the More Light network anticipates disciplinary actions against openly homosexual PCUSA clergy. But some conservative activists say they do not advocate "purging" homosexual clergy. Joe Rightmyer of Presbyterians for Renewal says, "We need to recover what is offered in Scripture, not just what is opposed."

Former moderator John Buchanan worries about the consequences of polarization within the denomination, saying, "The church needs to show a divided world how to stay in dialogue and service with each other, even when we disagree."

CT

CONGRESS

Bankruptcy Exemption Progresses

A bill that protects churches from creditors seeking to confiscate donations made by bankrupt contributors is making headway in Congress.

Recent court rulings have not protected churches from efforts by debt collectors who have successfully demanded church tithes given by individuals who had filed for bankruptcy.

Rep. Ron Packard (R-Calif.) says his bill, the Religious Freedom and Charitable Donation Protection Act, which would shield church tithes from bankruptcy proceedings, has strong support from both

parties. "Most were shocked it was even an issue," says Packard, a Mormon. The Senate counterpart introduced by Iowa Republican Charles Grassley, a Baptist, would bar collection agencies from suing churches for donations and would allow bankrupt members to tithe during the repayment period (CT, Dec. 8, 1997, p. 76).

Although the bill has wide congressional support, bankruptcy lawyers are actively opposing its passage. "It would be different if, forgive the analogy, the church was selling salvation or offering a specific

service for the money that was given to them," says Stephen Case of the National Bankruptcy Conference. "The church would treat a person the same if they didn't give them a dime."

The new legislation comes after the Supreme Court struck down the first civil test of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (CT, Aug. 11, 1997, p. 48). Since then, there has been a surge in the number of suits against churches for contributions made by bankrupt donors. For example, attorneys for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints say collection agencies are seeking to recover church donations in about 100 cases.

*By Walter R. Ratliff
in Washington.*

Two Cook Magazines Join CTi

Christianity Today, Inc. (CTi) and Cook Communications Ministries in April started a "strategic partnership," under which CTi assumes ownership and operation of Cook magazines *Virtue* and *Christian Parenting Today*.

The Colorado Springs-based Cook Communications abruptly shut down both publications on February 20, just after the March/April issues had gone to press. The new publications bring to 12 the number of magazines published by CTi, based in Carol Stream, Illinois (www.christianity.net). Existing CTi magazines have a combined circulation of 1.5 million.

"Both magazines are viable and show solid growth potential in the CTi environment," says president Harold L. Myra.

Christian Parenting Today, launched 10 years ago, has a circulation of 120,000. *Virtue*, which has been published for 20 years with the purpose of "helping women build Christ-like character," has 100,000 subscribers.



Most of the 14 employees of the two magazines had found other jobs by the time of the purchase. In the interim, before new editorial staff is hired, some of CTi's 140 employees will produce the publications. The purchase accelerates building expansion plans that CTi already had in the works.

Under terms of the agreement, Cook will develop book clubs using CTi's subscriber data base.

CTi also has announced a three-year partnership agreement with Promise Keepers to develop a bimonthly devotional publication, *Men of Integrity*, beginning in July. The company does not expect recent Promise Keepers financial difficulties (CT, April 6, 1998, p. 18) to impede the plans. CT

MUSIC

New Oratorio Features Black Gospel

When classical composer Paul Schoenfield, 51, grew up in Detroit, he spent many Sunday mornings enthralled by the gospel music he would hear of black church worship services over the radio. So when Schoenfield, an American Jew now living in Israel, was asked to compose an original, sacred oratorio, he agreed to do it if he could use a black gospel style to tell the story of Deborah as recorded in Judges 4-5.

The result is *D'vorah*, a five-

part, 45-minute oratorio written in an eclectic style that Schoenfield says draws upon "nineteenth-century spirituals, the ragtime and jazz influences of the early twentieth century, and today's rap and disco gospel."

D'vorah is the first of three millennium works based on biblical themes and commissioned by *Soli Deo Gloria* (SDG) of West Chicago, Illinois. *D'vorah* premiered in five March concerts in Haifa, Israel, before sold-out crowds,

News Briefs

◆ The **Christian Broadcasting Network** (CBN) reached an agreement with the IRS in March to preserve the ministry's tax-exempt status. CBN spokesperson Patty Silverman says the ministry founded by Pat Robertson and the IRS disagreed over the "tax significance of CBN activities." However, CBN lost its tax-exempt status for 1986 and 1987 due to an IRS ruling that three affiliate organizations were involved in political activities during those years. Silverman says "CBN made a significant payment to the IRS to settle the dispute."

◆ **Paul Bubna**, president of the Christian & Missionary Alliance for the past two years, died of a massive heart attack March 31 while playing tennis. He was 65. Bubna had served on the C&MA board of managers for 14 years and had been president of Alliance Theological Seminary in Nyack, New York, from 1991 to 1996.



Bubna

◆ Suspended **Roman Catholic priest** Rudolph Kos, 52, was sentenced on April 1 to life in prison for sexually assaulting altar boys. Last year, a jury in a civil suit ordered the Roman Catholic Diocese of Dallas to pay a record \$119.6 million in damages for sexual abuse caused by Kos (CT, Sept. 1, 1997, p. 95).

◆ Religious broadcaster **John Hagee** is suing the U.S. Postal Service, claiming it has "delayed, held, and even censored" his ministry's mailings. Hagee, pastor of the 16,000-member Cornerstone Church in San Antonio, alleges that for ten months last year the Postal Service denied use of the nonprofit standard mail rate and charged higher rates.

◆ A bipartisan group of lawmakers has formed the **Religious Prisoners Congressional Task Force**, which will allow representatives to "adopt" foreigners imprisoned for their religious beliefs. Rep. Joseph R. Pitts (R-Pa.) says the task force urges legislators to act "as a voice for suffering religious believers." Task force organizers are Rep. Tony Hall (D-Ohio), Sen. Sam Brownback (R-Kan.), and Sen. Joseph Lieberman (D-Conn.).

◆ **Gospel Rescue Ministries** of Washington, D.C., has had its membership status reinstated in the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability after complying with council standards (CT, Jan. 12, 1998, p. 57). CT

followed by three American performances last month in Washington, D.C. SDG cofounder John Nelson (CT, April 7, 1997, p. 38) conducted the concerts at both venues.

D'vorah is written for a black gospel choir and five soloists, including a tenor who serves as narrator and "preacher" with some freedom for improvisation. The story portrays two strong women: Judge Deborah, whose army led by Barak overcame Israel's enemy, the Canaanites; and Jael, who killed Canaanite commander Sisera when he sought protection from her after his troops were defeated.



Making music: Nelson and Schoenfield.

But Schoenfield does not glorify the violence, nor does he allow the moment of victory to become an occasion for musical exaltation.

By Richard A. Kauffman
in Washington, D.C.

The Myth of the Needy Child?

Newspaper exposé finds the promise of some child-sponsorship programs falls short.

The *Chicago Tribune*, in a lengthy exposé of child-sponsorship charities, reported that the marketing of some nonprofits creates false impressions, and that management at times is so lax that individuals were paying to support children who had died.

The *Tribune* investigated four major groups—Save the Children, Childreach, Christian Children's Fund, and Children International—concluding that the concept of individual sponsorship of a poor child is largely a marketing myth. The March reports, in two 16-page sections titled "The Miracle Merchants: Myths of Child Sponsorship," revealed that individual children often receive few or no direct benefits, even though marketing campaigns suggest otherwise. Three years ago, *Tribune* reporters began sponsoring a dozen youth from these organizations. Last year, the journalists visited their sponsored children to find out if the donations had made a difference.

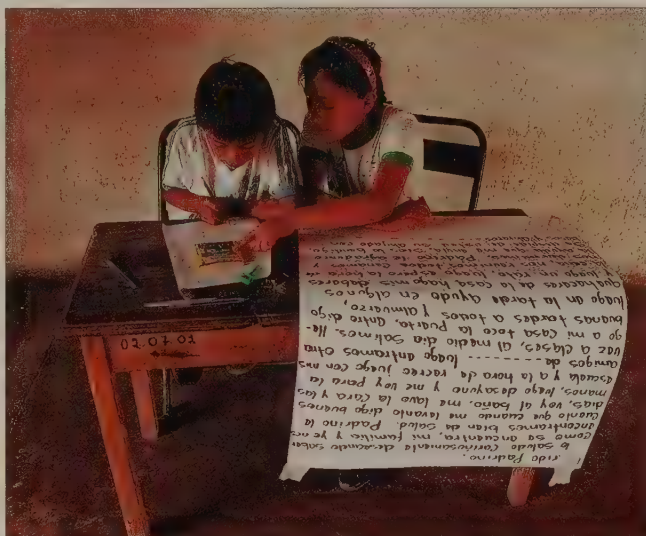
The newspaper asserted that while most of the groups have evolved in their field work from an individual focus to community development, their market-driven method of funding has remained the same: one donor, one child.

But the groups say their supporters understand the concept. "We're very open about it," says Save the Children spokesperson Alan Carter. "We want individual sponsors for individual children, but the sponsor's money doesn't go directly to that child."

NO BIG FALLOUT: Starting nearly 60 years ago with wartime orphans, child-sponsorship efforts have grown to become a billion-dollar-a-year charitable enterprise, potentially touching millions of families worldwide. Yet it is an industry that struggles to align its message with its product.

Child-sponsorship agencies say the impact of the exposé on donors has been less than expected. For example, Save the Children fielded 257 calls, with 93 sponsorship terminations, by mid-April. "The articles were very misrepresentative of our work, and we're displeased about that, but overall the impact has been pretty minimal" says Cheri Dahl of Christian Children's Fund, which was founded in 1938 and is nonsectarian in its orientation.

The *Tribune* says its investigation has caused a number of child sponsorship agencies to review their operations. Save



Keeping in touch: Guatemalan siblings 11-year-old César and 14-year-old Judith Mux write to a sponsor using a form letter provided by Children International.

the Children beefed up its field accountability and reprimanded workers in Mali where the organization failed to notify donors of the deaths of two dozen sponsored children.

Three prominent evangelical child sponsorship groups—World Vision, Compassion International, and Food for the Hungry—received only brief mention in the series. World Vision and Food for the Hungry are members—along with Save the Children, Christian Children's Fund, and Childreach—of a coalition of 160 relief-and-development organizations called InterAction. Member child-sponsorship agencies have request-

ed an independent advisory panel to review sponsorship practices.

RAISING STANDARDS: More than 20 organizations that have child sponsorship as part of their ministry are members of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA). In 1996, ECFA issued an advisory that outlined specific guidelines that member child-sponsorship agencies must follow. The advisory said that if a group appeals for funds for an individual child, the sponsored child must receive a direct benefit from the development activities in the community.

"The [ECFA] standards committee felt that some of the solicitations were not clear, or may even in some cases have been misleading," says ECFA president Paul D. Nelson. "What we were calling for is raising that standard so that there's less questioning by anybody who reads it."

Although many other groups as well as state and federal agencies keep an eye on

nonprofit child sponsorship, some charity leaders believe that the child-sponsor relationship itself also provides accountability. Don Paterson, vice president for donor and field relations for World Vision, says, "The sponsor has the opportunity to correspond with that child, and if they are able, to visit their family and community and hold us accountable to the work that we're doing."

A BETTER WAY? Daniel Borochoff, president of the American Institute of Philanthropy, believes, however, that child sponsorship is not the most efficient way to help a child. "Just think of the savings if the charity didn't have to do this charade of matching up an in-

dividual with a kid," he says.

But the agencies that attempt to change their marketing are likely to have less money to work with overall. Ken Waters, former public relations director for World Vision, says that if a child-sponsorship organization would reposition itself as a development agency, it could "expect as much as a 50 percent loss of income over a two- or three-year period."

Borochoff notes that if donors fully understood the amount of money spent on mass-market campaigns, donors might be less inclined to participate in child sponsorship. In addition, the different ways that charities report their

spending practices makes it difficult for donors to determine which group spends its funds most productively in helping needy children.

Of the \$22 that a sponsor gives monthly to the Scottsdale, Arizona-based Food for the Hungry, 62 percent goes toward support of the child. In 1996, Save the Children reported that 80 percent of its child-sponsorship income went to program services. But Borochoff says at least 60 percent of Save the Children's child-sponsorship budget came from government sources. Save the Children would not indicate what percentage of individual donations went to program services. "The public shouldn't give them money if they can't answer that basic question," Borochoff says.

Waters, now a journalism professor at Pepperdine University, says evangelical groups have faced the dilemma of what is the best way to raise money in contrast with the best way to deliver services to needy children in the developing world. Waters says experiments in marketing community development projects fell flat.



TV marketing: Sad-looking children often are part of commercials for agencies such as Save the Children.

He says, "They're boring, and they just don't compel people to respond."

Fifteen years ago, while Waters worked for World Vision, the organization tried a new approach to fundraising called Life Sharing, in which they appealed to donors to sponsor a community. "People just did not respond," Waters says. "They wanted that one-to-one relationship with a kid. So it was with a bit of reluctance that World Vision went back to child sponsorship and tried to retool it to be a bit more up-

front in what you would expect and what was really happening."

For example, a recent World Vision ad featuring celebrity Debby Boone solicits sponsorship for individual children. But halfway through, the text says, "Your sponsorship gifts will also help your child's entire community become more self-sufficient."

At Compassion International, which has had child sponsorship programs in place since 1952, president Wess Stafford says his group has never shifted its services toward community development. "We have not changed," says Stafford. "These *Tribune* articles have compelled us to change absolutely nothing." The Colorado Springs-based organization sponsors about 250,000 children through partnerships with local churches.

But Childreach CEO Sam Worthington says his organization over the past decade has made a shift from working through families and communities as an end, to seeing them as a means—with the child as the end. Worthington notes, "Our marketing has evolved to reflect this message."

By Art Moore.

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Still opposed: Vashti McCollum is still against efforts to reintroduce religion in public schools.

Back to the Future?

Antischool-prayer crusaders cite a 50-year-old case in resisting the proposed Religious Freedom Amendment.

When the House Judiciary Committee on March 5 approved the Religious Freedom Amendment barring the government from infringing on religious expression in public schools, 85-year-old Vashti McCollum thought she had won such a battle long ago.

It was five decades to the month that the Supreme Court ruled in her favor in *McCollum v. Board of Education*, prohibiting for the first time religious instruction in public schools.

"Ever since the decision was handed down, people have tried devious ways to put sectarian religion in the public schools and to get the public funds for parochial schools," says McCollum. "I think [the Religious Freedom Amendment] is designed to undermine the First Amendment of the Constitution."

However, Rep. Ernest J. Istook Jr. (R-Okla.), who has been leading the fight for the Religious Freedom Amendment, says federal judges are the ones who are undermining the Constitution. "When prayer or religious expression occurs on public property, [judges] turn a blind eye to the fact that it's protected as free expression of religion." He believes judges are misapplying the constitutional ban on the establishment of religion. He says, "The same First Amendment that protects us has been turned upside-down and is used as a

weapon against religion." His amendment, Istook believes, will restore full freedom of religion as originally intended.

McCollum's own case began in the early 1940s in Champaign, Illinois, where public school students thought nothing of saying the Lord's Prayer before assembly.

McCollum was a homemaker raising three sons when her eldest, 9-year-old Jim, came home and asked her for a quarter so he could take religious instruction in his public grammar school. The McCollums had never been churchgoers, and her husband, John "Pappy" McCollum, a University of Illinois professor, vehemently opposed the class. But Vashti, although a humanist, gave Jim the money so he would not feel left out.

'RELIGIOUS INDOCTRINATION': Jim McCollum, now 63 and a computer consultant in Magnolia, Arkansas, remembers balking at illustrated Bible stories, and his mother recalls fuming over a poster her son made of the Resurrection.

The next year, Jim opted out of religious instruction and often spent the hour in a chair in the hallway used for detention. "He came home crying and I thought, *If he can't take it, I can't take it.*"

School administrators were unresponsive, she says, so she contacted Philip Schug, a local Unitarian minister, who agreed she had grounds for a lawsuit.

Schug, now 83, remembers rustling up support from wealthy Chicago liberals committed to church-state separation. "Soon we were raising a lot of money," he says, "and we filed a suit against the legislature of Illinois."

Their first lawyer, Landon Chapman, wanted to prove that religious teaching is inevitably sectarian by demonstrating how minority groups were discriminated against when schools got involved in religion. Vashti McCollum's father, a prominent atheist, took the stand and announced to the court that the Adam and Eve story was fictitious and ministers who believed in God were insane. Soon the press dubbed his daughter "the atheist mother." The court ruled Jim was not harassed, that the Champaign system was not sectarian, and that religion class was like any other extracurricular activity in the schools.

ANOTHER STRATEGY: When the Illinois Supreme Court agreed to hear the case on appeal, Vashti McCollum hired a new lawyer, Walter Dodd, an expert on constitutional law. Dodd argued that publicly segregating students in sectarian groups for religious education in schools during school hours violated constitutional guarantees of freedom of religion. And he said such action is not validated by allowing children to be excused.

In June 1947, the U.S. Supreme Court agreed to review the case.

Given the potential precedent, religious groups that had remained on the sidelines went public with their support of Vashti McCollum. The Synagogue Council of America, the American Unitarian Association, and the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists filed briefs on her behalf. The Joint Conference Committee on Public Relations, set up by the Southern Baptist Convention, the two Northern Baptist Conventions, and the National Baptist Convention, also filed a brief backing the McCollums.

In March 1948, the Supreme Court ruled 8 to 1 that public school systems may not assist religious groups in giving religious instruction and thus spreading their faith. Half a century later, Istook says that his amendment (CT, April 27, 1998, p. 15) is a response to decades of Supreme Court decisions that have barred or discouraged religious expression in public places. Istook says the McCollum case had the unacceptable consequence of shutting out religious expression from public places. The amendment would restore students' right to religious expression, including prayer, in public schools.

By Julia Lieblich, Religion News Service.

Hispanic Christian Radio Grows by Blocks and Blends

New information-age strategy enables stations to compete with secular counterparts.

In Orlando, Florida, a Spanish-language Christian station has tied its major secular competitor for first place in the ratings wars.

Offering a full service of news, sports, and advice to a non-Christian audience, the station's successful programming formula blends spiritual and practical themes, linked with Hispanic Christian music. "We need to offer what the listeners need to hear: how to buy a house, how to finance a car, how to stay healthy," says Luis Hernandez, general manager of Orlando's WRLZ, known as Radio Luz.

Melvin Rivera, the Miami-based publications coordinator for the United Bible Society and past president of Hispanic National Religious Broadcasters, says Radio Luz, WWRV Radio Vision Cristiana in New York, and several Christian-format stations in Puerto Rico are "changing the way that Christian broadcasting is being done."

Along with its information format, Radio Luz fills 75 percent of its airtime with Spanish-language Christian music, in contrast to other Christian-format stations, which rely heavily on preaching and teaching programs. "As a result, non-Christians listen," Hernandez says.

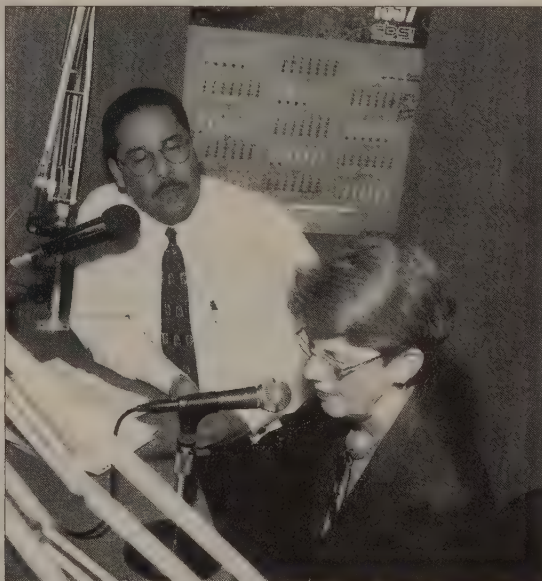
STATION EXPANSION: The number of Spanish Christian radio stations is expanding, especially in Texas and Southern California.

There are around three dozen Hispanic Christian radio stations in the United States, including Puerto Rico, and about 15 Hispanic Christian TV stations. Churches or ministries own the majority of stations, which is different from English-language Christian stations, which are most frequently operated by commercial groups.

Hispanic Christian-format stations are not limited to areas traditionally thought of as Spanish-speaking strongholds. In

some Michigan communities, for example, stations have started inserting two-hour blocks of Spanish programs.

"That's how most Christian stations in the U.S. start," Rivera says. "In Miami, right now there [are] churches starting



Community impact: Radio Luz general manager Luis R. Hernandez interviews Orlando mayor Glenda Hood, one of the ways WRLZ competes with other stations.

broadcasting with a block of five to six hours a day with the goal of purchasing a station."

But recent federal changes have made it easier for commercial interests to own more broadcasting outlets.

"The big corporations are buying all of the stations that they can buy," Rivera says. "Those who have one small station are increasing the price and selling them to the groups, which want more presence in the market. That makes it difficult for Spanish broadcasters to buy."

The high cost of owning a station has not stopped Puerto Rican Christians who have a tradition of supporting religious broadcasting. New York has a large Puerto Rican population, which has contributed to the success of Radio Vision Cristiana, purchased for more

than \$11 million. "In most other cities, Christians do not have the history of knowing what a station can do, so they do not have the custom of giving to broadcasting," Rivera says.

PROGRAMMING SHORTFALL: Hispanic broadcasters are discovering that truly helpful programming is hard to find.

Linda Martin Monroe, program director of Spanish-language KHCB in Houston, says, "We need to have programs that discuss divorce, abuse, unfaithfulness, and a macho lifestyle." Her station provides talk shows featuring Christian professionals as counselors. However, Monroe says, the majority of her station's listeners are women, and she has not found programs for men.

Rivera says three networks currently provide programming, but more are needed. "I would love to see the day when we have satellite services for all the Hispanic Christian radio stations in Latin America and the United States," Rivera says. "We need to have programming that is not just translating English into Spanish but is produced by Hispanics with the Spanish mentality, with more orientation to Spanish culture and needs."

Hispanic listeners are receptive to evangelical radio, producers agree. Many immigrants are a long way from their families in Latin America. Monroe says, "Many are nominally Catholic, do not attend church, and so are very open to the gospel."

There is an increasing need for networks to produce segmented programming for children, teenagers, young married adults, and non-Christians. Rivera says, "The stations are there and are discovering that they need to grow, but they don't have the resources."

The Hispanic National Religious Broadcasters, an arm of the National Religious Broadcasters, has been instrumental in getting Spanish-speaking Christians to cooperate. "In the past, we have not worked together or learned from each other or done networking," says Rivera, who completed a three-year term as president of the Hispanic National Religious Broadcasters in February. "We may have theological differences, but basically we are the same. We can learn from one another, we can work together, and we can change the world together."

By Kenneth D. MacHarg.

Senators Champion Rival Bill on Religious Persecution

When U.S. senators, unhappy with a proposed House bill on religious persecution, are supporting rival legislation that they believe will do a more effective job of protecting religious freedom globally.

On March 25, the International Relations Committee sent the Freedom from Religious Persecution Act, also known as the Wolf-Specter Bill, to the full House. The measure, which has undergone many revisions, would cut off U.S. aid to countries that tolerate or engage in religious persecution (CT, April 27, p. 25).

The next day, assistant Senate majority leader Don Nickles (R-Okla.) introduced the International Religious Freedom Act. His legislation has the backing of Senate Foreign Relations Committee chair Jesse Helms (R-N.C.), as well as support from Catholic, Jewish, mainline, and evangelical representatives. Those backing the bill include Joseph Lieberman (D-

Conn.), Connie Mack (R-Fla.), and Mike DeWine (R-Ohio).

A BROADER BILL: Critics of the Wolf-Specter Bill believe that it defines religious persecution too narrowly in focusing mostly on threats to life and limb. They say under the definition of "widespread and ongoing torture" in the Wolf-Specter Bill, limited sanctions could be applied only to Sudan.

By contrast, the Nickles bill would:

- Include a broader definition of religious persecution.
- Create an ambassador at large for religious liberty in the State Department, rather than a director of an office for religious persecution.
- Allow more flexibility in choosing from a range of 16 different economic or diplomatic sanctions.
- Provide federal financing for promotion of religious freedom.
- Include limits of choice to economic sanctions for gross violators.

Rep. Bob Clement (D-Tenn.) says the State Department last year reported that 77 countries violated the religious liberties of their citizens in some way. The Nickles bill would have required action in all

those countries while the Wolf-Specter Bill would have covered only a handful, if any, according to Clement. Religious freedom experts are debating whether legal restrictions on religious expression in reality constitute a more ominous threat than the relatively few incidents of torture and persecution.

PERSECUTION WATCHERS

REACT: Religious persecution experts are glad the issue is receiving widespread recognition.

"We're excited about the national debate that these bills are creat-



Religious punishment: Voice of the Martyrs says children in an Islamic school in Bangladesh have been chained for not memorizing the Qur'an.

Evangelicals Warned Against Persecution Apathy

Evangelicals should increase the pressure on the U.S. government to work more aggressively in protecting religious freedom worldwide, according to experts in the struggle against religious persecution.

"We have accepted silence as the dominant option for too long," says Paul Marshall, author of *Their Blood Cries Out* (Word Publishing, 1997).

In March at the first International Conference on Religious Persecution, in Columbia, South Carolina, scholars, church leaders, and public-policy experts gathered to strategize ways to keep the plight of the suffering church on the minds of American Christians.

Some experts believe that the situation in Nigeria shows what can happen when Christians stand quietly on the sidelines. In Nigeria, neither the Muslims nor the Christians represent a clear majority of the nation's 107 million people. But Muslims hold control of the government and the military, giving them the power to implement Islamic law, which

discriminates against all non-Muslims.

"For some time, Christians refused to be involved in the affairs of the nation," says Nigerian Jeremiah Gada, a doctoral student at Columbia International University. "Now, they are trying to reassert themselves."

Despite growing awareness among evangelicals to the plight of the persecuted in the past year (CT, Aug. 11, 1997, p. 61), Marshall believes most Christians remain indifferent. Indeed, only 100 ministry leaders attended the conference. Marshall says Christian groups should be issuing statements, educating their members, raising the matter of persecution with political leaders, and attempting to contact Christians in other nations.

"It is vital that the evangelical community in the U.S. apply political pressure," says Marshall, of the Institute for Christian Studies in Toronto. Unless political pressure is put on federal officials, "the attention on the issue of religious persecution will cease," Marshall says.

Marshall also advocates requiring annual reports on persecution by the State Department, as proposed by the Wolf-Specter Bill now before Congress. "Unless clear, forthright reporting and mechanisms for addressing these issues are put into place, then the religious persecution campaign of 1997-98 will be useless."

Rep. Bob Inglis (R-S.C.) says congressional representatives have clout internationally: "People from other parts of the world are very conscious about what members of Congress think about them."

Yet persecution of Christians is still widespread. According to Marshall, 200 million Christians are suffering severe persecution, and there are "situations of violence" in more than 30 countries.

Michael Horowitz of the Hudson Institute sees a parallel to Jewish persecution during the Holocaust. "I know as a Jew what the consequences will be if you [Christians] do not stand in fellowship with your brothers and sisters."

By Mary Cagney in South Carolina.

ing among the public," says Steve Haas, coordinator of Prayer for the Persecuted Church. "This issue should be worthy of one or more legislative efforts on behalf of Congress. This is an important issue, and we as Christians can't be silent now."

Yet some experts on the issue believe the Nickles bill does not offer as concrete a response to persecution as the Wolf-Specter Bill. They claim it would allow government bureaucrats too much latitude in determining the penalties for countries that restrict religious freedom.

Ann Buwalda, U.S. director of the British-based Jubilee Campaign, is concerned about the Nickles bill. She said, "I prefer to see an approach that gives enforcement of human rights standards as in the Wolf-Specter Bill."

Nina Shea, director of the Freedom House Center for Religious Freedom, says, "I feel the Nickles bill has many positive elements in it, but I'm concerned that the bureaucratic process for imposing sanctions under the Nickles scheme may weaken its impact." Religious leaders in the countries where freedom of religion is in jeopardy are ambivalent about resorting to penalties against their countries' governments. Several have expressed concern that Wolf-Specter takes a one-size-fits-all approach to penalties without allowing any diplomatic approach.

IMMIGRATION PROBLEMS: James Robb of Evangelicals for Immigration Reform, is concerned about the effect of the Wolf-Specter Bill on immigration. Robb testified before a congressional committee that the Wolf-Specter Bill redraws the definition of *credible fear*,

which is the legal threshold of danger that must be experienced by a refugee to receive an asylum hearing in the United States. Robb says if asylum seekers, such as Coptic Christians in Egypt, merely belong to a group that the Office of Religious Persecution Monitoring has determined is persecuted, it may be reason enough to allow them into the country immediately.

Robb predicts that, as a result of the Wolf-Specter asylum provisions, many



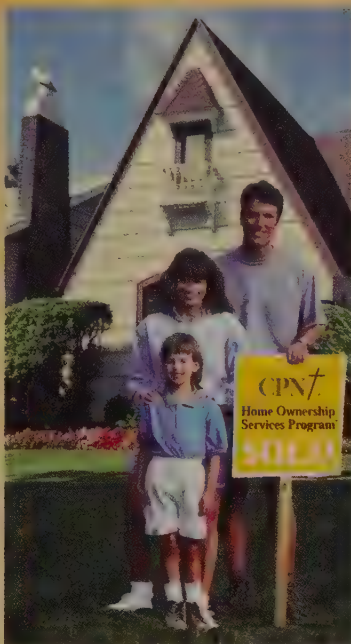
Nickles

Middle Eastern countries would be "emptied of Christians in a few decades," and that "Congress would have unwittingly worked to undo the labor of Christian missionaries and martyrs over the centuries."

Robb believes that the Wolf-Specter Bill is a "good idea in concept," but he has endorsed the

Nickles bill. "I hope we don't squander this moment," he says.

By Mary Cagney.



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NIGERIA

Pope's Visit Blindsides Evangelicals

Key Nigerian evangelical leaders were surprised and disappointed by the actions of some Protestants during Pope John Paul II's March visit.

Rick Calenberg, Nigerian director of the Society of International Ministries, says he was amazed by the wide variety of people who overreacted to the pope. "Just

about anybody who wanted a special spiritual experience showed up," Calenberg says. "They wanted to have the chance to touch the seat where the pope had sat, thinking they could get such blessings from that," Calenberg says. Many Nigerian Protestant leaders in pursuit of a papal blessing

traveled to the cities of Abuja and Onitsha, where the pope was speaking.

Calenberg says the Protestant overreaction "reaffirms the need for sound biblical teaching and training for the African continent."

Victor Musa, president of the Evangelical Church of West Africa, was troubled by the pope's beatification



Gift-giving: A Nigerian welcomes the pope.



Spiritual harvest: Nigerian Pentecostal churches, including Redeeming Love Chapel in Lagos, are the fastest-growing religious group in the country.

of the first Nigerian, twentieth-century priest Michael Iwene Tansi. Musa says, "We should exalt the Creator, the Savior more than the person that is a beneficiary of the grace of God." Just before the papal visit, Tansi's body was exhumed and prepared for beatification, a step toward canonization. Thousands of Christians, many seeking a miracle, struggled to touch the body lying in state at Holy Trinity Cathedral in Onitsha.

Catholic leaders called the

pope's visit a dynamic success. More than 4 million Nigerians attended two papal masses. In addition, John Paul II called for Nigeria's military dictators to release political prisoners.

With a total population of 107 million people, Nigeria has 42 million Muslims. The country includes 10 million Roman Catholics, 6.7 million Pentecostals, and 5.7 million Anglicans, according to *World Churches Handbook*.

By Obed Minchakpu
in Jos, Nigeria.

ISRAEL

'Antimissionary' Bill Effort Backfires

An agreement designed to defuse the tension surrounding an "antimissionary" bill aimed at Christian and Messianic Jew activity in Israel (CT, Feb. 9, 1998, p. 86) has generated controversy of its own.

Drafted by an ad-hoc committee of Jewish and Christian leaders, the agreement between 50 local "representative Christian bodies" and Knesset member Nissim Zvilli was supposed to provide an assurance of goodwill on the part of the Christians. In return, Labor party leader Zvilli would withdraw his support for the bill.

At the last minute, however, some Christian groups de-

clared they would not sign because Zvilli told the Associated Press the agreement was "better than a law," and that it meant that Israeli Christian organizations would stop all missionary activity.

Not so, says Chuck Kopp, president of the United Council of Churches in Israel, one of the dissenters. "We have not surrendered our right to speak freely about our faith," Kopp says. Baruch Maoz, chair of the Messianic Action Committee, says, "Asking Messianic Jews not to

witness is like telling the Labor party that it can continue to exist only on the condition that it stops trying to win elections."

Despite Zvilli's remarks, most of the Christian groups

agreed to refrain from aggressive missionary efforts targeting Jews.

Maoz warns that the fight is still not over. "No amount of explaining can make up for the wrong impression" given

by Zvilli's remarks, says Maoz. "Many Knesset members cannot afford to vote against this bill, so they will simply abstain, opening the way for a slim majority."

A new, much harsher bill has been drafted by Rafael Pinchasi of the religious Shas party in response to what Pinchasi called the "weakening" of the original bill.

By Sean Aaron Osborne
in Jerusalem.



Agreement announced: Zvilli (left) explains the accord with American Jewish Committee Middle East director Joseph Alpher, who helped mediate the compromise.

Five Killed in Mission Plane Crash

Searchers in southern Venezuela found the bodies of five passengers in a plane operated by New Tribes Mission (NTM) seven days after it crashed in rugged mountainous territory of the Amazon jungle. The Cessna 207 slammed into Mount Marahuaca on March 23, shortly after takeoff in hazy weather made worse by extensive wildfires burning in the rain forest in northern Brazil and southern Venezuela.

Killed in the crash were the pilot, Rick Burd, 45, of York, Pennsylvania, a 22-year veteran of flying for NTM; Tim Stucky, 15, of Newton, Kansas, the son of NTM missionaries; Bob McCormick, 60, and Ida McCormick, 56, of Whitehorse, Yukon Territory,

Canada, volunteer teachers with the mission; and Freda Lopez, a Maquiritare woman of Venezuela.

The plane was reported missing soon after takeoff from the village of Toqui bound for Puerto Ayacucho. A locator signal was detected that evening, but it took seven days for rescuers to reach the crash site due to rugged terrain, high winds, and poor visibility.

Searchers finally reached the plane after the Venezuelan military dropped them above the crash and they rappelled down to the site. The Sanford, Florida-based NTM has worked in Venezuela since 1946 and has more than 100 American personnel in the country.

By Kenneth D. MacHarg.

MISSIONS

Do Churches Send Wrong People?

Many Christians may feel called to a career in foreign missions, but churches and mission agencies are not doing a good job of evaluating candidates, according to a missions expert.

Tom Telford, a United World Mission consultant and author of *Missions in the 21st Century* (Harold Shaw Publishers, 1998), says that nearly half of new missionaries drop out by the end of their first four-year term because churches and agencies often send the wrong people.

Besides a strong relationship with God, Telford says the most important quality a missionary must have is adaptability. "In the United States we're raising up a lot of people who can't adapt to other countries," says Telford, who helps churches mobilize in sending missionaries.



Telford

The solution? Weed out misdirected candidates early on, recruit fewer, and train more. "Don't let people lay hands on themselves," he warns. "Only the [candidate's] church knows if they are fit to go."

But Telford's news is not all bad. Television, travel, and immigration have exposed young people to international cultures in ways their parents and grandparents never saw.

Yet, Telford says the next generation of missionaries must be sold on missions in a new way. Younger Christians "want to feel it, taste it, see it

before they invest," he says. "They support people. They don't just give to the mission fund." Telford says short-term "vision trips" to a foreign country in which people personally connect with believers outside their own culture often spurs them to support missions financially and may inspire them to return to the field as a career.

By Deann Alford.

News Briefs

◆ Palestinian Christian **Elias Freij**, 80, died March 29 in Jordan. Freij, a Greek Orthodox, was one of the first Palestinians to call for a negotiated settlement with Israel 21 years before the Israeli-Palestinian peace accord in 1993. He served as the mayor of Bethlehem from 1972 to 1997, and he became the first minister of tourism for the Palestinian Authority in 1994.

◆ The **National Bolivian Evangelical Association** has filed suit to stop the government from enforcing a resolution issued by the vice minister of Foreign Relations and Worship. The resolution states that churches "cannot carry out unauthorized acts geared toward proselytism, propaganda, or collecting funds."

◆ Thanks in large part to U.S. evangelical publishing houses, more than 15,000 **African pastors** have received basic libraries containing 40 books each to help them in ministry. The books have a total value of \$1,125,000, but the pastors needed only to pay the equivalent of \$75 for the sets to offset the cost of mailing and distribution.

◆ **CBInternational** will relocate its headquarters to Denver from Wheaton, Illinois, next year. The mission agency has 41 staff members and works with Conservative Baptist missionaries. 



Remembering Elias Freij: The peace-maker's coffin is carried to the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem.

SPAIN

Evangelicals Protest Media Shutdowns

Spanish Protestants have raised an outcry of religious persecution following government orders to shut down evangelical radio and television stations.

Complaints came after Public Minister Rafael Arias Salgado ordered the closing of Trinity Broadcasting Network's Tu Pueblo Television station in Madrid, along with nine of the sixteen evangelical radio stations of the Radio TV Amistad chain linked with the Church of God of Spain.

Spanish authorities say they are enforcing new regulations, not engaging in religious discrimination.

Stations operating before 1995, such as Tu Pueblo and the Amistad chain, had an eight-month exemption from compliance with new regulations. During the transition period, the government failed to provide the necessary compliance procedures.

Mariano Blazquez, execu-

tive secretary of the evangelical umbrella organization FEREDE (Federation of Evangelical Religious Entities of Spain), believes evangelical radio and television stations have been singled out, because many other stations "operate in the same conditions."

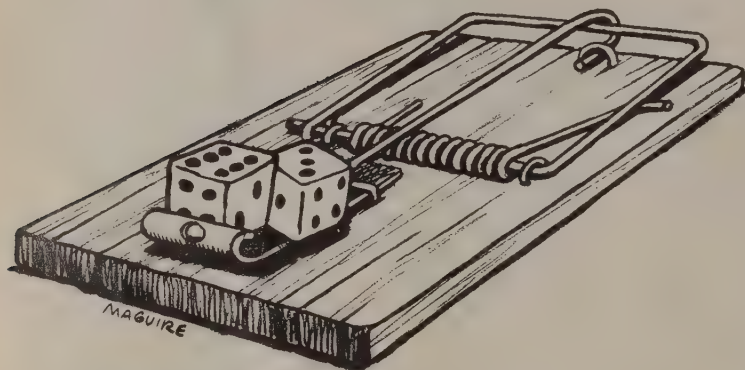
In addition, both Enlace, the operator of the TV station in Madrid, and the Amistad radio stations have also experienced interference on their frequencies from a government-owned network.

Tu Pueblo has endured the obstruction of its signal in 70 percent of its area coverage. The TV station is fighting the frequency interference and the closure order in court. The Amistad radio stations are also contesting their closure. FEREDE has opposed the closure of the Amistad stations as a breach of freedom of religion and expression.

By Jeff M. Sellers
in Madrid.

Gambling with the Enemy

Instead of folding, the church should be upping the ante.



When “Lefty” Rosenthal was owner of the Stardust Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas, he lustily embraced a gambler’s lifestyle. Although it made him rich and powerful, he is today an embittered man. Last year, in discussing Las Vegas gambling on public television, he said that “99.9 percent of the public, including myself, have two chances to win; one is slim, the other is none, and slim’s out of town.”

Gambling is an ancient vice that has soured lives and destroyed families for generations. American reformers by the end of 1910 succeeded in banning nearly all gambling. But since 1978, gambling has made a breathtaking comeback. Last year, Americans legally wagered more than \$550 billion, which is more than three times the revenues of General Motors, the country’s largest corporation.

As gambling has become socially acceptable, the voice of the church, which once condemned gambling as immoral and destructive, has been drowned out. Gambling, American style, has been cleaned up, civilized, licensed, government approved, and transformed into supposedly family-friendly entertainment. But the gambling industry is a family-killing enterprise if there ever was one.

Corporate America, state and local governments, and the media have all played a part in shifting public opinion toward the belief that gambling is largely harmless, mostly fun, and certainly not immoral enough to warrant prohibition. Church leaders in

communities such as Tunica, Mississippi, where gambling now dominates the economy and the culture, feel helpless in confronting the highly buffed largess of gambling potentates, who employ their church members, donate generously to local charities, and provide a strong influx of new tax revenue (see “None Dare Call It Sin,” p. 34). But if Christians look beyond the gambling industry’s guile and guise, they will find within their grasp the ability to turn the public’s perception of gambling toward reality and away from fantasy.

First church of the co-opted

A first step for churches to recover a prophetic voice against gambling is to confess that the theology of chance has infected the lifeblood of many congregations. The theology of chance, putting us at the mercy of blind fate, violates our Christian understanding of how God as Creator interacts with us. One aspect of this pathogen within the church is shown by the prevalent attitude that low-stakes gambling is benign. Charity raffles may be a mostly harmless fundraising activity, but they condition us to think that gambling can be fun, exciting, and socially acceptable. Whose heart would not beat quicker in anticipation of winning admission to an NBA playoff game for the price of a \$1 raffle ticket?

Another symptom of this infection is the fevered logic in which gambling winnings and revenues are counted virtuous when put to good purposes. Under such a rationale, churches in Alberta, Canada, have since 1993 accepted \$3.7 million in video lottery proceeds for community-development projects.

But their willingness to take gambling-tainted funds may be ending. After Alberta’s Catholic bishops issued a call for banning video lotteries because of an increase in gambling addictions, a leading Canadian politician suggested that churches were hypocritical to accept lottery money while criticizing gambling. To their credit, two congregations have sacrificed in response: One returned a check for \$80,000, and a second has refused the state’s annual gambling payoff of up to \$125,000 per organization.

Make visible the invisible social cost

Why are the consequences of gambling so hard to see? American culture has long celebrated the win-

ning gambler as a hero and the losing gambler as an untutored fool, presuming that skill makes the difference between winners and losers. But experts tell us that casino gambling gives the "house" an unbeatable mathematical advantage, and the longer anyone plays the more he loses.

When it comes to the social cost of gambling, Americans have an acquired blindness. In embracing a philosophy of individualism, we have rightly valued personal achievement, but we too easily view an individual's failure as limited to his or her own life and family. Unfortunately, the cumulative effect of thousands of failed marriages and careers, poisoned by compulsive, addictive gambling, brings with it dire symptoms from which all of us suffer.

The gambling industry has put a false spin on the issue of gambling addiction. It argues first that the problem is very small, and second that the problem is treatable. But the industry's reasoning fails to acknowledge the many lives that are shattered when just one member of a household becomes a gambling addict. Recovery may take a lifetime. "Lefty" Rosenthal shamefully relates how one head of household lost \$18,000, a life's savings, after being lured into Rosenthal's casino, which advertised a 49-cent farmer's breakfast.

Where should the church position itself in dealing with gambling's victims? Certainly, the church's function as a social and emotional safety net for gambling's victims must be maintained. But there is a more pronounced role for churches: In communities where gambling does not currently exist, churches should not ignore gambling issues. In regions where gambling has been approved, church leaders must overcome historic denominational and racial barriers and organize, strategize, and speak out jointly at every opportunity. The first place to make visible the invisible consequences of gambling is within the walls of our churches.

Do moralistic arguments work?

Frank Fahrenkopf, president of the American Gambling Association, is one of the nation's leading gambling promoters. Lately, he and other gambling proponents have been talking about morality in the gambling debate. Arguing that morality is mostly a private matter, he says, "Most Americans resent religious leaders or others trying to tell them what they should and should not do."

But Fahrenkopf does not accurately locate the sources of resentment. In large measure, Americans do not object to moral guidance itself, but to moral dictates without moral instruction. Moral dicta in a values vacuum invite rebellion. Persuasive reasoning, however, leads people to consider the issues. The recent successes of the National Coalition Against Legalized Gambling show that voters can think clearly for themselves when encouraged to do so (see "How to Fight Gambling," p. 39).

However, in those communities where gambling already is allowed, Christians are having great difficulty in beating back the gambling industry through the use of moral suasion. In South Carolina, Gov. David

Beasley, a Baptist, is waging war against video poker, calling it a "cancer" on the citizenry. His metaphor is appropriate, because the solution to the state's gambling problem is not regulation and taxation but excision. Even though moral arguments may starkly frame the gambling issue, they are not likely to be decisive in rolling back gambling because of its strong hold on the human psyche.

There are two underlying reasons to prohibit gambling. First, if the social purpose of gambling is entertainment for the masses, the price tag is just too high. Gambling is like illicit drug use: people may value the entertainment and escapism, but the social cost far outstrips any putative value. Second, casino gambling guarantees a win-lose situation. With the odds firmly stacked in favor of the house, such gaming violates our commitment to fairness and falsely advertises itself as a short-cut around thrift and hard work—values rooted in Christian teaching and practice. Gambling seduces us into believing in gain without pain and earnings without effort. The explosive growth of gambling reveals how Americans embrace money as the ultimate lifestyle guarantee.

**The dishonesty theology
of gambling violates relations
between God and humanity,
because God's perfect will for
each of us cannot be had
for the price of a lottery ticket.**

Pursuing the 'peak experience'

"People gamble, whether it is legal or not, because it helps them face the world more successfully than they could without the spark which it gives," says English professor Felicia Campbell of the University of Las Vegas. Campbell correctly identifies the emotional and spiritual dynamic at work in a gambler's heart. However, the argument that gambling provides a ready emotional charge rests on the false premise that any peak experience is good. Like all lusts, the promise of gambling is energizing. But sin entraps us rather than equipping us for life's challenges.

The deceitful economics of gambling violate relations between people, because neither goods nor services are exchanged. The dishonesty theology of gambling violates relations between God and humanity, because God's perfect will for each of us cannot be had for the price of a lottery ticket.

When Christians focus on not only the physical toll, but also the spiritual toll that gambling takes, they are well positioned to take the upper hand in the gambling debate. **CT**

McCartney — ON THE — REBOUND

How a workaholic jock and insensitive husband became the nation's leading Promise Keeper.

PHYLLIS E. ALSDURF

Bill McCartney is an enigma to folks within religious circles and without. Founder of the men's ministry Promise Keepers, he is a man whose religious fervor is both admitted and looked upon with suspicion. Some see him as the archenemy of feminism; others dismiss McCartney and PK as the latest fuzzy fad for the therapeutic culture. While many Christians see him in revivalistic terms—the latest great hope for the church—others are disquieted by his radical sold-outness. Is his spiritual intensity, they wonder, just one more manifestation of an impulsiveness and extremism that have been McCartney's trademark for years?

In his recent autobiography *Sold Out*, McCartney appears to have attempted an end-run on his critics by being the first to own up to a lifetime of failings and foibles. "Tucked away in the folds of my life are countless episodes that coldly strip away the mystique and pretense of what some think of me," he writes. He calls himself a "highly flawed, ordinary man

who has made it through only with the help of an extraordinary God."

There is a certain drop-dead seriousness about McCartney that comes through despite his polite congeniality. One gets the sense that even while McCartney is listening, he is anticipating where the conversation will go next, keeping ahead of the game, getting ready to call the next play. Although he is ever the gentleman, he still plays hardball.

I begin to gain some firsthand clues to how McCartney operates when he reaches over and turns off my tape recorder during an interview with him and his wife, Lyndi. I'd asked about PK's curiously elusive position on gender equality in light of the group's clarion call for racial equality. His marriage, not PK, was to be the focus of the interview, McCartney informs me. My hands duly slapped, he allows me to turn the recorder back on, and we continue the interview.

This incident illustrates both the strength and weakness of Bill McCartney: his aptitude for focus and control, yet little

room in his approach for those who don't operate according to his game plan. Over the years, these tendencies have given him both trouble and exceptional successes. Just this year his turn-off-the-recorder-and-fix-it mentality came through again when he laid off all 345 staff members in his Promise Keepers organization through an announcement that surprised even top staff members. God had told him (and his board, which had earlier miscalculated the amount of donations that would come in when admission charges for stadium events were dropped) that it was time for the churches to support the ministry, and that the work could be done through volunteers. (As it happened, on April 9, PK announced that a surge in donations allowed it to rehire most of its staff. See News Update on page 29.)

In *Sold Out*, McCartney refers repeatedly to King David. In many ways, this Old Testament character is a fitting exemplar for understanding McCartney. Like David, the former University of Colorado football coach and husband has made grievous mis-



takes, but also like David, he has humbled himself and mended his ways as the Holy Spirit has convicted him of particular sins. While not always pretty, McCartney's story, like David's, is ultimately about growing obedience and big flaws redeemed by a radical, even heroic, faith.

breaking point. To cope, she rarely left the bedroom of their home in Boulder, Colorado. There she contemplated taking her own life. For more than seven months she vomited every day, losing 80 pounds. McCartney, busy with football and with managing the burgeoning Promise

McCartney uprooted his nine-month-pregnant wife without consulting her when a better coaching position became available—and then left her for a weekend of hunting with his newfound coaching buddies an hour after they had arrived at their new home. A year after that, he interpreted a phone call about another coaching job as God's direction that it was time to move again. The call came just minutes after he'd returned to his pregnant wife and eight-month-old son from a weekend away from home. McCartney had the family in the car headed for his new job within 20 minutes.

Lyndi claims she wasn't bothered by Bill's lack of attention during their 30-year marriage "most of the time." And she stayed reasonably happy with her responsibilities as a mother of four "most of the time." But she also admits that they lived separate lives. As her husband soared to the pinnacle of his career, "I just felt like I was getting smaller and smaller and smaller," she recalls.

The recent renewal within the McCartneys' marriage to a large degree has been about Lyndi recovering her voice and regaining a sense of who she is. Describing herself as "bolder, stronger, and not nearly so intimidated as I once was," Lyndi says she "needed to be heard" by Bill. "I feel like I'm even recovering my personality, which had kind of disappeared too," she notes.

For his part, Bill says he is learning to listen to Lyndi. The result has been "sweeter and sweeter harmony" between them, he claims. To fulfill what he sees as his God-given responsibility to bring Lyndi "to splendor," Bill now budgets his time "to give the Lord and my wife top priority."

God's drunken zealot

McCartney has never done anything halfway. Raised in a blue-collar Michigan family that was sold out to all things Irish, Catholic, Democrat, and Marine Corps, McCartney says lukewarmness or indifference were "foreign concepts" to him. He distinguished himself early not only for his athletic abilities but also for his knowledge of sports. As a young boy, he also had an "insatiable zeal to know God," which translated into a disciplined commitment to the Catholic church. "I attended mass every day," McCartney remembers. "I literally went ten years without missing daily Communion."

Sold Out describes early manifestations of McCartney's religious fervor. As a seven-year-old at a Catholic school Christ-



Lyndi and Bill McCartney

Through Lyndi's eyes

Sold Out is presented as McCartney's story, but the book also contains nine sections written by Lyndi. They provide a good window into McCartney's spiritual journey, and they helped him write a book that was "closer to the truth," he says. Lyndi reveals the monumental price she paid as McCartney's "trophy wife," a woman who for years stood on the sidelines while McCartney coached the University of Colorado's football team to a national championship. They also help underscore what brought their never-great marriage to a crisis in 1993, when Lyndi says she found herself in "an emotional deep-freeze."

That year began in soap-opera fashion when, on New Year's Day, Bill came clean to Lyndi about an affair he had had with another woman two decades earlier in their marriage. That confession, which the McCartneys chose not to put in the book but which was reported by the *New York Times* last fall, left Lyndi devastated. At the time, McCartney was at the pinnacle of his coaching career and riding high with PK involvements. In a manner typical of the way McCartney operated at the time, he confessed his adultery just moments before walking out the door to coach a Fiesta Bowl game.

In the months that followed, Lyndi's emotional and physical health reached the

Keepers movement, remained oblivious.

"I thought she was just exercising discipline," McCartney told the *New York Times*. "I saw her losing weight, but I didn't see it as a bad thing. You know how ladies are concerned about the pounds. I saw that she was losing weight, and I was proud of her."

While Lyndi had no intention of leaving her marriage, she says she began building "emotional siege walls" between herself and Bill. "The Lord was the only one I felt I could trust."

The daughter of a southern California screenwriter father, she says her childhood dreams were "to sing, to dance, to act, to write." Her home was a place where the arts were emphasized and celebrities were entertained. "The glitz, glitter, and romance of Hollywood greatly influenced my life," she says. "I believed in 'happily ever afters.'"

While a student at Stephens College, a prestigious women's school in Columbia, Missouri, she met Bill, a football player for the University of Missouri. They married when Bill was 22 years old and Lyndi only 19. Lyndi quickly learned that she would have to adjust to Bill's destructive drinking binges, from which he often returned drunk. She also learned she would need to adapt to the many spur-of-the-moment, unilateral decisions he made.

For example, early in the marriage,

Up from the Ashes?

With \$4 million in donations, Promise Keepers recalls its staff—for now.

The roller coaster ride known as Promise Keepers (PK) is back on top, at least for the moment, after recalling its entire staff that had been laid off fewer than three weeks earlier. Around 70 of its 345 workers had found other work before the April 16 callback.

PK seemed to have reached its zenith last October when nearly a million men gathered for the largest event ever staged in Washington, D.C. (CT, Nov. 17, 1997, p. 62). Yet the announcement at the Stand in the Gap "sacred assembly of men" that PK would drop its \$60 registration fee at future stadium events had an immediate impact.

Switching to donor financing plunged the Denver-based organization into a cash crunch and spurred the March 31 layoffs of its 345 full-time staff members (CT, April 6, 1998, p. 18).

Yet, the news stirred 35,000 Christians who have seen the way the ministry has transformed the lives of men. More than \$4 million has come in since the layoffs were announced. Around 95 staff members volunteered during the interim. Although salaries had been cut, benefits continued throughout.

"The body of Christ responded," McCartney told CT. "Men, women, and children sent in their checks, they sent in their dollar bills, they sent in their change. Many churches have sent in a thousand dollars." The generosity has enabled PK not only to reinstate staff but to pay off all vendors and to make stadium deposits for some of this season's 19 men's gatherings.

Paul D. Nelson, president of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability, says PK has been cooperative in revealing financial figures.

"ECFA is watching the situation very carefully," Nelson told CT. "We've seen their internal documents, and they have maintained the ECFA seal throughout this process."

Until the recall announcement, many men had been waiting to see whether PK would be around before planning to attend a stadium rally. Freewill donations will be taken to cover each event, which costs \$1 million to stage.

NO FUTURE CUSHION: McCartney, the 56-year-old retired University of Colorado football coach, took the team approach to both layoffs and rehiring. The recall took place even though PK has no assurance of meeting cash-flow demands past mid-June.

"We can't look beyond that," McCartney says. "But we felt the way that people are responding we had to call our staff back. And, even though we had anticipated it would be longer, we couldn't deny God's generosity in good faith to our staff, some of whom were really struggling."

McCartney is relying on the donations to keep the operation afloat. "It's God's plan to ask the body to do this together," he

says. "If each church gives a thousand dollars, we'll be in business." So far, according to PK public affairs director Steve Ruppe, 1,500 congregations have given \$1,000 or more.

But PK is relying on more than one-time gifts. Last year, the organization started a "covenant partners" program that has been growing steadily. Currently, 40,000 partners are donating an average of \$200,000 a month, Ruppe says. In addition, PK receives a cut of the sale of every PK devotional, hat, and T-shirt sold. Promise Keepers has a \$48 million budget this year, compared to \$112 million in 1997.

Campus Crusade for Christ founder Bill Bright has been the chief PK cheerleader. His letters to pastors and lay leaders raised more than \$500,000 "to help our brothers in their time of crisis."

Smaller parachurch ministries have also jumped on the bandwagon. During a two-day radio broadcast, FamilyLife Ministry in Little Rock, Arkansas—where PK will rally on May 22–23 for the first time—spurred listeners to send in \$50,000 to Promise Keepers.

Children whose fathers have attended PK events have also eased the financial crisis. "We received letters saying, *My daddy's never been the same, and the kid sends in a quarter,*" McCartney says.

NOW WHAT? During the next two

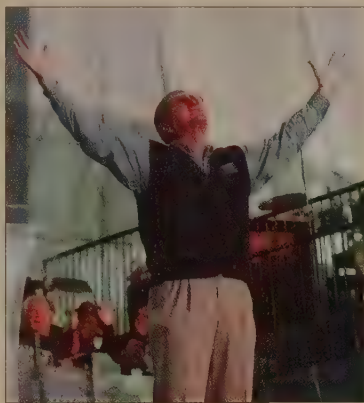
years, PK will focus on stadium events. This year, 10 of the 19 gatherings will be in new locales, including several midsize cities such as Columbia, Missouri; Grand Rapids, Michigan; and Tucson, Arizona. The season's kickoff event, May 15–16 in the Silverdome in Pontiac, Michigan, is expected to draw 50,000.

Stadium meetings are not on the agenda after 1999. McCartney believes PK has accomplished much of what God intended, including racial reconciliation, marriage restoration, healing of denominational rifts, and pastor encouragement. On January 1, 2000, PK is planning assemblies at every U.S. state capitol. Afterwards, the outreach will be global. "We're going to hand off the baton to the various ministries in churches, and we're trusting God to duplicate what he's doing with men in this nation around the world," McCartney says.

McCartney is certain the new financial plan will succeed. "God has never removed the anointing," he says. "He's showing up every time we invite him."

According to ECFA's Nelson, any Christian organization must combine prudent decision making with faith. "Ministries can only make payroll as long as God's people provide the means," Nelson says. "Promise Keepers has demonstrated that they're not afraid to take risk or be unconventional. They have demonstrated a track record of accomplishment."

By John W. Kennedy.



On top of the world: McCartney at Stand in the Gap.

The Coach's Burden



Sold Out:
Becoming Man
Enough to Make
a Difference, by
Bill McCartney with
David Halbrook
 (Word Publishing,
 1997, 370 pp.;
 \$19.99, hardcover).
Used with permis-
sion.

The first-ever Promise Keepers conference was held in Boulder, Colorado, on July 31, 1991. Toward the end of that program, as I casually gazed out on the crowd, my eye caught something. The crowd was almost entirely white. I knew the Holy Spirit was prompting me. As we were about to close in prayer, I walked back up on the stage with a simple word of caution. "Men," I said, "next year at Folsom Stadium we expect a sellout. But I believe that if we fail to gather a fair representation of *all* God's people, God will not join us."

The elated crowd left on a wave of exhilaration that would only be multiplied in years to come. But my last remarks on the racial issue had clearly hit a raw nerve, igniting a minor firestorm of hate mail and caustic letters, chastising me: "How dare you imply God won't be there." Others stated angrily, "God did not state in Scripture, 'Go ye therefore and eradicate racism.' He said, 'Go preach the gospel to all nations.'" Many quoted the Scripture where Jesus says, "For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them" (Matt. 18:20) to debunk my exhortation. And I understood their

point. But what it really gave me was a first glimpse of the seething giant of racism lurking within the Christian church.

I never backed off my original statement. As I have since learned, Matthew 18:20 probes deeper into the heart and character of his church than most want to believe. God requires more than mere proximity, numbers, and verbal assent. God knows whether or not his children are truly joined in wholehearted purity and oneness of spirit.

Shortly after Promise Keepers' first stadium conference of 22,000 men in 1992—again, a mostly white audience—a much heavier burden for this racial issue fell upon me. I had begun to see many of the subtle ways our culture inflicts pain, shame, and lack of opportunity on the minority communities in our midst. And it horrified me to see this dynamic thriving in the church as well.

With the help of Christian broadcaster James Dobson, I began scheduling speaking engagements at churches across the country, delivering a controversial message on racial reconciliation. I'd show up to churches filled with men eager to hear about the

mas party in Trenton, Michigan, he began to beseech God when he learned that a new wallet would be included in a grab bag of gifts for the children. When his turn came, he reached into the bag with his eyes obediently closed and promised God he would do *anything* for him if he would just allow him to pull out the wallet. When he did, young Bill began to reason, "If I could call on God for something like a five dollar wallet, what else could I pray for?"

"It confirmed everything I'd been hearing in catechism and already strongly suspected: There really *is* a God," McCartney remembers thinking. "He really *does* love me. I could actually talk to the God of the universe and expect him to hear."

By the time he entered college, his zeal had grown dogmatic. McCartney once warned his college roommate—the son of a Protestant minister—that "he was going to hell because he was not Catholic." During a summer break of corresponding with Lyndi, his girlfriend, he carefully printed the initials JMJ on the top of each letter. Standing for Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, the insignia was one that McCartney had been using faithfully since his

Catholic grade-school days.

An even more telling example of McCartney's spiritual disposition occurred at a sorority party his senior year. He was drinking beer with other jocks when, from across the room, he overheard Lyndi, his new girlfriend, casually use God's name in vain. "Using God's name in vain at all, much less around my teammates, for heaven's sake, was like committing the unpardonable sin," he writes. "Never mind that I was obnoxiously ignoring my own drunken stupor. I clamped down on her innocent slip with all the irrational fury of a pit bull. I exploded. To her shock, I turned mean and berated her for her careless blasphemy."

Lyndi tried to apologize, but McCartney hustled her out to the car and drove her recklessly to her dorm. Arriving in a drunken fury, he skidded into the side of an occupied police car parked there. Before a crowd of Lyndi's dormmates who had heard the crash, McCartney boisterously resisted the arresting officer. Even when handcuffed, McCartney wrestled free just long enough to return to Lyndi, hug her as best he could, and announce loudly, "Oh Lyndi, I love you!"

The incident cost him his football scholarship, but not his girlfriend, who had been dreaming of the day McCartney would express his love for her for the first time—even if not quite in this manner. In *Sold Out*, Lyndi wryly observes that "Bill first told me he loved me while he was handcuffed to a police officer. . . . The next time he told me he loved me, he got my name wrong. He used his old girlfriend's name. That was perhaps my first clue that Bill was a paradox."

Bill remained a paradox to her in marriage. He rose quickly through high-school coaching positions to more lucrative college contracts—all the while giving Lyndi and the four children less and less time. But even as he put in 16-hour days six days a week and continued drinking compulsively during the noncoaching season, he remained passionate in his desire to serve God. Often he would rise at four or five in the morning and go to early mass to confess his drunkenness and other sins from the day before.

"Society told me I was doing the right thing," McCartney says about his long work hours. "I got compensated com-

marvelous move of God called Promise Keepers—and I'd begin to share. I spoke from my experience as a football coach, recognizing in my players' faces a conditioned resignation toward cultural injustice; I tried to explain how a subtle spirit of white superiority has unwittingly alienated and wounded our brothers and sisters within the church, and how the ten o'clock hour on Sunday morning is the country's most segregated hour of the week.

Drawing from Scripture, I tried to show how we must shake off the dust of complacency to pursue intentional relationships with our precious brothers and sisters. I even demonstrated biblically where God lifted up an ambassador of reconciliation in King David, who assumed generational responsibility for crimes and injustices committed against the Gibeonites that he did not personally commit (see 2 Sam. 21).

But always when I finished there was no response—nothing. No applause. No smiles. Everyone instead looked crestfallen. In city after city, in church after church, it was the same story—wild enthusiasm while I was being introduced, followed by a morguelike chill as I stepped away from the microphone. I repeatedly returned to my prayer room shaken and dejected. “Am I hearing you, Lord?” I asked. “Is this really the message you want me to share?” And every time he would impress on me, “Just be faithful.”

As my speaking tour came to a close, I had an

engagement at a church in Portland, Oregon. My message ended to the usual wall of silence. Yet before I could leave the podium, a black speaker at the back of the stage stood up. As he got closer, I could see the tears in his eyes. He approached the podium. After a long delay, in a broken voice, he finally said, “I never thought . . . that in my lifetime . . . I'd ever hear a white man say . . . what this man has said.” He paused to compose himself. The church was stone silent. In a tone that broke my heart, he concluded: “Maybe there is hope.”

To this day, the racial message remains a highly charged element of Promise Keepers' ministry. Recent correspondence told us that, of the 1996 conference participants who had a complaint, nearly 40 percent reacted negatively to the reconciliation theme. I personally believe it was a major factor in the significant falloff in PK's 1997 attendance—it is simply a hard teaching for many.

In the past two years, I have held meetings with ethnic pastors in over 60 U.S. cities. Everywhere I go, pastors of color are profoundly encouraged, eagerly waiting to see good intentions put into action, while some among the white clergy remain aloof. Even within Promise Keepers, there has been pressure to de-emphasize or soften the racial message. But we hold firm. We press on, taking our cue from ethnic brothers and sisters who, for the first time, are expressing hope of seeing these racial walls fall once and for all. 

That hate mail really gave me a first glimpse of the seething giant of racism lurking within the Christian church.

mensurate with somebody who was doing something important. In reality [coaching] had stolen the first place in my life from what should have been there, what I thought was there, and what I told people was there.”

Promise procrastinator

To this day, people are amazed to learn that the McCartneys' marriage was flourishing even after he started Promise Keepers. It also continues to amaze the sports world that Coach McCartney abruptly resigned in December 1993, following another stellar season at the University of Colorado. Both facts reflect on McCartney's spiritual pilgrimage.

When he began Promise Keepers in 1990, McCartney truly believed that his marriage and family life were fine. But, he now acknowledges, he was out of touch. If he was busy with coaching before starting Promise Keepers, he was even busier afterward. His all-or-nothing commitment to both coaching and PK, McCartney says, allowed him to camouflage the hypocrisy of his personal life. “It may sound unbelievable,” he writes, “but

while Promise Keepers was spiritually inspiring to my core, my hard-charging approach to the ministry was distracting me from being, in the truest sense, a promise keeper to my own family.”

God used two events to turn McCartney around. One was a PK rally where men were told to write down the number their wives would give their marriages if rating them on a scale of one to ten. He had to admit with embarrassment to the other men on the platform that Lyndi—the wife of the founder of Promise Keepers—would probably only give their marriage a six.

Then, in the fall of 1994, a guest speaker at the Vineyard Fellowship church the McCartneys attended in Boulder pointedly stated: “If you want to know about a man's character, then look into the face of his wife. Whatever he has invested in or withheld from her will be reflected in her countenance.” That word did to McCartney what the prophet Nathan's story about the rich man's stealing a poor man's sheep did to King David. Literally turning to face his wife, McCartney saw in his wife's haunted, empty eyes his own sinful neglect staring back at him. “Escorting my wounded wife

out to the church parking lot,” McCartney writes, “I began to pray about the timing of my resignation from the University of Colorado.”

“God told me . . .”

One of Bill McCartney's strengths is that he will act when he believes God has told him to do something—regardless of the consequences. Determined that rebuilding his marriage would require drastic action, in November 1994, he announced that he was retiring from coaching in order to spend time with Lyndi. To do so, he gave up the ten years remaining on his \$350,000-a-year contract. *Sports Illustrated* called it “un-American.”

“I thought he would wind up hating me,” Lyndi says. In actuality, it marked a turning point in their marriage. “It was symbolic to me because he was giving up something he loved very much for us. He gave it up for the Lord, but it was for us, too, for our relationship.”

McCartney, who took his family from the Catholic church in 1988 to join the Boulder Valley Vineyard, speaks the language and world-view of the charismatic

Vineyard fellowship of churches. For example, he writes that God drove the nail into the coffin of his football aspirations through "a word" from Randy Phillips, then president of Promise Keepers. "Mac," McCartney says Randy told him, "first of all I'm coming to you as a brother in Christ. I'm not here on my own accord. What I'm going to share with you, I truly believe is from the Lord. . . . I'm not saying you should quit coaching at Colorado. I believe the Lord would have me tell you that you're not supposed to coach *anywhere* next year."

McCartney continues: "I could tell Randy had heard from the Lord and had tested it long in prayer. It was new territory for me. . . . I closed my eyes for a moment and sensed the Holy Spirit's soft, calming confirmation. Then I looked Randy square in the eye. 'Phillips, I'm accepting what you've told me on faith. I receive it as a word from the Lord.'"

McCartney's slow journey out of the Catholic church had begun in 1974 when he was "born again" at a Campus Crusade for Christ event that one of his players had invited him to attend. As Christian athletes at the meeting shared their testimonies, McCartney says in his autobiography, "I suddenly understood that while I loved God, knew Jesus Christ was His Son, and certainly considered myself *saved*, I needed to make the simple request, 'Jesus Christ, please save me.' . . . I needed God's healing *power* to fight off the craving of alcohol. Instead, I was pinning my hopes on a *program*. A static routine. A passive ritual. What I needed was a *relationship*."

His conversion began to transform some areas of his life. After reading that John Wesley had fasted every Wednesday and Friday from 8 A.M. to 4 P.M., he began a similar fasting pattern, and he quit a three-pack-a-day cigarette habit. Eventually, he and his family began attending a "Spirit-filled" Catholic church.

His struggle with the bottle, however, would last off and on another 16 years, until July 1990, when he pledged himself to abstinence. It was the only approach that truly allowed him to kick the habit, Lyndi writes, since "once he took one drink, he was out of control again." As McCartney became serious about kicking his drinking habit, he "immediately, perhaps even callously, cut ties with some very good friends of ours" who drank, he recalls in *Sold Out*. "I didn't take into account how this might strike [Lyndi]. There was no discussion to it."

The foreword to *Sold Out* reveals

another example of McCartney's on-a-mission-from-God outlook. Just as McCartney would consecrate his football program to Jesus Christ on the day he was hired by the University of Colorado, and just as he would hear God telling him before one important game, *Do not fear, for I will go before you. . . . This battle belongs to Me!*, so too the very writing of *Sold Out* is considered a work of great spiritual importance by all involved. In the foreword, literary agent and lawyer Sealy Yates states that "McCartney told David Halbrook [McCartney's writer] and me that it was imperative for us to diligently seek God's will regarding whether we should join with McCartney to write and publish this book . . .

McCartney's a the-buck-stops-here kind of guy with years of practice at being in charge.

because God has such a purpose for them with respect to the delivery and distribution of that book, Satan and his armies intend to do all they can to attack and defeat them and all God has for them to do in that regard." The foreword ends with a list of spiritual attacks Yates believes did indeed occur during the publishing process.

When it came to my own interview with them, Bill informs me, I was granted it on CHRISTIANITY TODAY's behalf only because the Holy Spirit had cleared my name through the publicist. Other interview requests, he lets me know, had been denied.

Ever the coach, McCartney will always remain comfortable with hierarchical structures in which he is calling the shots, taking responsibility, directing the game plan. He's a the-buck-stops-here kind of guy with years of practice at being in charge.

In *Sold Out*, Lyndi notes that the concept of a man "seeing his wife as a teammate is a recent revelation for Bill. You'd have to find another analogy to fit how he viewed our relationship during most of our thirty-four years of marriage. He may have seen me as a loyal cheerleader, which I was; or perhaps he saw himself as the coach and me as someone desperately

trying to make his team. . . ."

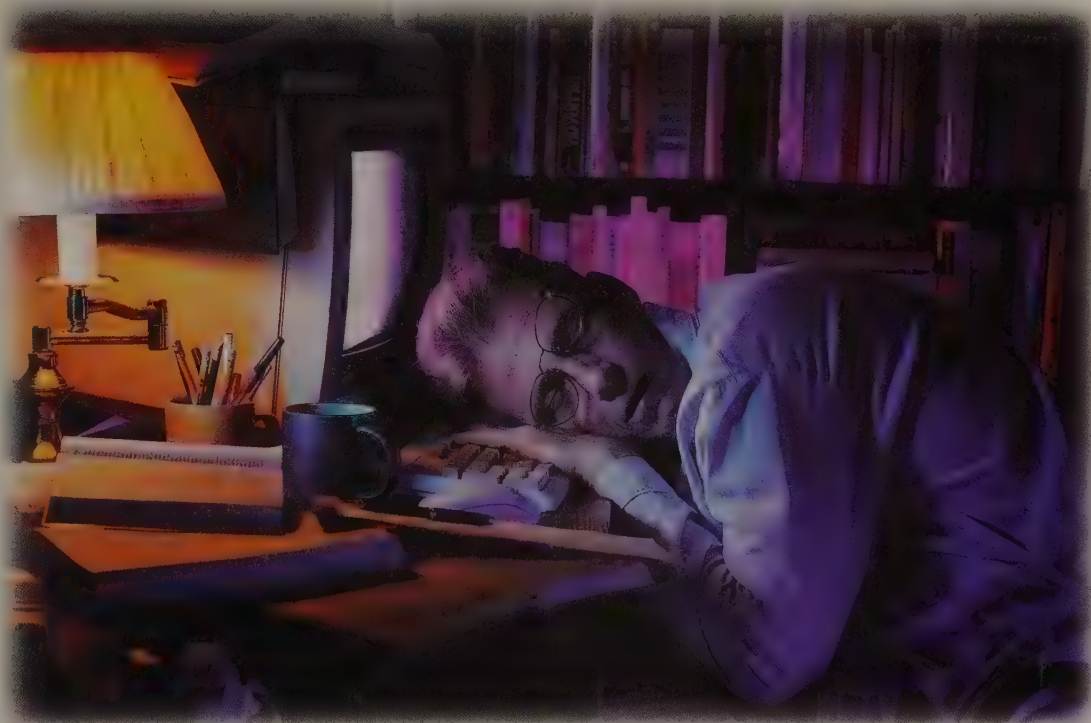
She concludes cautiously: "I must admit that while the Lord is showing Bill that I am his teammate, we're still growing into this reality, little by little. I think it's hard for Bill to see himself as anything other than the coach."

McCartney says there is no turning back for him on this issue. "Now that I'm tasting and experiencing the relationship that God always intended in our marriage, it's thrilling! I mean, I think about it during the day. It's on my heart. It's not just a passing thought before I walk in the door. We've entered into that kind of really rich relationship that has the love, the respect, the unity. It's a real honoring process."

Whatever McCartney's "blindness," which he admits he still has, his childlike craving to serve God and his willingness to be corrected set McCartney apart from lukewarm Christians. Describing himself as "theologically unbending," McCartney recognizes that his passionate pursuit of his life goals—spiritual and otherwise—has not made him popular with some Christians. "There are many who are within the Kingdom family who are ashamed of me," he writes. "They want to apologize for me. They want to disassociate from me."

This is a man who, in 1996, in preparation for a PK pastors conference, fasted 40 days, dropping from 206 to 184 pounds. On day 39, he writes, God "told me specifically why He had called me to such an extensive fast. Reading John 4:34, in which Jesus says, 'My food is to do the will of him who sent me,' I suddenly knew. *That's it!* . . . He awoke me to the fact that *my* food, my sustenance, literally, is to do His will. That's where the power lies in a Christian's life. *Do His will.*" Like Sonny Dewey, that engaging Pentecostal evangelist portrayed in Robert Duvall's *The Apostle*, McCartney's evangelistic zeal in the present is still haunted by the sins and excesses of the past. As McCartney well knows, "sold-outness" to a goal can quickly become a drivenness that all but destroys those caught in its wake. "A thin line separates 'sold out' from 'sell out,'" McCartney concludes in his autobiography. But that does not diminish the urgency he feels to make God's will his sustenance. And indeed, as he puts John 4:34 into practice—especially the part about remembering where true power lies—it's enough to make McCartney a man after God's own heart. 

Phyllis Alsdurf is a doctoral student in journalism and mass communication at the University of Minnesota.



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How Mississippi's Bible Belt

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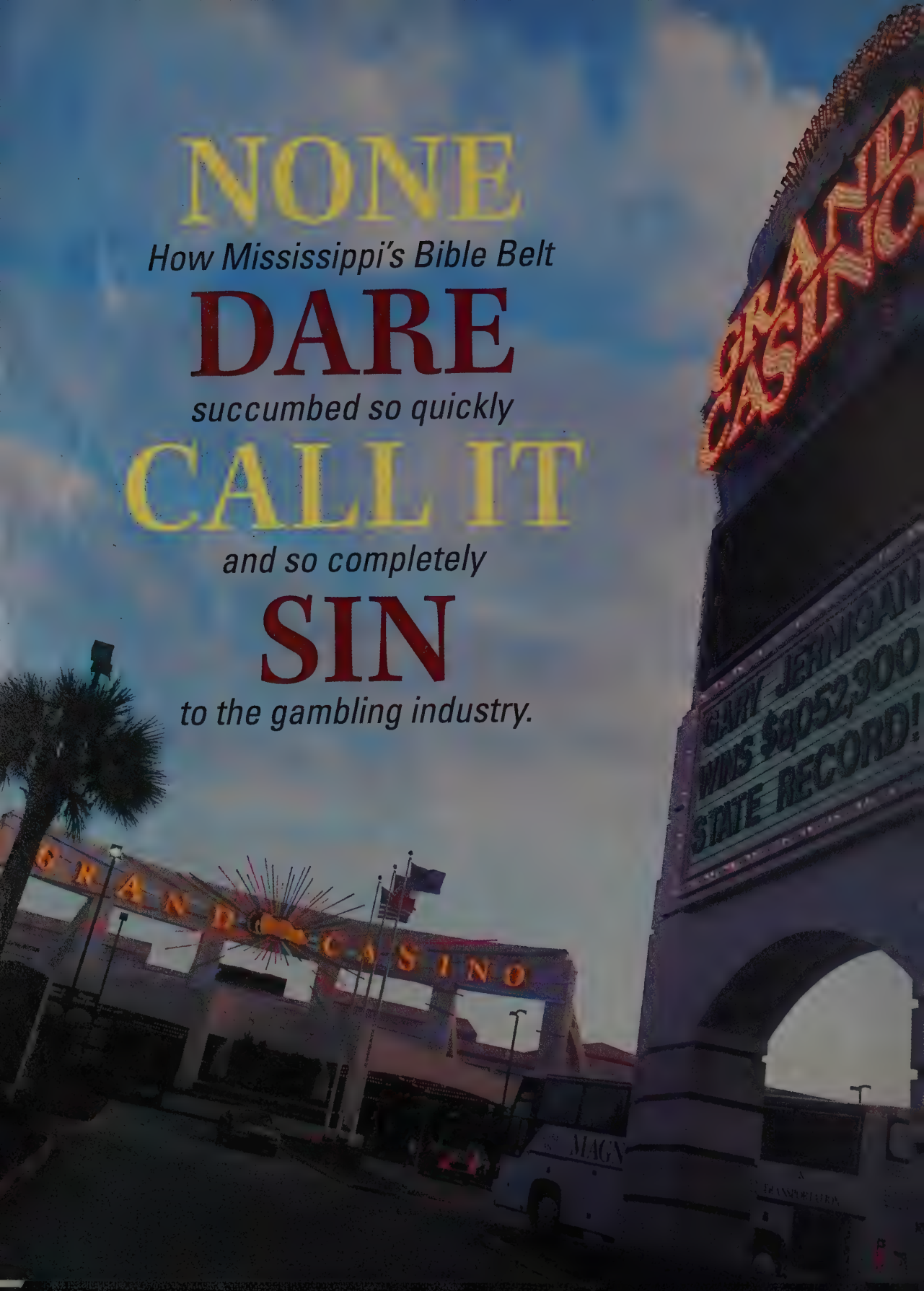
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Not long ago, gambling was illegal almost everywhere. In those days, America sent gamblers into the desert to pursue their dissolution. Las Vegas—"Sin City"—existed like a disease under quarantine, separated from the commonwealth by hundreds of miles of arid wilderness. If you went to Las Vegas, you didn't tell your mother; you didn't take the kids.

But not today. Without much fuss, Vegas has come near to us all. You can legally gamble in 48 states of the Union. Gambling has become normal, like the sale of beer at Safeway. Casinos offer childcare.

Nowhere is this transformation more obvious, nor more surprising, than in poor, conservative, Bible Belt Mississippi, which now trails only Nevada in square feet of casino gambling space. In five years, Mississippi has grown 30 thriving casinos producing nearly \$2 billion annual gambling losses. These losses are, of course, the casinos' gain, and the government's, for gambling operations are taxed by state and local authorities there at a 12 percent rate.

A deep strangeness

I began my tour of gambling in Mississippi at its southernmost part. As I followed State Highway 49 toward the Gulf of Mexico, billboards advertising games of chance slowly proliferated in the piney woods, until I reached Gulfport and saw my first Deep South casino. Downtown Gulfport looks beat-up and gray, with plenty of vacant storefronts and pawn shops. But on the waterfront gleam the Copa Casino—a converted cruise ship—and the glittering Grand Casino Gulfport, both seemingly lowered from a spaceship.

Mississippi's Gaming Control Act states that Gulf Coast casinos must be floating in the gulf waters. The Grand Casino sits on a barge so vast it is unthinkable that even a tidal wave could rock it. It has its own landside parking garage, its own 400-room hotel. You can walk upstairs and down on the gambling barge, from one mirrored wall to another, with only a vague sense that there is any world outside. The decor is gaudy and bright: patterned carpets, fountains of multi-colored lights, mirrored walls and ceilings. The electronic bells of slot machines make hypnotic background music against the harsher rhythm of large tokens dashing into metal trays—the sound, literally, of money poured out.

I had forgotten the deep strangeness of the casino environment. Whether I visited Mississippi casinos late at night or at 9:00 in the morning, I always

found plenty of people, black and white, old and young, male and female, dressed in sweatshirts and jeans and pantsuits—a Kmart crowd. Most play the slots. They sit holding plastic drink cups full of quarters, smoking, drinking, patiently tending the simple machines that roll ahead every ten seconds to inform them whether they have won or lost money. The atmosphere is surprisingly chaste. No cocktail waitresses approach in skimpy costumes. Clean and bright childcare facilities are available. Even when a slot machine is slamming out a reward, no excitement is visible—no whooping or hollering, no hugging or high fives. You would not readily imagine that this is entertainment. It has more the flavor of an assembly line.

And yet, the people are there, spending (losing) large amounts of money. They come from throughout the South—Georgia, Florida, Alabama and Texas, Louisiana, Tennessee, and Arkansas, to judge by the license plates in the parking lot. About a third of the gamblers are Mississippians, according to the casinos.

I crossed to the other side of the street in the morning, to the sober red brick of First Baptist Church. Pastor Kiely Young met me in worn cowboy boots. He told me he had fought hard against the casinos. "Unfortunately," he said, "our projections of negative impact have been fulfilled." The church's benevolence ministry—handouts and help to needy people—has tripled since the casinos arrived in 1992. One prominent church member recently made the front page of the local paper. He lost his law practice, his family, and his place in the community to gambling and drink he couldn't control. Young told me of



The sirens of vice: Gulfport's neon-anointed Grand Casino.

another high roller who was met at the airport by a casino limousine. After he had lost everything—and since the casinos offer ATMs, and credit card advance losses can be much more than what you carry in your wallet—the same limo drove him to the Salvation Army.

Spectacular flops make the Mississippi newspapers—like the three children under five years old who, left in the parking lot while their parents played the slots, set the family car on fire and almost killed themselves. Or the elementary school teacher arrested for embezzling \$1,800 in Adopt-a-School funds to feed her gambling habit. Or the father of two, over \$100,000 in debt to a casino, who killed himself after losing the last \$40 in his wallet. I found plenty of such stories in back issues of the newspapers, and I heard more from the pastors I visited. Pastors feel the burden of increased social dysfunctions—more marriage counseling, more people hitting the church office for financial help. Yet they almost visibly shrugged when I asked what the church can do about it. Gambling has come to Mississippi for good, they say, and the only role they see for themselves is picking up the pieces.

That's partly because of the enabling legislation. Mississippi's law allows individual counties along the Mississippi River and the Gulf Coast to vote on whether they want gambling. The catch is that if citizens vote no, gambling proponents can call for another election a year later—and keep calling them forever. (Recently, the "waiting period" has been lengthened for some counties.) If citizens vote yes, however, gambling is legalized forever. There's no way to reverse the choice.

Even if there were, it's very unlikely Gulfport and their near neighbors in Biloxi would do it. They love the money. "That's what put us on the map," Pastor Young said. "That's what stabilized the economy."

Thousands of new jobs have been created. Real estate prices are soaring. Housing subdivisions and huge hotels are under construction. Championship golf courses are in the making, causing people to hope the Mississippi coast might become a destination resort.

The casinos bring in name entertainers. Casinos offer attractive and inexpensive restaurants (I don't know how many people told me that you can get steak and lobster for \$5.99) and burnish an image of Mississippi as a smart and savvy place.

Memphis magazine put it this way: "Mississippi lawmakers, regulators, and casino operators made decisions that were smarter, bolder, and ultimately more profitable than competitors' . . . The skeptics who said 'the nation's fiftieth state' was too small, too conservative, too religious, too isolated . . . were wrong."

It is not lost on Mississippians—even Mississippi Baptists—that people in a big place like Memphis now admire their smarts, perhaps for the first time in history.

It remains to be seen whether the economic development has a wide impact. Casinos hire a lot of barmaids, but most of the jobs don't have a strong career path. Will the boom keep going, transforming the region, or will it leave a poor community with some gaudy casinos on its margins? The lessons of Atlantic City would favor the latter; Las Vegas, the former.

So far the beach strip shows few signs of renovation—it's still dominated by curio and T-shirt stores, aging motels, and graceful old homes. One of those homes is Beauvoir, the last home of Jefferson Davis, president of the Confederacy. I stopped to tour the well-preserved house, and strolled a sandy path to an old oak tree where an aging Davis would sit and read his Bible. I couldn't help wondering what old Jeff Davis would think of the casinos, visible just down the beach. He led a rebellion not just to preserve slavery, but to protect the South's traditional, agrarian way of life—a world ruled by concepts of honor and nobility. That's all gone now. Money rules Mississippi.

How the legislation passed

The Southern Baptists of Mississippi wield considerable influence, and if you doubt it, you should see the large office building they own across from the state capitol in Jackson. There I met

Elizabeth Holmes and Paul Jones from the Baptist Christian Action Commission. When I asked them how it happened that Bible Belt Mississippi had accepted gambling casinos, Jones recalled a lunch he had with a very confident casino executive back in 1985.

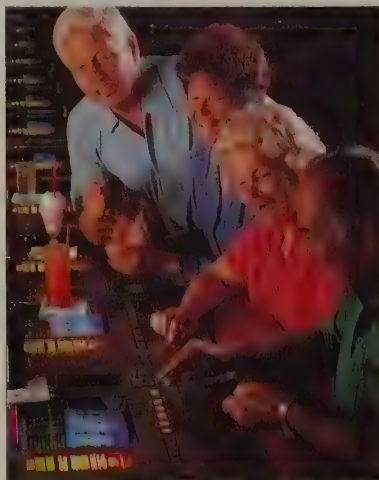
Mississippi would surely become a gambling state, the executive had predicted, for three reasons. First, Mississippi was such a poor state, "the economic argument will be heard." (The campaign to bring gambling to the Gulf Coast used the slogan, "Vote Yes for Jobs.") Second, white Christians would fail to find allies against gambling among a new breed of black leadership, who remember too well the failure of white Christians to confront racism. Third, "Mississippi is probably as good an example of cultural Christianity as

we have ever seen anywhere. We'll get the businessmen, and once we've got them, we'll silence the church."

That was the year, Jones explained, that the president pro tem of the state senate was caught taking a \$50,000 bribe. His arrest and imprisonment set back gambling interests for several years. Then, in 1989, Gov. Ray Mabus proposed a new educational agenda, seeking to fund it through the establishment of a lottery. Baptists and other antigambling forces fought and defeated the lottery bill. The next year, the governor called a special session of the legislature to consider again educational reform. It happened that Southern Baptists and Methodists were holding their annual meetings that week, so many pastors were out of town. When they returned home on Saturday, they learned that the legislature had established the Mississippi Gaming Commission. Two years later, in August 1992, the first casino opened its doors.

I went by the Gaming Commission, where a helpful public relations officer, Warren Strain, gave me detailed statistical information on the gambling industry and explained how the commission's oversight operates. "We're not for it and we're not against it," he stressed, "even though it does put bread on my table." Strain verified that the casino operations are at pains to show themselves clean and mob free.

I drove out to Vicksburg to visit one of the casinos built on the Mississippi River, stopping to see the Civil War battlefield on the way. The tourist slogan is, "History . . . and so much



more." It appears that this means, "History . . . and gambling." Unfortunately, people who are interested in history don't much gamble, and vice versa. The town of Vicksburg looks as though it had died and someone forgot to bury the body. At the top of the famous bluff overlooking the Mississippi is the old town, with handsome spired churches and historic houses. At the bottom, on the river, is Harrah's casino, an ersatz neon riverboat. In between is an attempt to establish a street of boutique shopping, with brick sidewalks. Half the stores are empty. The riverboat no doubt brings tax money to Vicksburg, but it evidently does no more for its environment than a tire factory.

That's not necessarily an indictment, however. I tried to think how Vicksburg would be altered if the casinos became factories for some other useless product—bobble-head dolls, for instance. I'm sure Mississippi would happily accept regional leadership in bobble-head doll manufacturing. The jobs would require, presumably, about the same skill levels as do casino jobs. The main difference would be felt by the addicts. There are no problem consumers of bobble-head dolls the way there are problem gamblers. And the state, addicted to revenue, would never be able to tax a manufacturer at 12 percent of revenue.

The pornography of success

Legal gambling is not new to these United States. In the early Republic, games of chance were common (Jefferson and Washington recorded their losses at cards), and lotteries financed everything from roads to schools to churches. Corruption was so common, though, that lotteries were gradually outlawed through the early part of the nineteenth century. After the Civil War, several Southern states turned back to lotteries for revenue, and the Louisiana lottery continued to operate for decades; but cheating was legendary. A reform-minded Congress outlawed all lotteries in 1894, and gambling remained illegal everywhere for 40 years. Not until the financial desperation of the 1930s did Nevada begin its experiment. New Hampshire waited until the 1960s to lead the states back to lotteries.

Most Protestants have viewed gambling as inherently problematic, if not sinful (in point of fact, a lot of Christians Catholics particularly—never have seen gambling as sin). Gambling may be entertainment, but it is not wholesome entertainment—it depends on lust as surely as does pornography. Gambling appeals to people's fantasies that they can get something for nothing. It is the pornography of success, undermining that important element of character known as the work ethic—the conviction that all people need to work persistently at productive tasks.

The vast majority of people can "handle it," as the gambling industry is quick to point out, but gambling does cause persistent social problems. Poor people tend to gamble away larger percentages of their income, so it's a "tax" on those who can't afford it. A recent study found that the poorest of Mississippians—those making less than \$10,000 a year—spend more than 10 percent of their income on gambling if they live in a county where it's legal. Most troubling of all, a certain percentage of people—estimates run from 1.5 to 6.5 percent—can't control their gambling, and these "problem gamblers" increase when gambling is readily available. Problem gamblers become the embezzlers, bank robbers, suicides, child abusers, and bankrupts you read about in the newspaper. Robert Goodman in *The Luck Business* estimates that each "problem gambler" costs society \$13,200 a year, including bankruptcies, fraud, embezzlement, unpaid debts, and criminal justice costs. Other estimates range from \$20,000 to \$30,000.

America's Gambling Habit

Legal gambling has swept across the United States three times. The second wave ended shortly after the turn of the century. We are now in the middle of the third wave of legal gambling.

1909 Nevada outlaws casino gambling. By the end of 1910, virtually all gambling is outlawed in the United States.

1931 Nevada relegalizes casinos, becoming the only state with legal casino gambling. In the 1930s, 21 states bring back racetracks; low-stakes charity bingo spreads through the nation.

1940s and 1950s Almost all states change their laws to allow parimutuel betting on horses and low-stakes charity gambling.

1963 New Hampshire rediscovers the state lottery. The first drawing is held in 1964, the first legal lottery in this century. Players fill out long forms for drawings held only twice a year.

1978 First casino opens in Atlantic City, making New Jersey the second state with casinos. Total preopening cost of the first casino, Resorts International: \$45.2 million; 1996 gross revenue at same casino: \$224.6 million.

1985 First interstate lottery, linking the state lotteries of Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont.

1987 *Cabazon* case decided by U.S. Supreme Court, affirming the right of Indian tribes to self-regulate high-stakes versions of all games not prohibited by state law.

1988 February: State lotteries create first national lottery, "Lotto America." October: President Reagan signs the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act. November: South Dakota voters amend their constitution to allow low-stakes casinos in Deadwood.

1990 New York amends its parimutuel wagering law to allow off-track betting operators to accept phone-in bets from residents of other states.

1991 Picturesque, low-limit riverboat casinos open in Iowa on April 1 to nationwide television coverage. Six months later, high-limit riverboat casinos open in Illinois.

1997 By the end of this year, 25 states and three territories have legalized true casinos through statutes and tribal-state compacts. Many of these are not yet open. At least 12 state lotteries are in the quasi-casino business with video lottery terminals and keno.

A 1997 study from Mississippi State University estimated there are between 46,400 and 88,700 problem gamblers in Mississippi. If Goodman's estimates of social costs are accurate, then problem gamblers cost Mississippi at least \$600 million annually—a lot more than casinos pay in taxes. However, the cost of problem gamblers is diffuse, while the taxes are money in the bank.

Really, the argument over gambling rarely reaches this level, because the rhetoric of choice sweeps every other argument away. For economic conservatives, casinos offer a pure form of capitalism: an ingenious product sold to willing buyers. Mississippi casinos promote economic development without much government involvement; they keep taxes low; and they locate only where local counties vote to invite them in. Isn't this what Newt Gingrich has been advocating—low taxes, less government, local control? The logic of the market won't let some higher authority say what products are worthwhile or restrain unwise choices by consumers. If people like to buy bobble-head dolls, let them. If they get a bigger kick out of pouring money into slot machines, that's their choice. If they blow away their rent money in the process—that's their problem, not mine.

The rhetoric of choice appeals to liberals, too, though in a different way. Liberals react against traditional moralism. Abortion, pornography, sexual behavior, saluting the flag—these they think should be a matter of choice, not public morality. (On other matters, of course, liberals can become quite moralistic.) Regarding gambling, why should the state tell people whether it's wrong? Why shouldn't people choose for themselves? Meanwhile, casinos satisfyingly integrate different ethnic groups (gambling is a great leveler) and offer jobs to poor people rather than lecturing them on their need to stay married and to avoid drugs and crime.

So both conservative and liberal impulses meet when gambling is legalized. It's probusiness yet socially liberal. Actually, you'll notice this combination on most of the social vices. Pornography, alcohol, gambling, tobacco—where would they be without corporate America? Vice makes excellent business, and businesses promote vice very efficiently. Only they don't call it vice. In America today we don't have any language to discriminate between legitimate and illegitimate business. As Warren Strain of the Mississippi Gaming Commission put it, "We're not for it and we're not against it, even though it does put bread on my table."

Mardi Gras on the Mississippi Delta

The strangest locale for gambling is Tunica County. Located in the cotton fields of the Mississippi Delta, Tunica is two-thirds black and desperately poor—on some lists, the poorest county in America. At least it was until the casinos got in.

Most of the traffic into Tunica comes by way of Memphis, a mere 30 minutes' drive. I came the other direction from Jackson, following straight, narrow highways. I don't remember seeing a new building on the entire drive. I didn't see many old buildings, either—this part of the country is relatively unpopulated. The cotton was coming in, so all along the roads, head high bricks of cotton waited to be ginned. Unpicked cotton laced the fields like an early snow. Then, through the hazy November afternoon I saw, from far off, the gleaming 30-story tower of the Lucky Strike Hotel, under construction.

There is no town nearby. Really, there is nothing nearby. The Tunica casinos don't sit on water but starkly alone on the river side of the Mississippi levee. The large, gaudy buildings are mostly built on a theme—Irish castle, Mardi Gras, Country, Hollywood, Wild West. Gamblers come from nearby Tennessee

and Arkansas, though new golf courses and a 30-story hotel suggest that the casinos plan to reach out to a wider region. Already, the casinos offer more jobs than there are residents in the entire county. Welfare rolls are down, way down. Tax dollars have poured in faster than the local authorities know how to spend them. It's a stunning change for a place that hasn't seen much.

Yet the change is not uniform. I stopped in at the Baptist building in Clarksdale to talk to W. C. Johnson, the 70-year-old director of missions for Baptists in the North Delta. His threadbare office gives supplementary relief to people short on money, and they are having a banner year—more people showing up looking for help than ever before. Funds are short, Johnson said, since local Baptist offerings are down, as is church attendance. There are three pawnshops in Clarksdale where there used to be one, and two clothing stores recently went under. Johnson wanted to be fair, and he made a point to tell me that the casino money did a lot to improve roads and build new schools. The casinos, from what he hears, treat their employees with dignity and fairness. But, "These people who live in the Delta can't afford to gamble. Losing \$50 for them is like \$1,000 for someone else."

I asked him how pastors in the area feel about the casinos. He said that, black or white, local pastors oppose gambling, seeing the damage it does in families. They feel helpless to say much, though. "Most of them have decided that preaching is not going to work." One Baptist pastor wanted to take out an ad in the local paper, stating that his church would have nothing to do with the casinos. When he went to calculate how many families kept completely clear, however, he could come up with only a handful. He pulled the ad. Even people who don't gamble like to get a cheap meal at the casinos. "My son and his wife go a lot," Johnson said. "I asked him if he would grow a beard for my sake."

I ended my trip just over the state line in Memphis, where I visited relatives. My niece, a recent college graduate, told me that she frequently accompanies friends to Tunica for an evening of gambling. The rest of the family goes less often but consider it a lot of fun when they do. My brother-in-law, a doctor in a medical research lab, told me that his working group planned to take a bus to Tunica instead of holding a Christmas party. They had done it once before, and the feeling is strong that it was the best Christmas celebration they ever had. He theorized that people from very different social strata—doctors and lab technicians and secretaries—feel more comfortable together in a casino than they would at a party.

I thought I detected a slight uneasiness in the way they talked to me about it—as if to say, "Who would have ever imagined me enjoying a casino?" Yet it was evident that gambling had become a quite normal way for an educated, civic-minded family to have fun.

Memphis magazine reports that people in Memphis lose about \$450 million annually to the Tunica casinos. According to a 1997 poll, they are split right down the middle—half visiting the casinos and half staying home, half thinking the casinos have made a positive impact and the other half considering it negative. Is there a debate going on, however? Not in the least. It's a free market, and if you don't like gambling, you don't have to go.

Most Americans don't have any moral language to talk about whether gambling is a good thing for us as a community. Commerce is the only language we hold in common, and it speaks of choice. I didn't know what to say, therefore, when my relatives told me how much they enjoyed gambling. What language could convince them that gambling is a sin? 

How to Fight Gambling



Thomas Grey was pastor of a rural Methodist church in northwest Illinois when he read in the paper that a casino was applying for a boat-docking license in his county. "I naively believed," he says, "that if I went to the county board with the truth—that gambling is not economic development, that it's not a painless revenue stream, and that it's not good for the quality of life—the political leadership would agree." Instead, the board reacted defensively. Grey, in turn, reacted by starting the

National Coalition Against Legalized Gambling in May 1994. CHRISTIANITY TODAY's Kevin D. Miller spoke with him about the coalition's strategy against legalized gambling.

Why do communities invite in gambling?

They don't! There is no popular grass-roots movement toward more gambling in America. It all happens through promoters meeting with politicians that are cash starved and can no longer ask the people to pay more taxes. So the government says, "Here's a painless way we can get the revenues we need." It sounds painless, but it's not. We argue that taxpayers pay even more when you bring in gambling because of the social cost. Who, after all, pays for the bankruptcies, the addictions, the crime and corruption? Where is that factored into the cost analysis?

How do your opponents answer these assertions?

They dismiss the studies we cite as anecdotal or skewed. But the statistics come from independent, nonpartisan studies. We have a whole section on our Web page documenting and summarizing these studies (<http://www.ncalg.org>). For example, there are 298 counties that have casinos, and in those counties the bankruptcy rate is on average 18.6 percent higher than in counties without casinos. A study that was just released shows that in cities like San Diego, Atlantic City, and Las Vegas, the suicide rate is four times higher than in other cities of comparable size. Other studies show that child-abuse cases, police costs, burglaries, rapes—the list goes on and on—increase dramatically when gambling enters a community. But the lure of alternative tax dollars seems to deafen the ears of our leaders to the facts. The government gets benefits while the gambling industry even gives money to churches and charities. Their goal is to silence you by compromising you.

It sounds like cigarette-industry tactics.

Absolutely, except with one major difference: With gambling, the government

has compromised itself. The government can't do with gambling what it's doing to tobacco, because it's *promoting* gambling. Mississippi's government, for example, is tied in with gambling, which makes it very hard for people to assess the impact of gambling on their community, much less challenge it.

You're a minister. Why do you think pastors and church members haven't taken up this issue with more vigor?

I should say first that some have, to an extent. Among evangelicals, the Christian Coalition, Donald Wildmon, and Focus on the Family have jumped into the fray on the basis of "Here's a problem that's impacting families." Occasionally a denomination will pass a resolution against gambling. But politicians don't care what we say. If we want to put the fear of God in them, then we'd better begin fighting for the truth at the ballot box.

Also, many Christians are involved in gambling. Eight out of ten people gamble in some form or another, whether in a state lottery, during the Super Bowl, or on the golf course. Even many Christians who wouldn't gamble patronize casino restaurants because of the cheap meals, not realizing that by doing so they are participating in a culture that sacrifices their neighbors and their communities.

What should be the church's message on gambling?

In a pluralistic nation, the church is not in a position to dictate, "Thou shalt not gamble." But we can ask the right questions: What is social morality? What is just economics? What is good, uncorrupted government?

In a democracy, you love your neighbor by having good, uncorrupted government. So it's up to you and me to educate and to help the communities know on

election day, here's the choice: good and evil! The church is missing its prophetic role on this issue. The truth is on our side, and we ought to march to the truth.

Let me add that a lot of clergy don't want to preach on this subject because they know some people in their congregation gamble. The point is, you don't have to attack them. They're already losing. Attack the casinos. Attack the public policy that's undermining them. We aren't going to win this in the sanctuary. We have to win this in the streets and in the state house.

What, besides voting against it, can individuals do to combat gambling?

In one word, organize. A fuller answer to your question, though, depends on the state and the community where gambling is being fought. That's why we began the National Coalition Against Legalized Gambling—to help local groups find the resources they need. We invite people who want to fight gambling in their community to call our number (1-800-664-2680). We will first give you a package of general information. Then, if you are calling from Tennessee, for example, we'll inform you about what's happening there and connect you with the key fighters in Tennessee.

Once it's in, can you uproot it?

Sure. A boat came into my community. Five years later, it closed. Another example: just several dedicated individuals in Arlington Heights, Illinois, took out two politicians in recent elections who were progambling. And since then, the renowned horserace track in Arlington Heights has been closed down.

Since 1994, when our coalition was formed, 35 states have said no to gambling expansion, and only five have gone further. We're witnessing a backlash against gambling, so this is *not* the time to stop fighting. I know our fight is a tough one, but it's ultimately about whether or not we are going to become a casino economy where we unjustly let the poor, through gambling, pay our taxes. I believe the Spirit is moving us. I believe that the waters have parted, and all we're to do is to keep moving. This is the Lord's doing at this moment in history. God has caught the bad guys out in the open, and we're Gideon's army. **CT**

Colombia's Bleeding Church

Despite the murders of 120 church leaders, Christians are fighting for peace in one of the world's most violent nations.

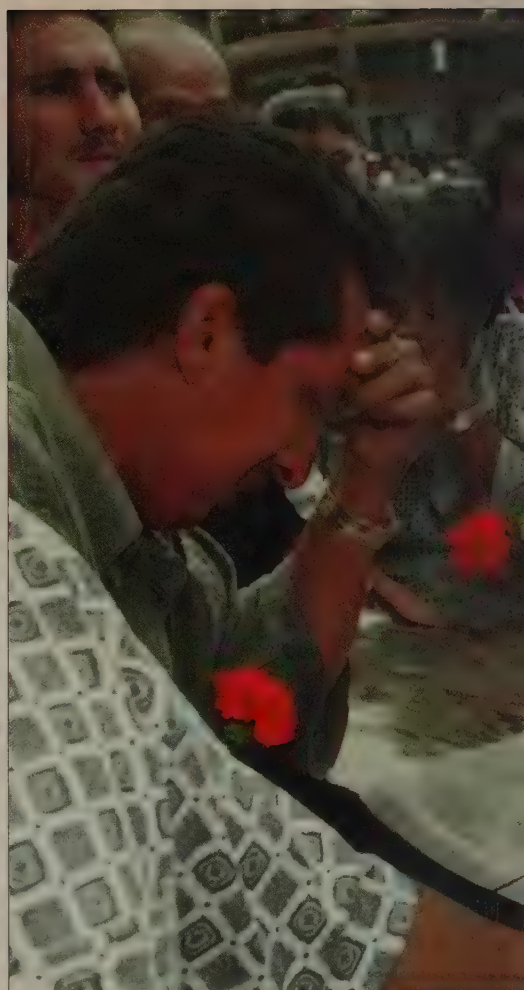
DAVID L. MILLER
in Bogotá
and Medellín

This is an election month in Colombia and megachurch pastor César Castellanos is mixing religion and politics. Castellanos leads the huge International Charismatic Mission in Bogotá, an independent, Pentecostal congregation he founded in 1983 with eight people that has grown to more than 100,000 today. But Castellanos is not content merely to be pastor at Bogotá's largest evangelical church. On March 8, he became an elected member of the Colombia House of Representatives.

Public service carries considerable risk for Castellanos. Media will closely scrutinize his integrity. In a

country where drug trafficking is a major industry, corruption scandals have tainted the reputations of numerous government officials, including that of President Ernesto Samper, who will relinquish the office following presidential elections on May 31. Forecasters expect 60 percent of the nation's voters to stay away from the polls that day because Colombians have come to believe that politics is powerless to solve the country's enormous problems.

Powerless or not, politics in Colombia is incredibly bloody. As happens every election year, numerous candidates campaigning for office have been assassinated. Just as the March congressional race wound down, a pitched battle ignited between the Revolutionary



Armed Forces of Colombia guerrillas (FARC) and the Colombian army for control of the southern Caquetá Province. The first three days of combat claimed the lives of 80 soldiers and a like number of guerrillas. The rebels seem to have two objectives: sabotage the electoral process and protect Caquetá's cocaine industry, which helps finance their army.

Why would César Castellanos, one of Colombia's pre-eminent religious leaders, want to get mixed up in a business so violent as Colombian politics? Precisely because of the violence. In May 1997, unidentified assailants tried to kill Castellanos and his wife, Claudia Rodríguez Castellanos, as they drove home from Sunday worship services. Castellanos suffered four bullet wounds in the chest, throat, and left arm. He spent two weeks unconscious in intensive care clinging to life. Three bullets struck Claudia Castellanos in the arm and thigh. Miraculously, their four daughters and two of their nephews traveling in the car with them escaped injury. The would-be killers escaped without a trace.

Investigators initially thought the terrorists' primary target had been Claudia Castellanos, who served in the Colombian Senate from 1992 to 1994



MAP BY JUNE GUNAWAN



Ongoing violence: Relatives and friends weep while lowering the coffin of former town council member Genaro Saenz into a grave in Puerto Asis in Putumayo Province in February. Right-wing paramilitary gangs are blamed for the killing and hundreds like it.

and had announced her intention to run again. They later concluded that the attack had no political overtones. It did, however, motivate César Castellanos to seek election himself.

"The assassination attempt led me to do some reflection, and I decided to enter government," Castellanos told *CHRISTIANITY TODAY* in Bogotá. "Despite the violence in Colombia, we know God has raised up the Christian faith to stop these invisible, almost demonic forces. For that reason we are working on all fronts—the spiritual, social, and political—to influence the coming of peace to our nation."

FACELESS VIOLENCE: Like César Castellanos, every Christian minister in Colombia faces risk. Since 1995, at least 21 evangelical pastors and more than 100 congregational leaders have been murdered. The homicide rate in this nation of 36 million is 15 times greater than that of the United States. Murder is so common it seldom makes the news. Crime studies

reveal that more than half of the homicides go unreported, and only 3 percent are ever prosecuted. Eighty percent of the population, in fact, have no proper police protection or access to courts of law.

A comparison between Colombia and neighboring Peru, which suffered through the Shining Path terrorist war a decade ago, reveals a dramatic picture. The Shining Path uprising, one of the bloodiest in South America in this century, claimed an estimated 30,000 lives during a 15-year period. However, nearly that many people—28,000—died violently in Colombia last year alone.

Political violence has increased markedly during the Samper administration, which began in August 1994. Insurgents have exploited the president's low approval rating, the product of allegations that Samper is in the pay of the drug cartels, to escalate their war against the state. In turn, wealthy ranchers and industrialists have countered the leftist challenge by

financing paramilitary units, which are private militias to protect their land and commercial interests.

REFUGEES FLEE: The undeclared civil war has engulfed large areas of the country, from Caquetá and Putumayo in the south, to Urabá and Medio Magdalena in the north. The U.S. Committee for Refugees and Amnesty International report that 1 million refugees have fled their homes.

Refugees include two large, U.S.-based evangelical missions. A rash of abductions and the tragic deaths of two missionaries in 1995 (CT, July 17, 1995, p. 60) forced New Tribes Mission (NTM) to withdraw all personnel and mission school students from its base in Villavicencio. FARC guerrillas in Colombia are believed to have abducted three NTM missionaries more than five years ago (CT, March 8, 1993, p. 68) who have not been found. In 1996, because of increased kidnapping and bomb threats (CT, July 15, 1996, p. 65), directors of Wycliffe Bible Translators made the agonizing decision to close its linguistic center in Loma Linda, where missionaries had labored since 1964 to provide the New Testament in tribal languages.

The vast majority of the exiles are peasant farmers or unskilled workers caught between the warring factions. To battle clandestine armies such as the FARC, the government's military strategists employ the practice of territorial "cleansing." Field commanders order civilian populations to abandon areas where guerrillas are known to operate, destroying the homes and crops of those who fail to comply. The tactic aims to deprive the rebels of food-



Bold faith: Claudia and César Castellanos.

stuffs, hiding places, and recruits.

However, the heavy-handed abuse has turned many Colombians against the armed forces. Some become guerrilla collaborators out of self-defense. But joining a rebel movement is an unsatisfactory option. FARC cadres use peasants as political shock troops, obligating them to march in public demonstrations, stage squatter invasions of private lands, and otherwise place themselves in harm's way. Defectors from rebel ranks typically end up dead.

As the ruthless conflict escalates, so do the activities of paramilitary "death squads," which have taken up the task of controlling civilian populations through intimidation. Their signature tactic is making guerrilla sympathizers vanish, later dumping the victim's mutilated body to be discovered by family or neighbors. The message is clear: to avoid a similar fate, clear out now. Samper has repeatedly condemned paramilitary squads and ordered army commanders to dismantle them. According to Amnesty International, however, their numbers have increased markedly during his administration.

Although they tend to grab headlines, direct clashes involving the army, paramilitaries, and guerrillas account for only 5 percent of violent deaths each year in Colombia, according to research by the independent Ser Institute. The warring factions seldom attack one another directly, preferring instead to inflict harm on civilian surrogates.

The drug war also grabs headlines, especially in the international press. Yet cartel mischief accounts for only 10 percent of homicides in Colombia—which is more than 90 percent Catholic—according to researchers. About 85 percent of murders fall under the category of crimes committed by unknown assassins for indiscernible reasons.

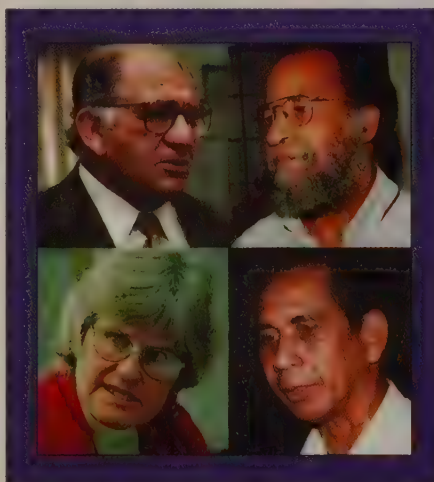
PASTORS MURDERED: Many victims of faceless violence die of mere suspicion.

That is the case in Urabá, a region of vast banana plantations and peasant farms where guerrilla bands and paramilitary groups vie for power. It is also an area where Protestant churches are experiencing rapid growth. But the social upheaval puts innocent Christians at mortal risk.

In recent years, the Association of Evangelical Churches of the Caribbean (AIEC), a denomination affiliated with the Latin America Mission, has lost pastors and lay leaders in Urabá. One evening in March 1995, a paramilitary band gunned down Hugo Rangell at his dinner table. They suspected Rangell, a member of the

Nuevo Damasco AIEC church, of being a guerrilla sympathizer because they tracked a stolen cow to his pasture field. On another night, a death squad entered the home of Moisés Aleán, pastor of the AIEC congregation in Volcancito, and murdered Aleán, his wife, and four children. The family apparently died because they, too, had been suspected of collaborating with guerrillas. Following the massacre, Aleán's entire congregation fled Volcancito, concluding that their pastor's assassins soon would be coming after the rest of them.

SUCCESS CAN BE FATAL: In other cases, a church leader's success, not suspi-



Seeking peace: Clockwise from top left, Tirana, Esquivia, Payares, and Gregory are working for a safer Colombia.

cions of collaboration, places him at grave risk. Manuel Amador resigned as pastor of the Foursquare Gospel Church in Chigorodo to devote himself to itinerant evangelism. An energetic preacher, Amador attracted large audiences. He also attracted the attention of an armed faction that decided Amador commanded so large a following that it threatened their control. In May 1996, guerrillas or paramilitaries—it is still unclear—assassinated him.

One Sunday afternoon in June 1995, Jesús Argelio prepared for the evening service at the Foursquare Church in Apartado when two men appeared at his front door. Argelio answered the knock, and the duo shot him in the head, killing him instantly. The assailants had heard about Argelio's bold preaching and concluded he was an enemy of the people who must be eliminated.

The same fate nearly overcame Carlos Payares, a friend and fellow pastor of Argelio's, who served eight years in Urabá as district superintendent of the Inter-

American Church, a denomination pioneered by the missions agency OMS International. Parishioners urged Payares to flee Apartado because they learned he was the target of an assassination plot. Meanwhile, they contacted the group planning his murder and convinced them Payares should be allowed to live.

"The problem is the armed groups think the church is an opponent that could upset their plans," Payares says. "They attack the church because they see it as a dangerous enemy."

When church members do not participate in the violence, they are persecuted because they appear to be on the opposing side, Payares says. "But the church is not on the side of either the rich or the insurgents," he says. "It's only practicing the principles of the Lord."

"The spirit that operates in the 'paras' and the guerrillas is the same," Bible college student Alexander Puerta told CT. "We never ask favors of either of them. It's like asking a favor of the Devil." Puerta is nearly blind as a result of an attack by guerrillas at a banana plantation in 1995. The massacre left 25 dead. Only Puerta, an elderly woman, and a teenage girl survived.

AWAKENING TO NEEDS: Faceless violence has created the 1 million internal exiles who have fled their homes and farms for safer havens. These families face a dismal future. More than half of displaced households are headed by single mothers whose husbands have been murdered or disappeared. Poor to begin with, they abandon all property and possessions. Often they must leave behind even their personal identities so that enemies cannot trace their whereabouts. This makes the task of settling in new communities and securing new jobs especially difficult.

In mid-1996, Jana Gregory, an attorney from Portland, Oregon, who works in Colombia with the Mennonite Central Committee, heard a prayer request at church for 250 refugees living in vacant Bogotá office buildings and went to visit them.

"Half were kids," she recalls. "They were sleeping on bare floors, most of them were sick. Some of the adults had gone back home and were killed, so the rest were afraid to return. We decided to see what kind of services we could offer."

Gregory and other volunteers from the Teu Saquillo Mennonite Church organized twice-weekly visits to play with the children and tutor them. Hairdressers gave free haircuts, dentists worked on

teeth. The whole population received free treatments for intestinal parasites. After seven months in the office buildings, the government resettled the refugees in another part of the country. Gregory's Presbyterian congregation in Portland and the Mennonite Central Committee of Colombia supplied the refugees with seed money for livestock and farm implements.

This is but one example of the evangelical community in Colombia awakening to needs of violence victims. Guillermo Tirana, pastor of the Trinity Baptist Church in Bogotá and president of the Evangelical Confederation of Colombia (CEDECOL), told CT that the crisis has prompted unprecedented, interdenominational cooperation.

"Heavy blows make us sensitive," he says. "Everywhere that people are caught in the violence, they are asking for help. That has motivated us to take action."

Since assuming leadership of CEDECOL in 1995, Tirana has involved the organization in relief efforts on behalf of displaced persons. Bogotá churches have donated food, clothing, and money as never before. "The evangelical community in its totality is agreed that we must do this for displaced persons," Tirana says.

CEDECOL also formed the Commission on Human Rights and Peace in 1995 to aid persons suffering from violence, naming Bogotá attorney Ricardo Esquivia as director.

"Thirty pastors from every part of the country are serving on the commission," Esquivia says. "People are beginning to give attention to the suffering church."

The commission sponsors training events such as the workshop on community peacemaking and conflict resolution conducted in February in Medellín. Instructors from a wide denominational spectrum led discussions on a variety of topics. Harold Segura, rector of the Baptist Seminary in Cali, presented a biblical theology of peace. Pablo Moreno, also from the Cali faculty, sketched the historical experience of the church in violent contexts.

"The object [of the training] is for commission members to reproduce themselves in their respective regions," Esquivia says. "All of these churches have suffered blows. What we are trying to do is to help people who are suffering see God moving through the churches."

TRAUMA RECOVERY: The CEDECOL commission noticed the deep psychological scars that violence inflicts upon displaced persons and is busy equipping the volunteers in its network to conduct what is called community-based, trauma recovery

therapy. With a \$30,000 grant from UNICEF, the commission has launched a pilot program in Urabá that it hopes to replicate in other areas of the country.

"These people have left everything—farms, animals, all their personal property, and maybe some dead family members—behind," says Gregory, who helped design the program. "We work with groups of children and women to get them to talk about the pain they've suffered, and to do that in the context of the Christian faith. When a mother sees there's value in talking through fears with her kids and offering them reassurance, then she can spread that through the family and, hopefully, beyond."

Tensions in Colombia have reached such a pitch that even the CEDECOL project, altruistic as it is, faces risk. UNICEF officials coach evangelical volunteers to alert local army commanders about their activities, lest they be mistaken for leftist organizers. The term *displaced person* does not appear in the commission's public announcements, because it arouses political passions. Volunteers must carefully monitor who attends their meetings and not allow photographs, because death squad operatives infiltrate such groups to identify future victims. And every Christian who works with the Commission for Peace faces the sobering reality that, every year, scores of relief workers and human-rights defenders are slain in Colombia.

Esquivia is aware of the risk and accepts it as part of the task. "There are cases in which we might be helping somebody who's from the guerrillas or the paramilitaries, but we don't do background checks on anybody before we help them," he says. "It's enough that they are suffering. Everyone is a human being, and God asks us to work with everyone."

Tirana agrees. "Most things are risky, especially if we're talking about doing things that are really worthwhile," he says.

FRONTLINE OUTREACH: Besides risk, evangelicals have faced criticism for their peacemaking effort. The most oft-repeated is that their initiative is too little, too late. The Protestant church, estimated at between 3.5 million and 7 million, is now a sizable segment of Colombia's 37 million people.

Jack Voelkel, chair of the Missions Department of Biblical Seminary of Colombia in Medellín, does not share that assessment. "It's always difficult for evangelicals to develop efficient organizations, even in the States, where we have so many resources," he says. "This is difficult in any situation, but particularly in Colombia

where the institutions are young and pastors struggle to survive."

Rising violence has prompted Colombian Protestants to respond to another challenge: assuming responsibility for evangelizing the country's native Amerindian peoples, many of whom live in areas under guerrilla control. Three years ago, a consortium of evangelical churches formed a national mission society known as Misincol. Wycliffe missionary Fernando Larzabal has been working with the agency to develop a corps of Colombian Bible translators. Wycliffe Bible Translators hopes to equip them with the linguistic skills necessary to carry on the daunting task of translating the New Testament into the 80 native dialects found within the country.

According to Larzabal, that objective acquired new urgency in 1996, when Wycliffe pulled its missionaries out of their base in Loma Linda. "The fact that we were forced out of Loma Linda placed us in greater contact with the Colombia church," he says. "At the same time, Colombian nationals were saying, 'We cannot avoid our responsibility in reaching the indigenous peoples, but we need you to teach us.'"

The cooperative spirit emerging in the evangelical community poses a poignant question: Would the Protestant churches have forged this interdenominational harmony in a more peaceful climate? Probably not. Some church leaders speculate that violence has even played a part in the phenomenal growth the Colombian church is experiencing.

The first missionary came to the Aburrá valley, which includes Medellín and outlying communities, in 1889. "By 1970, there were only 500 baptized evangelicals in this whole valley, out of about 3 million people," Voelkel says. "Now there are 15,000 to 20,000 evangelicals here. Violence has undoubtedly stimulated people to be concerned about eternal things and, therefore, more open to the gospel of hope."

For his part, Guillermo Tirana sees an open door for effective work in Colombia. "This is the moment the Lord is using for people to find his way," he says. "There is a very real commitment to spread the gospel. Secondly, in moments of affliction, people are thirsty for God."

Leaders such as Tirana, Esquivia, and Castellanos persevere on multiple fronts—political, social, and spiritual—to bring their compatriots to Jesus. They do it because, in the final analysis, they know that this is the only real hope for bringing peace to their troubled nation. **CT**

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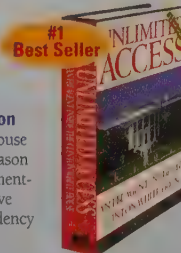


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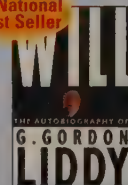
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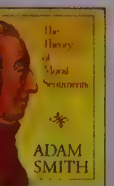
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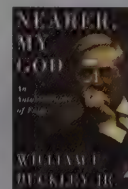


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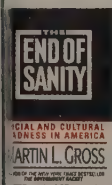
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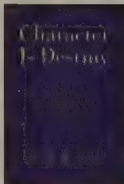
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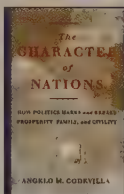
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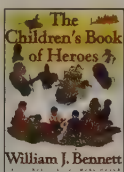
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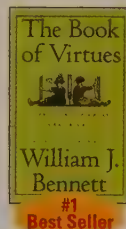
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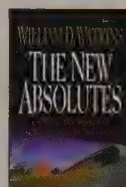
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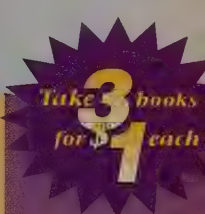


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The Day We Were Left Behind



BARBARA BROWN TAYLOR

When Jesus had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. —Acts 1:9, NRSV

On Sunday mornings, a great division takes place among American people as some go to church and most stay home. Those who stay home are not taking a week off; church is simply not part of their lives. As far as they are concerned, houses of worship are little more than pretty antiques, fussed over by wishful thinkers who do not know when to admit they are wrong and go home. It is one of the most peculiar things twentieth-century human beings can do—to come together week after week with no intention of being useful or productive, but only of facing an ornate wall to declare things they cannot prove about a God they cannot see.

Our word for it is *worship*, and it is hard to justify in this day and age; but those of us who do it over and over again begin to count on it. This is how we learn where we fit. This is how we locate ourselves between the past and the future, between our hopes and our fears, between the earth and the stars. This is how we learn who we are and what we are supposed to be doing: by coming together to sing and to pray, to be silent and to be still, by peering into the

darkness together and telling each other what we see when we do.

We may baffle our unbelieving friends and neighbors, but it cannot be helped. Half the time we baffle ourselves, proclaiming good news when the news is so bad, trusting the light when the sky is so dark, continuing to wait on the Savior in our midst when all the evidence suggests that he packed up and left a long, long time ago.

To be theologically correct, we have been waiting on the Savior ever since the first Ascension Day, when Jesus led his disciples to a mount called Olivet just outside of Jerusalem, spoke to them for the last time, and disappeared inside a cloud for good. You can read in Acts 1:6–11 how one moment he was there with them and the next moment he was gone, his well-known hand raised in final blessing, his face grown bright and indistinct, his familiar shape vanishing into the fog like the end of a dream too good to be true—all of it slipping out of their reach until he was no longer there for them, no longer present but past, a memory that would haunt them to the end of their days.

Where he went was to heaven—which

may not be up, exactly, as much as it is beyond—and what he went there to do was to finish what he had begun with us. It was not enough that through him God was born into the body of the world; that was just his Christmas gift to us. His ascension gift was that through him the body of the world was borne back to God. By presenting his own ruined, risen body to be seated at the right hand of God, Jesus imported flesh and blood into those holy precincts for the first time. He paved the way for us, so that when we arrive there later everyone will not be quite so shocked by us. He restored the goodness of creation, and ours in particular. By ascending bodily into heaven, he showed us that flesh and blood are good, not bad; that they are good enough for Jesus, good enough for heaven, good enough for God. By putting them on and keeping them on, Jesus has not only brought God to us; he has also brought us to God.

I tried all of that out on a friend last week. "Isn't that incredible?" I said. "Doesn't that make the Ascension come alive for you?"

"Interesting," he said, "but not compelling."



*You cannot miss what you have never known,
which makes our sense of absence—
and especially our sense of God's absence—
the very best proof that we knew God once,
and that we may know God again.*

What he meant, I think, is that it is still an abstract idea—an explanation that has very little to do with our day-to-day experience. Almost everything else that happened to Jesus makes sense in terms of my own life. He was born to a human mother; so was I. He ate and drank and slept at night; so do I. He loved people and got angry with people and forgave people; so have I. He wept; me too. He died; I will die too. He rose from the dead; I even know something about that. I have had some Easterlike mornings of my own—joy found in the midst of sorrow, life in the midst of death.

But ascending into heaven to be seated at the right hand of God? That is where Jesus and I part company. That is where he leaves me in the dust. My only experience of the Ascension is from the ground, my neck cranked back as far as it will go, my mouth wide open, my face shielded from the sun by the cloud that is bearing my Lord away.

Luke ends his gospel by telling us that the disciples returned to Jerusalem with great joy. But you have to remember that it had just happened for them, that they had just been with him, and the memory was fresh. They were still running on adrenaline; you can see it in the pictures. Almost every church with stained-glass windows has an ascension window tucked away somewhere. In it, Christ generally hovers in the air, his hands upraised in blessing, while the disciples look up at him with something between awe and delight. But he is there with them—he is in the window—and if they went away joyful, then I cannot help thinking that it was because they thought he would be back in a day or two, next week at the latest.

Two thousand years later, we tend to see the whole thing a little differently. We need a new window to describe our own situation: a window with just us in it—no angels, no Jesus, no heavenly light—just us, still waiting, still watching the sky, our faces turned up like empty cups that only one presence can fill. But he is not present anymore, not the way he used to be.

Ascension Day is the day the present Lord became absent, which may be why it is the most forgotten feast day of the church year. Who wants to celebrate being left behind? Who wants to mark the day that Jesus went out of this world, never to be seen again? Hungry as we are for the presence of God, the one thing we do not need is a day to remind us of God's absence.

Or is that really the one reason, underneath all the other reasons, we are here? Because we have sensed God's absence—in our hollow nights, our pounding hearts, our unanswered prayers—and because those things have not discouraged us from coming here but have in fact brought us here, to seek the presence we have been missing?

Sometimes I think absence is underrated. It is not nothing, after all. It is something: a heightened awareness, a sharpened appetite, a finer perception. When someone important to me is absent from me, it becomes clearer than ever what that person means to me. Details that got lost in our togetherness are recalled in our apartness, and their sudden clarity has the power to pry my heart right open. I see the virtues I have overlooked, the opportunities I have missed. The quirks that drove me crazy at close range become endearing at a distance. From that enlarged perspective, I can see that they are the very things that make my someone *someone* and not just anyone.

There is something else that happens during an absence. If the relationship is strong and true, the absent one has a way of becoming present—if not in body, then in mind and spirit.

My husband, Edward, is devoted to hawks and especially to the golden eagles that are coming back to our part of Georgia. Driving down the highway with him can become a test of nerve as he cranes over the steering wheel to peer at the wing feathers of a particularly large bird. Is it an eagle? Or just a turkey vulture? He has to know, even if it means weaving down the road for a while, or running off it from time to time.

"Keep your eyes on the road!" I yell at him. "Who cares what it is? I'll buy you a bird book; I'll buy you a bird. Just watch where you're going." Then a couple of summers ago we spent two months apart and I thought I would get a break from hawks, but instead I began to see them everywhere—looping through the air, spiraling in rising thermals, hunkered down in the tops of trees. Seeing them, really seeing them for the first time in my life, I understood that I was not seeing them with my own eyes but with Edward's eyes. He was not there, so I was seeing them for him. He was absent—or was he? He was present in me.

One thing is for sure: there is no sense of absence where there has been no sense of presence. What makes absence hurt, what makes it ache, is the memory of what used to be there but is no longer. Absence is the arm flung across the bed in the mid-

dle of the night, the empty space where a beloved sleeper once lay. Absence is the child's room now empty and hung with silence and dust. Absence is the overgrown lot where the old house once stood, the house in which people laughed and thought their happiness would last forever.

You cannot miss what you have never known, which makes our sense of absence—and especially our sense of God's absence—the very best proof that we knew God once, and that we may know God again. There is loss in absence, but there is also hope, because what happened once can happen again, and only an empty cup can be filled. It is only when we pull that cup out of hiding, when we own up to the emptiness, the absence, the longing inside—it is only then that things can begin to change.

It is our sense of God's absence, after all, that brings us to church in search of God's presence. Like a band of forlorn disciples, we return to this hillside again and again. It is the place we lost track of him; it is the last place we saw him, so of course it is the first place anybody thinks to look for him to come again. We have been coming here a long time now, but even in his absence it is a good place to remember him—to recall best moments and argue about the details, to swap all the old stories until they begin to revive again, the life flowing back into them like feeling into a numb limb. It hurts at first, but then it is fine, and the joy of remembering makes the pain seem a small price to pay.

"Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven?" That is what the two men in white robes said to the disciples on the mount called Olivet just outside of Jerusalem. Luke calls them men in white robes, anyway, so as not to scare anyone, but you can bet your last nickel that they were angels—angels sent to remind God's friends that if they wanted to see him again, it was no use looking up. Better they should look around instead, at each other, at the world, at the ordinary people in their ordinary lives, because that was where they were most likely to find him—not the way they used to know him, but the new way, not in his own body but in their bodies, the risen, the ascended Lord who was no longer anywhere on earth so that he could be everywhere instead.

No one standing around watching them that day could have guessed what an astounding thing happened when they all stopped looking into the sky and looked at each other instead. On the surface, it was not a great

moment: 11 abandoned disciples with nothing to show for all their following. But in the days and years to come it would become very apparent what had happened to them. With nothing but a promise and a prayer, those 11 people consented to become the church, and nothing was ever the same again, beginning with them.

The followers became leaders, the listeners became preachers, the converts became missionaries, the healed became healers. The disciples became apostles, witnesses of the risen Lord by the power of the Holy Spirit, and nothing was ever the same again.

That probably was not the way they would have planned it. If they had had it their way, they would probably have tied Jesus up so that he could not have gotten away from them, so that they would have known where to find him and rely on him forever. Only that is not how it happened. He went away—he was taken away—and they stood looking up toward heaven. Then they stopped looking up toward heaven, looked at each other instead, and got on with the business of being the church.

And once they did that, surprising things began to happen. They began to say things that sounded like him, and they began to do things they had never seen anyone but him do before. They became brave and capable and wise.

Whenever two or three of them got together it was always as if there were someone else in the room with them whom they could not see—the strong, abiding presence of the absent one, as available to them as bread and wine, as familiar to them as each other's faces. It was almost as if he had not ascended but exploded, so that all the holiness that was once concentrated in him alone flew everywhere, flew far and wide, so that the seeds of heaven were sown in all the fields of the earth.

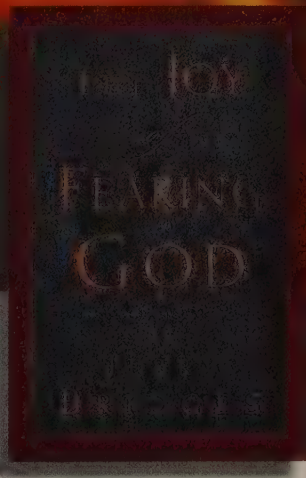
We go to church to worship, to acknowledge the Lord's absence and to seek the Lord's presence, to sing and to pray, to be silent and to be still, to hold out the empty cups of our hands and to be filled with bread, with wine, with the abiding presence of the absent Lord until he comes again. Do you miss him sometimes? Do you long for assurance that you have not been left behind? Then why do you stand looking up toward heaven? Look around you, look around.



Barbara Brown Taylor, author of God in Pain (Abingdon), teaches at Piedmont College, Demorest, Georgia.

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Under the Streets

Lifting manhole covers and crawling inside is a first step in a Romanian ministry's gritty outreach.

As another cold night falls on the East European city of Bucharest, Marshall McKenna prepares to visit the hidden homes of the hundreds of Romanian street children.

Heading for a manhole on a side street, Marshall easily pulls away the heavy lid and quickly disappears down the ladder. Four yards below street level, the inky darkness closes in around him. But the young South African knows his way and walks on confidently.

Like most street kids in Bucharest, he is a glue addict. It's the cheapest drug available, but its impact on the human brain can cause devastating neural damage. Despite his bleak situation, Ionel draws strength and encouragement from Marshall, who turns the conversation in a different direction. "Anybody can give you food and clothes," Marshall says. "But we want to give Jesus to you." Ionel listens intently, yet remains noncommittal. All too soon, the visit is over, and Marshall makes his way back to the surface, only to move on to another of his evening appointments.

Bent on bread

It's 7 P.M., and Marshall makes one of his regular stops at the Bucharest train station. Street kids swarm around him, pushing, pulling, swearing, shouting—a sooty, shabby, drugged, and desperate crowd bent on bread.

For a moment, Marshall seems overwhelmed, but then he pulls himself together. "You behave now!" he says, shouting at the top of his voice. "Stand still and say thank-you!" Amazingly, instead of laughing him off, the kids obey. The uproar dies down, and in short order Marshall hands out one sandwich after another.

To more than 200 street kids around the Bucharest train station, Marshall and the others at the rescue center are family.

The young teams strive to reintroduce normalcy to orphans whose lives have been stunted by neglect and false freedom. Later that night over a cola and a hamburger, Marshall says, "People often ask us if we mind doing what we're doing, [with] the kids being dirty, rude, and possibly full of lice.

"They don't understand that it is such a privilege to be out in the streets like this! We tell the kids over and over again that if they really want change, they need to come to Jesus. And some do."

Orasul Sperantei operates two shelters, one called the Villa of Hope, for young boys, and the House of Hope for girls. But the total capacity for 50 children is far short of the need. The shelters offer long-term care, where the children will grow up, receive an education, and be prepared for adult life.

Cristian Soimaru, 25, Romanian cofounder and field director of *Orasul Sperantei*, points to Cornel, 13, as an example of how children commonly become homeless. In the mid-1990s, the boy had sought sanctuary in the streets of Bucharest to escape severe physical abuse at home. His stepfather's preferred meth-



TOMAS DIXON

It's a hard-knock life: In Bucharest, street children often live near underground steam pipes to keep warm.

After several minutes, someone ahead strikes a match and lights a candle. It's Ionel in his winter nest, which is nothing more than a large, filthy blanket on the concrete floor. Ionel and countless other abandoned Romanian children seek shelter under the streets of Bucharest, keeping warm near the underground steam pipes that crisscross the city.

More than one problem

As candlelight flickers across the huge pipes along the ceiling, Marshall and Ionel talk. Marshall, as a team member with *Orasul Sperantei* (City of Hope) Rescue Center, works to help Bucharest's street children obtain housing, education, or employment. In Ionel's case, he urgently needs a job. As they discuss the options, Marshall says the rescue center, founded by Christians, will pay for Ionel to travel to his hometown so that he can obtain the identification papers necessary for legal employment.

But being jobless is perhaps not Ionel's biggest problem. As they talk, Ionel regularly grabs for a dirty plastic bag and takes a quick sniff.

od of discipline was to turn Cornel upside down and bang his head against the floor. If he failed at school, his mother punished him with an iron rod. After his escape, Cornel lived on the streets for several months. "When we found him, he was like a frightened chicken," Cristian recalls.

Cornel, who has blossomed at *Orasul Sperantei*, says with conviction, "I will stay here with my family after I have married. I want to work here, like Cristian." In spite of his bitter life experience, Cornel is more willing than most to talk about his parents. "I want to play the drums like my real father," he says eagerly. "I want Mom and Dad to become Christians!" With a sly smile, Cornel adds: "I would lie if I said that I read the Bible much. But I do read it!"

Bitter legacy

The estimated 2,000 or so street children are just a part of the overall problem. There are an additional 100,000 children in substandard orphanages. The number of orphaned and abandoned children is a bitter legacy from the era of communist dictator Nicolae Ceaucescu, who was executed, together with his wife, on Christmas Day, 1989, as communism was collapsing throughout Eastern Europe.

"Ceaucescu had the megalomaniacal idea that Romania should be the second-largest people in Eastern Europe by the year 2010," Cristian explains. "In the eighties, he forbade not only abortions but also contraceptives, and introduced punitive taxes for the childless. At the same time, he emptied the shops in order to pay off the country's foreign debts. So there were more and more unwanted children, and less and less food. Many, many children were disposed of by their parents."

In 1990, television reports from the Romanian state orphanages shocked the world. Some 250,000 children were living under unspeakable conditions; many were mentally retarded from lack of care. As the system broke down, thousands ran away and started living in the streets.

"Romania's biggest problem today," Cristian points out, "is not bad economy but the attitude that people still hold toward children. Ceaucescu is still alive in people's minds. They view children as a liability."

To the boys in the villa, Cristian is both father and pal. They show their affection constantly—and rather wildly. "It may

Villa of Hope:
Cristian Soimaru,
cofounder of
Orasul Sperantei,
draws smiles from
orphaned boys.



sound stupid," Cristian says, "but I personally believe that many of these kids will play an important role in the future Romanian community."

Orasul Sperantei was founded in 1992 by two individuals who hardly knew each other. At the time, Cristian, a student of law in Bucharest, sensed God urging him to speak to a couple of street kids one night as he was in a cafe after church. In the ensuing weeks, he started walking the streets on his own.

Angie Thomson, an American living in Brussels, escorted an aid transport to a Romanian orphanage for mentally disabled children—and was overcome at what she saw.

Later, a Baptist pastor helped the two launch the ministry. Their first orphanage opened in August 1994. The staff counts 45 full-timers: 40 Romanians and five foreigners. Volunteers from the local churches help out regularly. Angie stresses that *Orasul Sperantei* ministers to physical and spiritual needs. "All children in our homes know the Lord Jesus as their personal Savior," she exclaims. In the orphanages, there is a Bible study and worship time every night. Angie admits that ministering to the street kids is "excruciatingly draining." She says that "the worst feeling in the world is to walk away from a small child who is hungry and shivering and has no home to go to, knowing that you have no more beds left."

But in spite of the strain, Angie plans for expansion: "We are praying for a Village of Hope outside Bucharest with homes for 200 kids." While Cristian focuses on work in Romania, Angie attends to raising financial support, even though that means spending time away from her "small ones." But she is confident that their ministry is "one step closer to taking in another little shivering boy or girl."

By Tomas Dixon in Bucharest.

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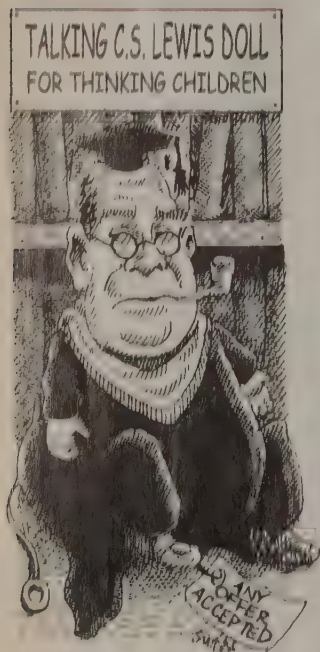
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Rob Suggs is a senior editor at *Walk Thru the Bible Ministries*.

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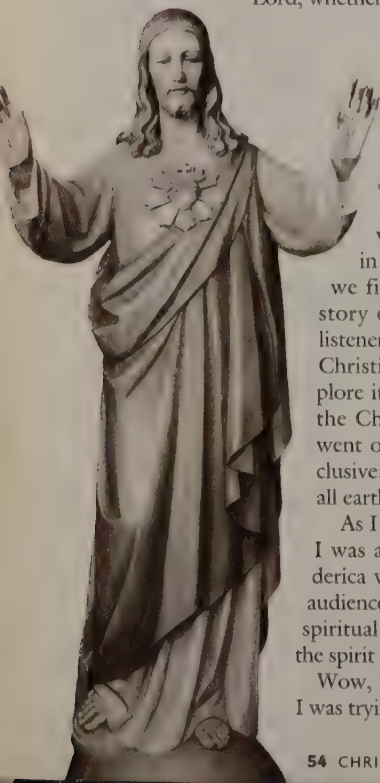
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I Didn't Mean to Be Rude

Many faiths,
not just ours,
hold quite
specific
doctrines and
stand at firm
disagreement
with one
another.



Twenty-four years ago this month I learned something specific. The specificity of what I learned is what makes it, to many, offensive.

Twenty-four years ago a hitchhiking jaunt around Europe brought me one afternoon to a church in Dublin. I was intrigued by Eastern religions at the time, particularly Hinduism, but was theologically open-minded enough to appreciate Christian art and architecture.

The light in the church was dim, and I blinked to adjust my eyes. Wandering toward the back, I encountered a statue of Jesus, who stood marble-white with arms held low, palms open. On his chest the sculptor had depicted his heart, twined with thorns and springing with flames. The base of the statue was inscribed: "Behold the heart that so loved mankind."

Here's the part I can't explain. I remember looking at the statue, but I don't remember falling to my knees. Then I felt an interior presence forming the words, "I am your life."

Twenty-four years ago I learned that Jesus is my Lord. But that's not the offensive part. Soon thereafter, reading Scriptures and learning from other Christians, I discovered that Jesus is everybody's Lord, whether they know it or not.

As I write those words, I think of how rude they sound. It's a hard thing to say; as soon as the idea of objective religious truth is proposed, touchy offense rises up in alarm.

But I keep trying. Not long ago I was one of a dozen speakers invited, in a secular context, to talk about what we find spiritually nurturing. I told the story of my conversion, then invited my listeners to learn more for themselves. If the Christian faith is your heritage, I said, explore it—there's always more to discover. If the Christian faith is not your heritage, I went on, explore it—Christianity is not exclusive; the welcome offered here transcends all earthly bounds.

As I sat down, the emcee looked at me like I was a naughty kindergartener. What Frederica was trying to say, he explained to the audience, was that there are many wonderful spiritual paths, and all should be honored in the spirit of multiculturalism.

Wow, I thought. I had *no idea* that was what I was trying to say.

I had just run into the modern mental cloverleaf that shunts Christ's claims to the service road: all religious beliefs are equally valid, all are fundamentally the same, and thinking yours is better is rude. Worse, you're probably one of those kooks who kills those who disagree; people with specific beliefs are dangerous. Christianity is very nice, as nice as the other religions, and all of them can be blended together in a tasty, open-minded stew.

But this theory doesn't stand up to even fleeting examination. Many faiths, not just ours, hold quite specific doctrines and stand at firm disagreement with one another. They blend in with each other about as well as a tire iron in a consommé. "All religious beliefs are equally valid" turns out to be just another religious belief, one that hasn't been proved valid. In fact, it's a kind of cultural imperialism—all the world's religions get reduced to a sentimental lowest common denominator that seems self-evident only to the privileged Westerners who came up with it.

The idea that all religions are one can be accepted only by a leap of faith. To make this leap, believers have to squint past varieties of religious experience that make even the resolutely open-minded squirm. Can we blandly include the "cargo cults" that sprouted among remote islanders who had received airlifted relief supplies? How about the Aztecs whom Cortez encountered in sixteenth-century Mexico City, burning human hearts before fat, jewel-encrusted idols?

It's hard being thought rude. Soft evangelical Christians may bypass the problem by putting the emphasis on the comfort that Jesus can give: faith will make you happy. Social strategists may highlight the utility of religious belief: faith will make you good.

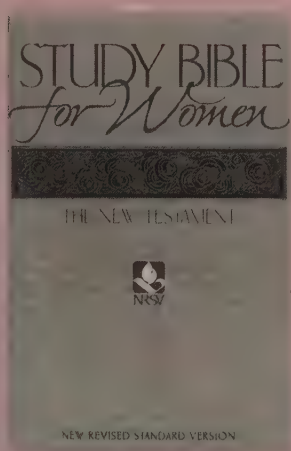
But the real purpose of Jesus' work is more intimate and more deep: faith will make you his. It turns out that when Christians say "faith," we don't mean merely acknowledging certain facts about God: "Even the demons believe—and shudder." It's faith as in *having faith in someone*, being faithful to him, following faithfully wherever he leads. Faith doesn't just enlighten us, it transforms us. It does this because it is faith in one true Person, striding over the tumult of lesser gods.

In the heart of New Orleans's leering and grimy French Quarter there stands a church, and in front of the church there is a statue like the one I saw in Dublin, Jesus with his hands spread in welcome and thorn-pierced heart aflame. My husband used to say as we passed it, "That's the only genuine offer in the French Quarter." It's an offer I accepted 24 years ago this month, a specific offer, shocking and saving and impossible to conceal. **C**

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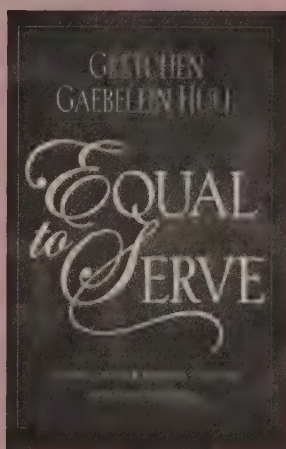
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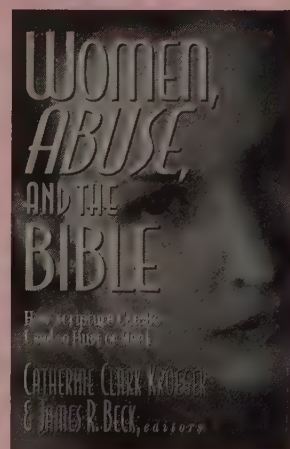
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BOOKS

Crafting a Class: College Admissions and Financial Aid, 1955-1994

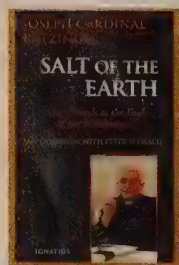
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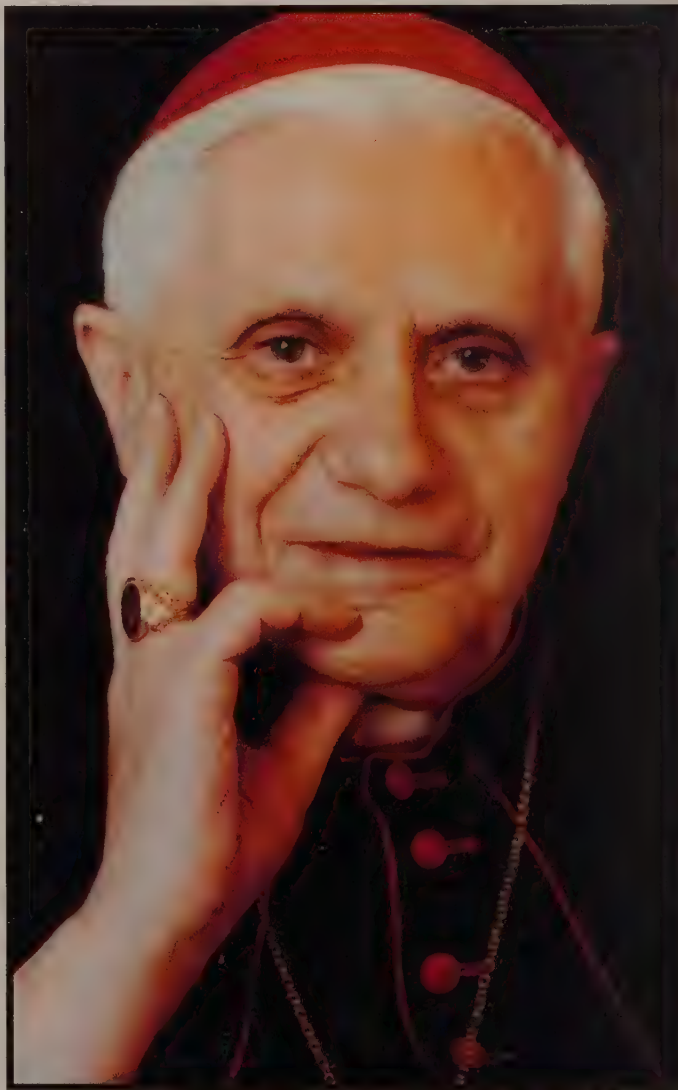
The pope's chief doctrinal officer has always been in dialogue with the Reformation traditions. Now he reveals his vision for Christianity in the new millennium.



Salt of the Earth: The Church at the End of the Millennium, by Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger (Ignatius, 283 pp.; \$12.95, paper). Reviewed by Richard John Neuhaus, president of Religion and Public Life and editor-in-chief of First Things.

In 1988, Religion and Public Life, a research and education institute in New York, invited Cardinal Ratzinger to give the annual Erasmus Lecture, followed by two days of conversation with theologians, including Protestants of the old-line and evangelical communities. The subject then was the authority and interpretation of Scripture, and everybody came away from those days profoundly impressed by the learning, candor, and gentle civility of this man who is the prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. Readers of the present book are in for a similarly scintillating engagement with one of the great Christian minds and spirits of our time.

Salt of the Earth is an interview extending over several days with the noted German journalist Peter Seewald, a self-described skeptic. Comparison is inevitably made with another book-length Ratzinger interview that was published in 1985 as *The Ratzinger Report*, which caused an enormous stir in Catholic circles. At that time the cardinal had not been long in the post of chief doctrinal officer, next to the pope, of the Catholic church, and his relentless cri-



tique of the "crisis of faith" at the root of the church's problems startled many readers. More than a decade later, the tone of *Salt of the Earth* is more tranquil, even autumnal at points, but the critique is no less incisive, and there is no doubt about Rat-

zinger's continuing belief that all crises are rooted in a crisis of faith, of whether we say yes or no to the love of God in Jesus Christ.

Almost everything a reader might want to discuss with the cardinal is engaged in these pages: his theological formation, how doctrinal development happens in Catholic teaching, the great moral controversies over abortion and euthanasia, whether women can be ordained, the meaning of celibacy, the changing role of the papacy, where and why the church made mistakes, the prospects for Christian unity, and what the church and the world should expect in the next millennium.

Seewald's questions are aggressive and usually incisive; Ratzinger's answers are invariably patient, pastoral, and reflective of his immense learning. Many have observed that, had he not been chosen as prefect by John Paul II, Ratzinger would have made a theological mark comparable to that made by Karl Rahner or, in Protestant circles, Karl Barth. To which others respond that he has achieved greater theological fulfillment and influence as prefect. *Salt of the Earth* may be submitted as evidence for the second position.

Ratzinger has also written numerous scholarly works, and it is a credit to his scholarship that he is able to turn his thought into prose completely accessible to the nonspecialist. He is not above addressing the issues that preoccupy the popular press. He refers, for instance, to "the canon of criticism"—women's ordination, contraception, celibacy, and the remarriage of divorced persons. On these issues, liberal reformers insist, the Catholic church must change if it is to reach the people of our time effectively. Here the cardinal becomes the skeptic. He notes an obvious factor that is often overlooked: "On these points Protestantism has taken the other path, and it is quite plain that it hasn't thereby solved the problem of being a Christian in today's world and that the problem of Christianity, the effort of being a Christian, remains just as dramatic as before." He sympathetically cites another theologian, Johannes Metz, who says that it was actually a good thing the Protestant experiment was made. Ratzinger observes, "It shows that being a Christian today does not stand or fall on these questions."

In conversations with evangelical thinkers, I am impressed by how many have been influenced by Ratzinger's much earlier book, *Introduction to Christianity*, published in English in 1970. For some, that encounter was the first

dawning of an awareness that Catholics and evangelicals can affirm core beliefs about "the gift of salvation," to employ the title of the recent statement issuing from the project of Evangelicals and Catholics Together. As off-putting as it is to Protestants, for many Catholic theologians the Reformation is not a formative event. In the worlds of Catholic faith and life, they believe, other things of equal or greater importance were happening in the sixteenth century. That is not the case with Cardinal Ratzinger. In part, no doubt, because he was born and reared in Germany, his theology has always been in intense conversation with the Reformation traditions.

He is not, of course, a "minimalist" theologian who is inclined to tailor Catholic teaching to fit Protestant tastes. But he has intimate understanding and appreciation of the religious and theological genius of figures such as Luther. He believes that what is true in the Protestant critique can and should be embraced by what he calls "the structure of faith." At the same time, he does not seem to expect too much in the healing of the breach between Rome and the Reformation. Speaking of the prospects for Christian unity, he says at one point that perhaps the most we should hope for is that there will be no new schisms. At another point, however, he speaks of Catholic "responsibility for the unity of the Church, her faith, and her morals," and he envisions the ways in which the exercise of the office of the papacy will change "when hitherto separated communities enter into unity with the Pope."

As might be expected, *Salt of the Earth* pays extensive attention to the office of the papacy. It is assumed that the New Testament intends a continuing "Petrine Ministry" in the church. The question is the relationship, if any, between that ministry and the ministry of the bishop of Rome, who, it is claimed, is the successor of Peter. Some Protestants, Ratzinger notes, "are ready to acknowledge providential guidance in tying the tradition of primacy to Rome, without wanting to refer the promise to Peter directly to the Pope." Many others, he says, recognize that Christianity ought to have a spokesman who can personally and authoritatively articulate the faith both to the world and to the Christian community.

In 1995, John Paul II issued the encyclical letter *Ut Unum Sint* (That They May Be One). In an unprecedented way that astonished many (including many Catholics), he invited non-Catholics to join in rethinking the exercise of the



**"PLATITUDES UNDONE":
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THE MAKING,
By Holbrook Jackson,
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handwritten responses**

of G. K. Chesterton.

Ignatius Press

92 pp.; \$14.95, hardcover

Reviewed by Carol R. Thiessen.

Gilbert Keith Chesterton's fans are many, both in Britain—where that prolific writer reigned early in this century—and in the U.S. One of those fans, Albert Kessler by name and a Chesterton collector, came across a rare gem one day in a used bookstore: Chesterton's personal autographed copy of a slim 1911 volume by Holbrook Jackson entitled *Platitudes in the Making*, subtitled "Precepts and Advices for Gentlefolk." After each of Jackson's platitudes in 12 brief sections, Chesterton has added his personal commentary on Jackson's platitudinous observations.

Ignatius Press has now reproduced the original book, including the additions made by Chesterton. For example: "The god of theology: a power that creates to destroy. *No: that is obviously the god of modern science.*" Or: "Every custom was once an eccentricity; every idea was once an absurdity. *No, no, no. Some ideas were always absurdities. This is one of them.*" In a short section entitled "Between Ourselves," Jackson wrote, "A man's spiritual kin are his nearest relations." Chesterton comments, "*See parallel passage in the Gospels more paradoxically put.*"

Some of GKC's retorts are profound, others just fun. But if you enjoy Chesterton as I do, this little jewel will make your day. **CI**

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papal office so that it might become an instrument of, rather than an obstacle to, Christian unity. As Ratzinger notes, the invitation is addressed first of all to the Orthodox East, but it also has large ramifications for the separated communities of the West. It is a source of considerable disappointment in Rome, a disappointment reflected in this book, that other Christians have not taken up that invitation. But, as it is said, Rome thinks in terms of centuries—and, as is evident in this book, in terms of millennia.

When the cardinal turns his attention to the next millennium, now only months away, the tone is sober, even somber. He envisions a largely post-Christian world in which the church will be on the defensive, smaller in numbers, but, he hopes, more coherent and committed in its faith. This is in contrast with John Paul II's frequently expressed vision of the third millennium as a "springtime"—a springtime of world evangelization, a springtime of Christian unity, a springtime of the renewal of human dignity.

The difference in expectations is undoubtedly related in part to personal disposition and experience. Ratzinger's world is chiefly that of a dimly secularized Western Europe. The pope's experience is that of Central and Eastern Europe, where a vibrant, if often contentious, Christianity has risen from beneath the rubble of Nazism and communism's evil empire. In addition, the pope's unceasing travels have established close ties with Africa, Asia, and Latin America, where anticipation of Christianity's future is frequently exuberant.

Not too much should be made of these differences, since it is obvious that God alone knows what the third millennium holds. What comes through in *Salt of the Earth* is the unshakable confidence that, no matter what happens, Christ is Lord. In his first sermon as pope, John Paul chose the theme "Be not afraid!" That theme has been repeated like a trip-hammer throughout this pontificate, and it is powerfully sounded in the present book. *Salt of the Earth* is an invitation to engage the mind and soul of a Christian made wise by life and learning, one who has had an inestimable influence in directing the church that embraces more than half the Christians in the world today and reaches out to all. Some readers, whether Protestant or Catholic, may not be persuaded by all that Cardinal Ratzinger has to say, but the book is an invitation that should not be declined. **CT**



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The Bottom Line

How colleges—not excluding Christian schools—have been shaped by market forces.

Crafting a Class: College Admissions and Financial Aid, 1955-1994, by Elizabeth A. Duffy and Idana Goldberg (Princeton University Press, 336 pp.; \$ 29.95, hardcover). Reviewed by Lauren F. Winner, Kellett Scholar at Clare College, University of Cambridge.

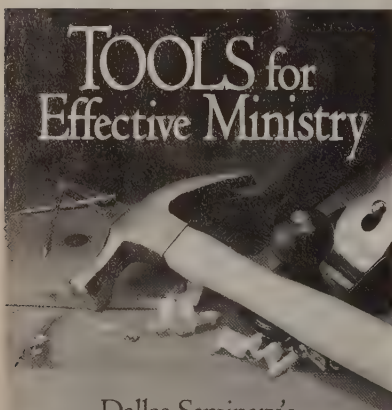
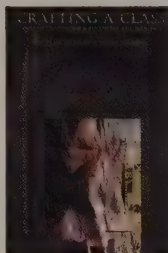
Moms, I am convinced, all attend a class sometime during pregnancy where they learn a few authoritative tales to tell their children. Growing up, all of my friends and I heard slight variations on a small canon of stories, and each of our mothers sought to authenticate the tales by swearing to know the people involved. The story that most frequently passed my mother's lips was the one about the girl who wore a foot-high beehive and never washed her hair until one day when, in the middle of

English class, great black bugs started crawling out.

When I was young, My mother also liked to tell a story about my grandmother, the first woman in my family to go to college—she had attended Woman's College, a normal school now known as the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. She had, the story went, written Woman's College a letter saying, "I want to come," and they had written back saying, "Fine, come Tuesday." All of my friends heard similar stories growing up, with grandmothers attending institutions ranging from Radcliffe to Brooklyn College; I seem to recall that a version of the same tale even made its way into one of the

ubiquitous how-to-apply-to-college-and-get-in guides. Whether my grandmother indeed ever received such a letter from Woman's College, I do not know. What is clear, however, is that college admissions have changed radically since my grandmother matriculated in 1925.

Elizabeth A. Duffy and Idana Goldberg's recent book, which was funded by the Mellon Foundation, does not pick up the story of college admissions and financial aid until 1955. In the last four decades, Duffy and Goldberg argue, admissions have been transformed. Most obviously, a vast majority of single-sex schools became coed, and colleges began active minority recruitment. The central change Duffy and Goldberg pinpoint, however, is one of selectivity: at midcentury, few colleges denied admission to more than a handful of students. In the 1960s, the college-age population exploded, and financial-aid resources expanded. This resulted in a deluge of applicants, far



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Books

more than the colleges could admit, even when they expanded their class size: For the first time, colleges were faced with the task of "crafting a class."

The flaw with this book's focus on selectivity lies in Duffy and Goldberg's sample. Their findings are based almost entirely on a study of 16 private liberal arts colleges in Massachusetts and Ohio, which include two Little Ivies (Williams and Amherst), three Seven Sisters (Smith, Wellesley, and Mount Holyoke), and one Christian college: Gordon. These are among the most selective colleges in the country, and one cannot generalize from their experiences to a Mars Hill or a Sweet Briar. Today many American colleges are worried about filling a class, not crafting a class.

This is particularly true of Christian colleges, many of which do not even manage to enroll their full capacity of students, much less achieve any measure of selectivity. The majority of Christian colleges, for instance, do not require a Christian commitment for admission; some see enrolling non-Christians as an opportunity for evangelism; others claim that the presence of non-Christians imbues the campus with an otherwise unavailable atmosphere. But many Christian colleges simply need the numbers and do not have the luxury of turning away non-Christian applicants.

As any parent with children of college age could attest, financial aid is a crucial part of the admissions picture. Financial aid has been the subject of tremendous controversy in recent years as several elite private universities have contemplated abolishing need-blind admissions. The question of aid is debated endlessly on the floors of state legislatures, where state aid to students attending private colleges is increasingly challenged as a diversion of funds away from the public universities. And the question is not limited to the American higher-education landscape: If federal tax breaks for college tuition has been a topic of some prominence recently in America, the question of government grants to college students has aroused rather more ire and passion in England, as New Labor launches tremendous cuts in aid to students.

Duffy and Goldberg chart the development of financial aid from 1955—when there was no federal aid program—to 1994, when federal aid amounted to more than \$35 billion, and the 16 Massachusetts and Ohio institutions studied in *Crafting a Class* spent on average approximately \$10.3 million on financial aid. Although Duffy and Goldberg do

not touch on the issue of financial aid to religious colleges, it is worth noting that Christian colleges rely on federal financial-aid dollars no less than their secular counterparts, but several recent court cases have challenged the constitutionality of these allocations. If government aid is found to violate the separation of church and state—and a good argument can be made that it does—many Christian colleges would have difficulty replacing this money. In a 1996 survey of 13 Christian colleges, the average revenue from federal grants—not including federal loans or state grants—was \$900,000.

Need-based aid constitutes only part of financial aid in contemporary America. In recent years, some colleges have increased their merit-based scholarships, designed to lure top-notch students away from competitors. When they began their research, Duffy and Goldberg were disdainful of merit-based aid programs, assuming that merit scholarships diverted funds away from need-based aid. The most interesting finding of their book is that, in fact, "merit

The mentality of the university is increasingly one of customer satisfaction.



aid seems to have had at most a marginal impact on need-based allocations. Although none of the colleges that award merit aid guarantee that they will meet the need of all admitted students, all except one have continued to increase their spending on need-based aid, even as they have expanded their merit programs."

But for all their analysis of increased selectivity and the development of financial aid, Duffy and Goldberg fail to focus on the most important change in higher education during the last

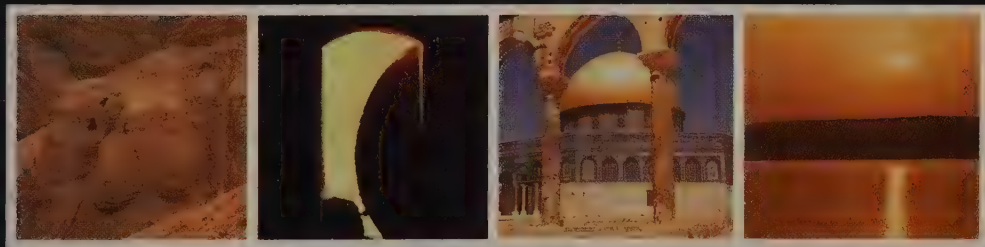
half-century: colleges have crawled into bed with the market, and their cozy relationship seems only to solidify each year. This has dramatic consequences for all areas of university life, not least admissions and financial aid. The mentality of the university is increasingly one of customer satisfaction, and the cultivating of customers—students—begins at the admissions office.

Admissions offices now devote an inordinate amount of their resources to selling their school and recruiting students. As Mark Edmundson pointed out in a recent essay in *Harper's*, the marketing of a school to prospective consumers begins most aggressively in the junior year of high school, when kids are bombarded with videotapes, CD-ROMs, and glossy picturebooks portraying university life. "Colleges don't have admissions offices anymore," Edmundson quotes one financial aid officer as saying; "they have marketing departments."

One admissions officer at a small Christian college told me that his school had recently debated changing its admis-

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sion policy to admit only Christian students. "That would be truly in keeping with the mission of the school," he said, "but we can't do it, any more than we can limit our student body to the kind of high academic achievers we'd like to see. We have to remember the mission of the college, but the main concern is the bottom line."

It seems to me that my friend has his priorities reversed. In fact, while we must always remember the bottom line, the main concern must be the mission of the university—which is not to turn a profit.

Duffy and Goldberg suggest that, during the last 40 years, the central change in college admissions has been the transformation of admissions officers from mere gatekeepers to administrators-cum-artisans who cull their students like so many gourmards hunting for the finest ingredients. Perhaps this is the case at elite institutions like Amherst, but things are much different outside that charmed circle. As one administrator at a small college in the South recently told me, "We used to be able to think about what students the college wants. Now we think instead about what college the students want, and our job has become for us to convince them they want us, not the other way around. And then we take whoever we can get. And if we have any real room for choice, we take whoever can pay."

Another admissions officer echoed the sentiment: "We have a need-blind admissions policy, but people pretty much look the other way. We're urged to be selective, of course, but at the end of the day, all the extracurricular and personal statements and letters of recommendation are more or less irrelevant—we select on the basis of bank accounts, and if we don't happen to have that information handy, we go by the zip code."

Crafting a Class clearly is not intended to serve as a guide for students and their parents—how to get in, how to get your kids in—but the advice implicit in Duffy and Goldberg will mislead unwary readers who try to use the book for that purpose. Field hockey and the Junior Classical League and violin lessons may be prerequisites for Smith and Williams. If, however, your child is aiming at a less prestigious institution, you may want to do no more or less than move to a tonier neighborhood. Then, you will have to worry not about whether your child will be admitted to said institution, but only what type of experience he will have once he gets there. **CT**

Truth

that is heart-deep

*from pastors
who can preach*

Ralph Waldo Beeson, the founding benefactor of our school, was a man of few words. On one occasion he summed up his idea of the kind of students we are seeking to prepare for the service of the church. "They ought to be," he said, "pastors who can preach." At Beeson, we believe that the recovery of preaching is essential to the renewal of the church. What does the preacher have to say that the psychologist, politician, stock broker, or social commentator has not already said?

THE MAIN PART. The answer is with a preacher in whom the Word of God burns as a fire in the bones, one who preaches with fierce humility, yet also with unstinted audacity. In the tradition of the Reformation, preaching stands as the central sacramental moment of worship. As Luther put it, "The preaching and teaching of God's Word is the main part of all divine service."

HE MUST INCREASE. In my office there hangs over my desk a famous painting by Matthias Grünewald. It is a depiction of the crucifixion with the hands of Jesus reaching into the dark sky. At his side stands John the Baptist with an open Bible in one hand while, with the other, he points with his long, bony finger to the figure of Christ on the cross. Barely visible in Latin are these words, "He must increase, but I must decrease." This is the

task of all true evangelical preaching. We say, "Don't believe in me, believe in Him; don't follow me, follow Him; I am not the way; He is the way, the truth, and the life."

SERVANT SHEPHERDS. There is a big difference between "pastors who can preach" and preachers who may also be pastors. A pastor who can preach is not a philosopher dispensing wisdom, nor a lawyer arguing a case, nor a general barking orders. A pastor is a shepherd, a servant leader, a fellow pilgrim who, like the prophet Ezekiel, walks alongside and sits down together with those to whom he has been sent to preach. Such preachers will speak the truth in love "dipping and seasoning all our words and sentences in our hearts before they come into our mouths...so that our auditors may plainly perceive that every word is heart-deep"—

George Herbert. To hear such a preacher is not merely to be inspired, challenged, or motivated. It is an occasion for divine epiphany.

Soli Deo Gloria!

Timothy George

Dean



Timothy George



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"Augustine Who?"

A window on the Greek Christian world—and a model for contemporary theology and biblical study.

The Bible in Greek Christian Antiquity,

*edited and translated by Paul M. Blowers
(University of Notre Dame Press, 464 pp.;
\$60, hardcover; \$40, paper). Reviewed by
Christopher A. Hall, associate professor of
biblical and theological studies at Eastern
College, Saint Davids, Pennsylvania.*

The collision of worlds can be a rather jarring affair. My first intense exposure to Eastern Christianity took place in a graduate seminar entitled "Russian Orthodox Spirituality." The seminar was taught by Thomas Hopko, a well-known Orthodox theologian and gifted teacher. The seminar was an eye-opening experience. Orthodox understandings of the centrality of worship

were fascinating. Theological explorations of the Trinity were challenging. Eastern hermeneutical approaches to reading and interpreting the Scripture intrigued me.

I recall offering the interpretive perspective of Augustine on a specific biblical text and receiving the surprisingly abrupt response of Professor Hopko: "Augustine who?" Rest assured that Hopko was familiar with Augustine. Why, then, the somewhat harsh comment? Perhaps Hopko spotted in me an inability or unwillingness to open myself to his world, a world inhabited by teachers who spoke and wrote in Greek, not Latin, and who had read the Bible in

the context of Alexandria, Antioch, and Constantinople rather than Rome, Hippo, Wittenburg, or Geneva. He was convinced that pastors and teachers such as Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Athanasius, Basil, Gregory of Nazianzus, and

John Chrysostom had much to offer me, if only I was willing to listen.

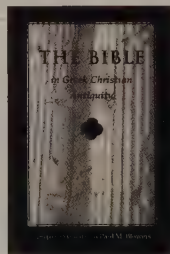
Hopko was right. The hermeneutical lens of Greek Christian antiquity magnified concepts, characters, and themes that the evangelical tradition occasionally overlooked or blurred. This is not to say that early Greek interpreters did not have their

own blind spots. It is to argue, however, that perspective regarding our own strengths and weaknesses is difficult to attain if we refuse to look beyond our theological and hermeneutical noses.

Readers interested in exploring the hermeneutical world of Greek Christian antiquity will discover a wealth of information and insight in *The Bible in Greek Christian Antiquity*. Respected scholars of early Greek Christianity such as Ronald Heine, Frederick Norris, Charles Kannengieser, and Douglas Burton-Christie offer analyses of a variety of topics related to how early Greek Christians read and interpreted the Bible.

Interested in how the Bible influenced the devotional practices of early Greek Christian communities? Five different essays explore this topic, with subjects ranging from the influence of the Bible on early Christian martyrologies to the Bible as a guide for early Christian travelers to the Holy Land. How about the use of the Bible in early doctrinal controversies? Charles Kannengieser walks the reader through the use of the Bible in the Arian controversy of the fourth century, while Alain Le Boulluec studies the use of the Bible among marginally orthodox groups in the second and third centuries. Readers interested in early Christian art, the use of the Bible in Greek inscriptions, and the use of the Bible by opponents of early Christianity will find essays discussing these topics.

Students representing the burgeoning interest among evangelicals in the writings and lives of the church fathers will not be disappointed. Ronald Heine, for instance, helps his readers understand how and why Origen, one of the most controversial of the Greek Fathers, read the Bible the way he did. Origen has been frequently viewed as an example of biblical hermeneutics gone bad, particularly because of his extensive use



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of allegory in interpreting the Bible.

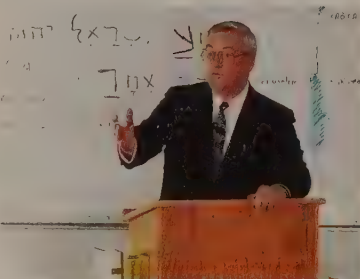
Heine guides the reader into Origen's interpretive world, explaining that Origen based his use of allegory, questionable though it may be for evangelical interpreters, on his firm belief that the same Spirit was speaking throughout the Bible, creating an underlying unity in the Scripture's various themes and narratives. Because Origen was absolutely convinced of the Bible's divine origin, he was confident that his search for a deeper symbolic or allegorical meaning in the biblical text was not a hermeneutical free fall in which hidden meanings are created out of thin air. No, the biblical narrative itself—from Genesis to Revelation—filled Origen's symbolic reservoir.

Origen would insist that his biblical interpretation, fanciful though it might appear to the modern reader, resulted from the prayerful detection of symbolic clues revealed through a comparison of text with text. As Origen read the entire biblical narrative in light of God's act to redeem humanity in Christ, he created a symbolic web of key "persons, places, and events in the Bible" that served as hermeneutical keys for understanding the deeper meaning the Holy Spirit had implanted in the biblical text.

Other Fathers would disagree with Origen's allegorizing penchant, as would most evangelical interpreters of the Bible. Unanimity reigns among the Fathers, though, regarding the qualifications of the person who would read Scripture well. For the Fathers, the Bible was to be studied, pondered, and exegeted within the context of prayer, worship, reverence, and holiness. The Fathers considered the Bible a holy book that opened its riches to those who themselves were progressing in holiness through the grace and power of the Spirit. The character of the exegete would determine in many ways what was seen or heard in the text itself. Character and exegesis were intimately related. As the Greek Father Athanasius put it, "Anyone who wants to look at sunlight naturally wipes his eye clear first, in order to make, at any rate, some approximation to the purity of that on which he looks."

Neither Athanasius nor other Greek Fathers such as Gregory of Nazianzus envisioned exegesis or theology as the academic activity of theological professors divorced from the life of the church or personal spiritual formation. Rather, the best exegesis took place within the community of the church. Surely this holistic, communal approach warrants a closer examination in our own time. **CT**

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REFLECTIONS

Classic and contemporary excerpts

Hildegard of Bingen is increasingly recognized as one of the most remarkable women of the Middle Ages. She possessed a prodigious talent and has attracted the attention of musicians, historians, literary critics, scientists, and theologians. Her music has undergone a recent revival, as has interest in her writings and pictures. Born in 1098, Hildegard became a Benedictine nun at the age of 15, an abbess at 38, and in 1150 founded a new community near Bingen, in Germany's wooded Rhine valley. During her life, her reputation as visionary and healer grew, and she corresponded with kings and queens, monks and nuns, and laypeople. She died in 1179. This issue's Reflections page is devoted to some of her work to mark the 900th anniversary of her birth.

God's Word in Creation

No creature has meaning without the Word of God.

God's Word is in all creation, visible and invisible.

The Word is living, being, spirit, all verdant greening, all creativity.

This Word flashes out in every creature.

This is how the spirit is in the flesh—the Word is indivisible from God.

—Taken from Teachings of the Christian Mystics

Overcoming Evil

Man . . . does not rule over evil except when he refuses to do it. When he has truly done evil, he is its servant.

—Taken from The Book of the Rewards of Life, tr. Bruce W. Hozeski

The Soul As a Tree

The soul is in the body as the sap is in the tree; and the powers of the soul are like the figure of the tree. How is this so? Understanding in the soul is like the green vigour of the branches and the leaves of the tree. Will is like the flowers

on the tree; mind like the first fruit bursting forth. But reason is like the fruit in the fullness of maturity; while sense is like the height and spread of the tree. And in the same way, the human body is strengthened and supported by the soul.

—Scivias (SC 14, 26), in Hildegard of Bingen, ed.

Fiona Bowie and Oliver Davies

A Call for Renewal

Those who willingly endure poverty in my name are truly worthy of my love; while those who through their greed would gladly have worldly riches, but are not able to have them, lose the profit of their labour. Yet he who seeks riches to satisfy in them my will and not his greed, will have in my house the reward of glory for his good will.

So too, he who seeks the power of

Praise to the Trinity

*Praise to the Trinity
Who is sound and life.
Creator and sustainer*



*Of all beings.
The angels praise You,
Who in the splendour
Of your hidden mysteries
Pour out life abundant.*

—Symphonia Armonie
Celestium Revelationum

glory because of his bragging arrogance and not for the glory of my name—seems to me like a stinking corpse. But he who seeks glory for the sake not of his own arrogance but of my renown, will appear full of glory in my Kingdom.

—Scivias (SC II 6, 92) in Hildegard of Bingen, ed.

Fiona Bowie and Oliver Davies

The Will

The will is like a fire, baking each deed as if in a furnace. Bread is baked so that people may be nourished by it and be able to live. So too the will is the strength of the whole

work, for it starts by kneading it and when it is firm adds the yeast and pounds it severely; and, thus preparing the work in contemplation as if it were bread, it bakes it to perfection by the full action of its ardour, and so makes a greater food for

humans in the work they do than in the bread they eat. A person stops eating from time to time, but the work of the will goes on until the soul leaves the body.

—Scivias, Book One, taken from The Wisdom of Hildegard of Bingen, comp. by Fiona Bowie

God's Work

Everything that God has effected has been perfected in Love, Humility and Peace. Human beings, therefore, should esteem Love, embrace Humility and grasp Peace.

—De Operatione Dei, taken from The Wisdom of Hildegard of Bingen, comp. by Fiona Bowie



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a '96 MA graduate from the Bible/Theology department is from Poland. He and his wife Ann plan to return to Poland this summer to begin a church-planting ministry in Wroclaw. The Stanczaks will also help to produce the *Polish Theological Journal*. They are being sent by their home church in Wheaton, Bethany Chapel, and by Christian Missions in Many Lands.



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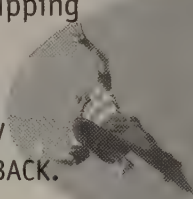
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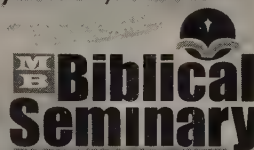
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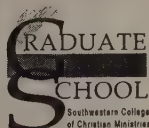
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**Todd and Elizabeth (Th.M. '98)
sang at the 1997 graduation.
They were married July 12.**

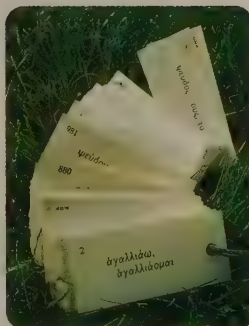


TODD SHIVELY was walking across Purdue's campus during his days as an undergraduate when another student casually called herself a *born again pagan*. Todd countered, identifying himself as a *born again Christian*.

"She was shocked," recalls Todd. "She thought I was too smart to be a Christian."

The incident instilled in Todd a desire to be able to present the gospel in terms that are intellectually respectable. And that's why he's at Gordon-Conwell.

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Todd has also been able to participate in the Boston Theological Institute (BTI), a group of nine seminaries that includes Gordon-Conwell.

"I took *Studies in Religion and Culture* at Harvard

University Divinity School. It was both challenging and enriching," says Todd.

"We shouldn't avoid honest questions from intelligent people just because we're too lazy to do our theological homework. I think that hard study makes it easier to share the gospel!"

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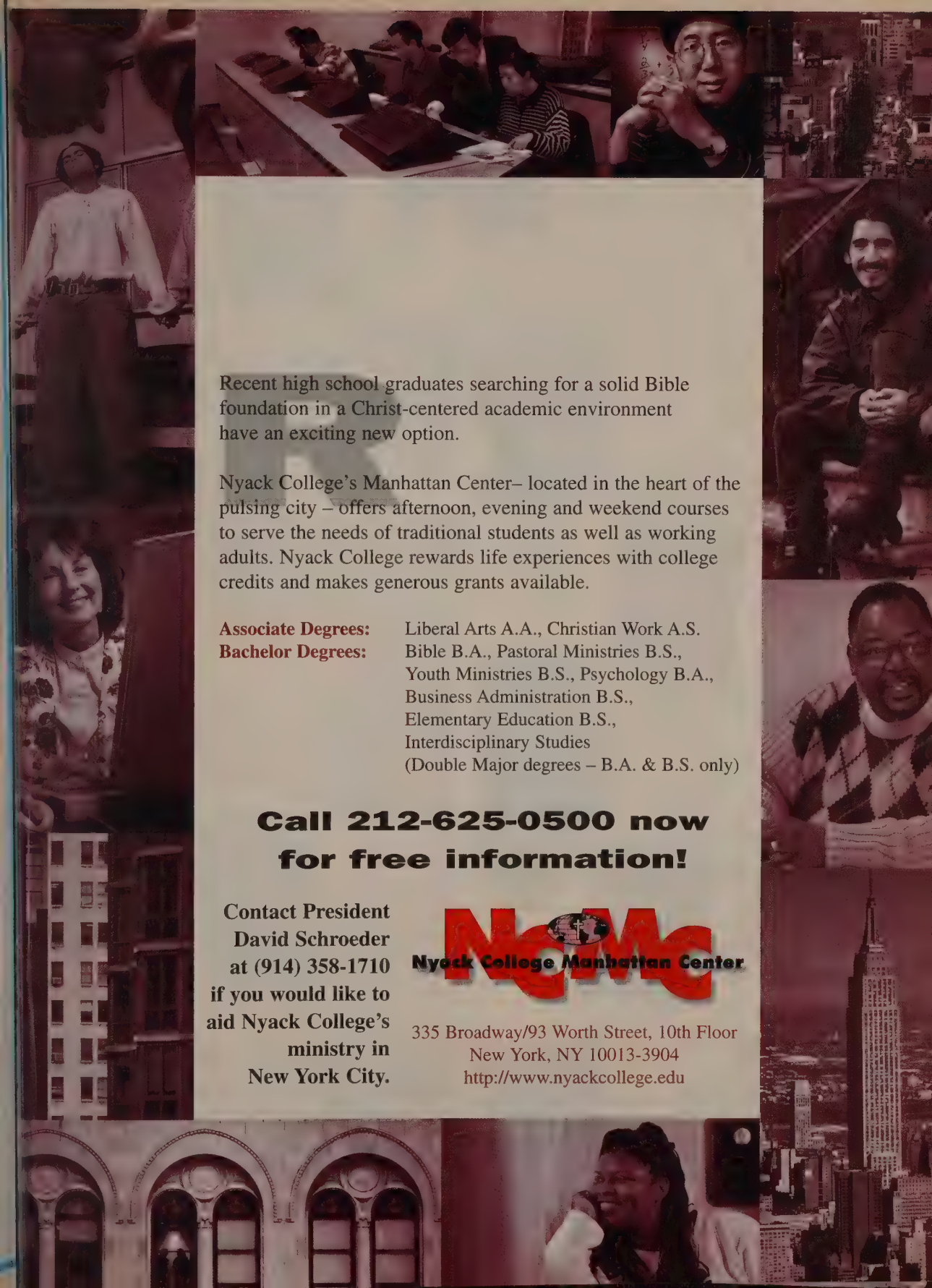
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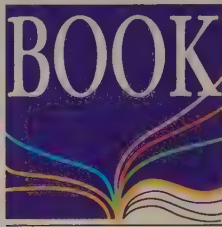
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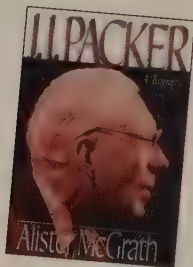
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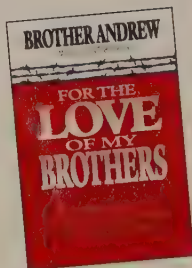
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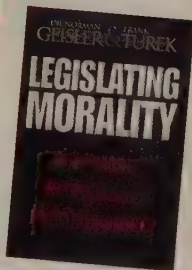
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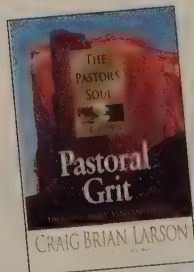
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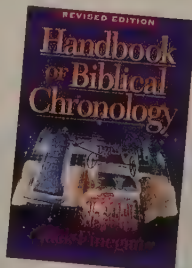
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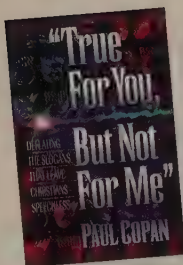
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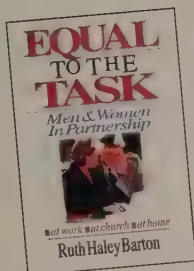
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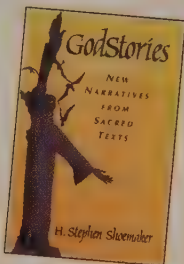
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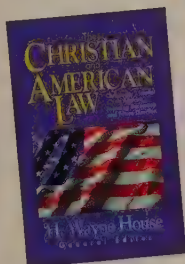
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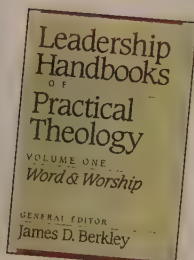
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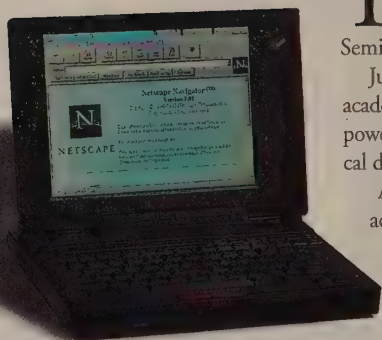
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of tension.

Francis Schaeffer traced the decline of civilization through its art. Some readers protested when their favorites—Kierkegaard, Stravinsky, Camus—ended up on the wrong side of Schaeffer's "line of despair," which illustrates the danger of trying to impose absolute standards on art. Still, we all sense that *something* has changed in Western civilization, and probably not for the better. Merely listen to a Bach motet, a Beethoven symphony, a Shostakovich concerto, and a meditation by John Cage—in that order.

I once spent several leisurely hours in the manuscript room of the British Museum, grazing through the centuries from Shakespeare and Donne to Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Jane Austen, and Virginia Woolf. As I approached the twentieth-century displays, I could not avoid the sensation of sliding downhill. The handwriting, subject matter, and even the sentence structure seemed to deteriorate. Finally I reached the most recent manuscripts, featuring the scrawled original of a renowned Beatles' song: "Oh yeah, oh yeah, I wanna hold your hand." A long descent from John Donne.

I took a fascinating graduate course from the University of Chicago on "The History of the Structure of the English Sentence." Beginning with the very earliest writings, we analyzed representative sentences from different eras. By the end of the course, students could date an unidentified paragraph within a half-century simply by diagramming its sentences. Grammatical structure, it turns out, yields an important clue to overall culture.

In societies secure in truth, reason, and their role in the world, writers tend to produce balanced, confident sentences. Samuel Johnson did not mentally diagram his sentences before speaking, to ensure that each subordinate clause be symmetrically balanced by another. He spoke that way because he thought that way, in an era that had a stable view of the world.

Today, some writers dispense with capitalization and intentionally ignore hard-won rules of punctuation. The same author may follow up a sentence that sprawls over several pages with two- or three-word sentences possessing neither subject nor verb. Our sentences have lost the confidence of earlier eras, becoming cryptic, chaotic, disorganized—like the entire century.

Our class at the University of Chicago took a careful look at Bible translations, for these have had a powerful influence on language. As might be expected, most retain a traditional sentence structure. Yet despite recent discoveries of ancient manuscripts and improvements in translation skills, in some ways the newer versions have strayed from the origi-

nal, especially in rendering the Old Testament.

Jacques Ellul once said, "The blessed uncertainty of language is the source of all its richness." That built-in uncertainty is evident in Hebrew, where one main connective word, usually translated "and" or "but," can perform many different functions. Consider the following literalistic translation from Genesis as rendered in the sixteenth-century Tyndale Bible:

And the woman saw that it was a good tree to eat of and lusty unto the eyes and a pleasant tree for to make wise; and took of the fruit of it, and ate, and gave unto her husband also with her, and he ate. And the eyes of both of them were opened.

The *and* creates a sense of movement, of narrative action, while leaving much open to interpretation. The Jewish tradition embodied in the Talmud capitalizes on this "blessed uncertainty" by printing rabbinical interpretations of Scripture.

We moderns like more direction. Consider the New English Bible (1970) rendering of the same passage:

When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good to eat, and that it was pleasing to the eye and tempting to contemplate, she took some and ate it. She also gave her husband some and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened.

The *when* and *then*—two possible meanings of the same word in the original Hebrew—move from translation toward interpretation, and subtly shift the force from narrative to didactic.

Changes such as these add irony to the recent discussion over gender usage in the NIV Bible. Indeed, the Bibles most "conservative" about gender issues apply an overlay of interpretation in far more subtle ways, such as in their use of conjunctions and adverbs.

While some draw lines in the sand and condemn opponents on the other side, I rejoice that the controversy is taking place. Both sides are arguing over the true meaning of the text—a worthy goal that many universities have long since abandoned. Christians still believe that words have ultimate meaning, and that the most noncoercive of all media, language, can convey truth about the universe.

All those who take up the daunting task of Bible translation step into a force field of tension. On the one hand, we must keep on arguing about proper meaning because we so highly value that meaning. On the other hand, we must recognize that all translation, indeed all language, contains an element of uncertainty. We dare not lessen the tension on either end. **CT**

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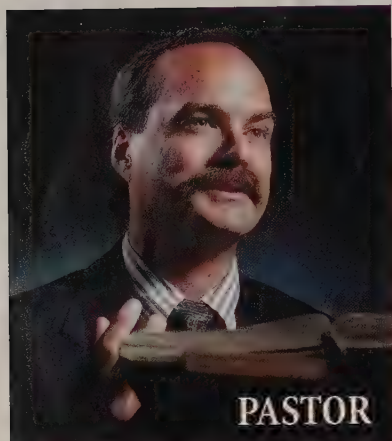


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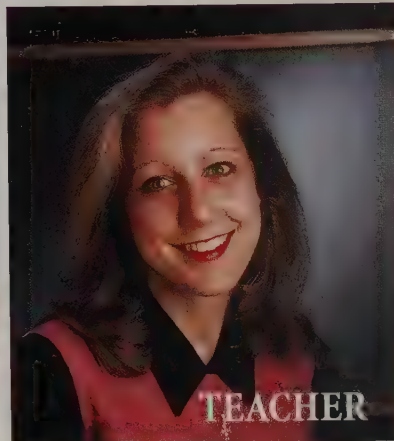
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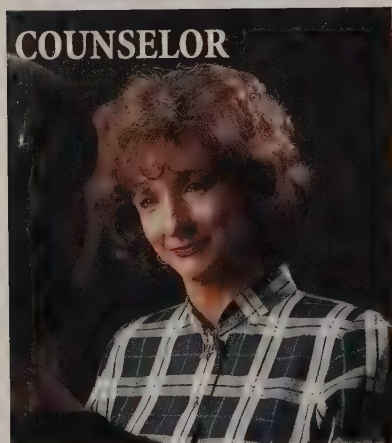
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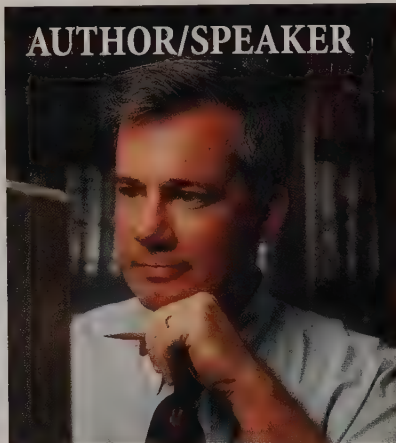
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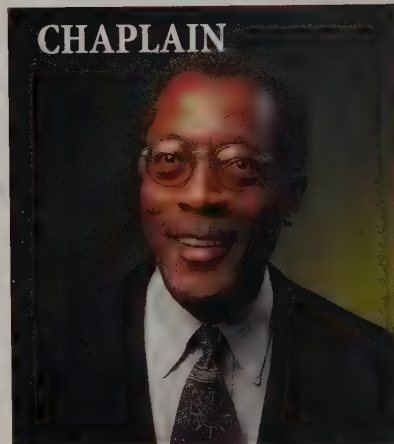
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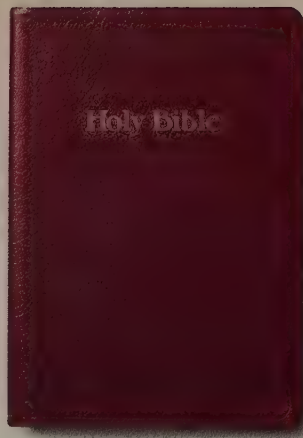
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A Magazine of Evangelical Conviction



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Michael Maudlin,
Managing Editor

How Can a False Religion Be So Successful?

INSIDE CT

In 1980 I decided to visit my uncle in Oregon, and this worried my fiancée. She thought I was vulnerable. Having been a Christian less than a year, I would be visiting a Mormon relative who had already converted several family members, including my grandmother.

So Karen loaded me up with various articles and books. After reading up on Mormonism, I wondered, How could anyone take this religion seriously? Its theology is inconsistent and derivative; its historicity questionable; and its sociological dynamics easily explained. Then I went to Oregon.

Uncle Otto is a great guy. Two sons from his pre-Mormon marriage lived nearby, and with their pleasant wives and well-nurtured children they made perfect "Welcome to Mormonism" postcards. My uncle and his wife had adopted or birthed seven more children. Uncle Otto never pressured me about his faith but patiently answered my questions. When I was leaving he said, "Mick, as long as you continue searching for the truth, I think you will end up a Mormon."

A few years ago I visited the Mormon bookstore at Temple Square in Salt Lake City. What I found was eerily familiar. Every category we have in Christian bookstores had its counterpart here: surveys of South

American archaeology that acted as "evidence that demands a verdict"; commentaries and apologetical texts; histories and biographies (including those of sports stars and other celebrities); fiction; and especially books on lifestyle evangelism.

On his recent flight to Salt Lake, our cover story's author, associate news editor John W. Kennedy, sat next to a returning Mormon missionary. John told him the kind of story he was doing, and the missionary didn't get upset; instead, he shared his faith. The same thing happened when John interviewed apostle M. Russell Ballard about the hordes of Southern Baptists due to descend on his town (see story beginning on p. 24): Ballard shared his faith. And when our photographer Steve Sonheim took pictures in Temple Square, four different, pleasant, eager young people started conversations about "spiritual things" with him.

What does it say about all our evangelical successes—growth statistics, vibrant publishing, dynamic parachurch ministries, solid educational institutions, and healthy, evangelizing congregations—when they are duplicated or outdone by this false religion? It means we cannot place our confidence in these markers, no matter how impressive they may be. It means that very little separates us from Mormons, except this: communion and truth. The living God has met us, made us his own, and revealed his truth to us through his Word. Everything else is only a prop.

CT

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God's Grace for Marriage

✉ I'm always amazed by God's grace when a marriage as broken as the McCartneys' experiences healing ["McCartney on the Rebound," May 18]. It's one of God's greatest miracles. However, when I read about their dating experiences in college, I was reminded of the urgency of communicating to my daughters how intelligent, capable, and valuable they are just by virtue of who God made them to be. God forbid they should ever feel compelled to date, let alone marry, a man who treated them so poorly.

Michelle Houston
Forsyth, Mont.

✉ McCartney's "God told me" this and "God told me" that is akin to spells of psychotic episodes that clearly say there are times when he is not in touch with reality. As an evangelical believer, I would be very cautious in setting him up as an example to follow. Bill Simpson

San Antonio, Tex.

Gambling: A Form of Bondage

✉ I am grateful for Tim Stafford's article on our nation's gambling craze ["None Dare Call It Sin," May 18]. During the past eight months, I have been an intern chaplain at an inpatient treatment center for compulsive gamblers. It did not take me long to realize how naïve I was about oppressive aspects of the industry. My experience has shown me that gambling is a very real form of bondage. Addictions often begin at a young age with games such as marbles and cards, or with innocent engagement in bingo, lotteries, or slot machines. Once the hook is set, destruction is fast, forceful, and often bears more collateral damage than other addictions.

Kristoffer Cox
Renville, Minn.

✉ I am deeply grieved over the gambling problem in Mississippi. I lived there in the '60s, and my life revolved around the church and Christ. I think the body of Christ there (as well as in my own state of Arizona) has compromised its values to the point of no longer being able to fight off moral evil. The pastors interviewed there seem to have no basis on which to oppose the sin of gambling. Who could possibly mistake the Satanic

Responding to Karla Faye

Readers' response to CT's April 6 editorial has been been greater than for any other editorial. In the last issue, we published excerpts from the first wave of letters, letters that overwhelmingly opposed our belief that "the death penalty has outlived its usefulness." However, more recent letters show that over half (53 percent) of our readers agreed with CT's stance. This issue remains important to a large number of Christians.

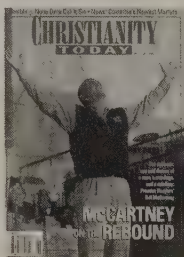
taunt in the remark, "We'll get the businessmen, and once we've got the businessmen, we'll silence the church?"

Ann Hughes
Phoenix, Ariz.

The Suffering Colombian Church

✉ Thank you for "Colombia's Bleeding Church," by David Miller, in your May 18 issue. While there is a growing awareness in the American church of Christian persecution worldwide, the suffering of the church in Colombia has not received sufficient exposure. Miller's article should help correct that.

Jeff Taylor
Santa Ana, Calif.



Where Is the Fiction?

✉ CT's '98 Book Awards [Apr. 27] reiterate the evangelical community's inability to write fiction. While we are amazingly prolific at turning out hordes of Bible dictionaries, commentaries, and ethical musings, we are hopeless with narrative. Perhaps we should consider placing a ban on narratives about the Antichrist and romances bearing titles like *Softly Creeps the Spring*. Where is the next Flannery O'Connor? Where is the next Walker Percy? Where is the next C. S. Lewis?

Christopher H. Bunn
Wheaton, Ill.

A Fine Writer

Oh blessed irony! Oh joyous and grateful reversal! I found Susan Wise Bauer's article on the struggles of prayer (expressed via the mountainous literature on the topic and our contemporary "how to" culture) excellent, refreshing, and helpful ["The Myth of a Better Prayer Life," Apr. 27]. Susan Wise Bauer is a fine writer and an honest, astute thinker. CT readers should be led to her recent novel, *The Revolt*.

John D. Morrison
Lynchburg, Va.

✉ Bauer's article seems to omit the most important book on prayer, the Bible. Her prayer attempts also seem to be self-centered. She says, "The theory of prayer is, in fact, intensely simple. Tell God your needs, thank him for his gifts, cry out to him in sorrow, praise him for his greatness, listen for his answers." That is all fine as far as it goes, but there is not one word said about interceding at the throne of grace for others.

Rodney Bonck
Verona, Va.

✉ I am grateful for Bauer's kind comments about my book, *The Art of Prayer*. I disagree, however, with the implicit assumption that her subjective responses to the books she reviewed should be taken as universal. She is troubled by our culture's self-helpism, yet she falls into the equally pervasive cultural bias of defining a book's value by "if it works for me." Bauer evidenced little awareness of the need for different literary approaches that speak to different kinds of people. Bauer says several of the books are "undoubtedly pitched to an audience accustomed to solving its problems with how-to books." It is hard to read this as anything but dismissive. But in a day of best-selling New Age author-gurus like Deepak Chopra, I felt called to write an approachable book that could point people to Christianity's wonderfully accessible God.

Timothy Jones
Nolensville, Tenn.

No Biblical View?

✉ It is common to find people making good arguments for absolutes, including a belief in an absolute God, being the problem in the world. What is not so common is to find a Christian reviewer doing more damage. In Volf's review of *Jehovah on Trial* [Apr. 27] I found not one attempt to provide a biblical answer. God's rejection of Cain is not set in the biblical context of his rejection of God as his God, but Volf sees it in God's "inverting the order of social inequalities." Rather than present a biblical view, Volf sees Schwartz's critique of monotheism as a prod "to give a richer and more faithful account of who God is." How better than from Scripture? Instead, we are given a picture of a God whose election of "us" (saints?) does not exclude "them" (sinners?). This God actually chooses some for the "ultimate pur-

pose" of blessing all. In the same way? For eternity? Finally, even the Trinity becomes a model for a healthy society rather than a model of life specifically and exclusively for the church. I find the points made by the reviewer much more disturbing than anything in the book.

Scotty Karber
Benton, Ark.

■ I believe Volf would have served us better if he had ended by saying, "Now all good Christians can save their money, and forget about Schwartz and keep on following and obeying God's Holy Word."

C. C. Fowler
Colorado Springs, Colo.

Positive, Nonjudgmental

As a Roman Catholic, I was surprised and grateful to discover your article "A Pro-Woman Pope" [Apr. 27]. Thank you, Elizabeth Fox-Genovese! Her article was positive and nonjudgmental, something Christian media other than specific Catholic literature and broadcasts frequently fail at. The lack of understanding and ignorance of Catholic teaching further serves to prejudice and divide Christians. I pray daily for the union of all Christians, and positive truthful dialogue is a very important step to reaching that goal.

Pamela Weaver
Piedmont, S. Dak.

Having a pope who supports women's equality in all realms of society does not mean much when he denies women the opportunity to be ordained.

Barbara Hallenbaugh
Connellsville, Pa.

Throwing Stones at Clinton

■ Virtuecrat Charles Colson's decrying of President Clinton's approval ratings in the midst of "salacious charges" deserves scrutiny ["Why Fidelity Matters," Apr. 27]. The last president we had who indisputably slept only with his wife was Jimmy Carter, who was hounded from office by Religious Right types like Colson and Falwell. Although Carter was an evangelical himself (and still teaches Sunday school), most evangelicals opted to support his successor, who became our only president who was divorced and never went to church. The evangelicals who voted for Ronald Reagan should be the last people throwing stones at Clinton.

Paul R. Schlitz, Jr.
Baltimore, Md.

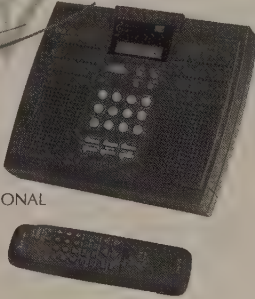
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A Ray of Divine Light

✍ A hearty "hoorah" for Mr. George, Mr. Oden, and Mr. Packer. It is about time someone speaks, and *is heard*, from the ranks of true ecumenism ["An Open Letter About 'The Gift of Salvation,'" Apr. 27]. For a long time, I have been disheartened by the ecclesiastical bickering between Protestants and Catholics. All it has ever served to accomplish is a widening of the gulf between us.

I applaud the spirit and the effort of ECT. It seemed I never saw a reflection of that spirit in real life. Now I have glimpsed a ray of divine light. I shall continue to encourage and pray for those who push forward this true ecumenical spirit.

Dennis Paul Meyer
Coopersburg, Pa.

✍ Many evangelicals are wondering where the evangelical signers of the ECT documents are headed. Anyone who studies carefully the latest "Catechism of the Catholic Church" (1994) can only come to one conclusion: They are on a one-way street leading to Rome. Glen R. Felty
Chicago, Ill.

Christians and the Holocaust

With regard to the Editorial in CHRISTIANITY TODAY, April 27, 1998: I sincerely appreciate your attempt to wrestle with Christian responsibility for the Holocaust. But the article does not come to grips with the precedents that Hitler found in official Christian policies toward Jews, the complicity of genuine Christians in the democratic processes that brought Hitler to power, and the refusal of many born-again Christians to take a stand against Hitler's activities. Hitler's racist philosophy may have owed much to social Darwinism and Nietzsche, but it could not have developed without a long tradition of Christian theology that treated Jews in equally racist modes. Indeed, your own quotation from Martin Luther fortuitously identifies Jews in racial terms.

Your recommendations about education in the history of Judaism and anti-Judaism already have been widely followed in secular and nonevangelical Christian institutions. But many reputable evangelical institutions do not offer even a single course in these areas. Evangelicals have produced a Bible translation (the NIV) that is arguably the most insensitive of all the major recent translations with respect to the manner in which Jews and Judaism are portrayed (e.g., the NIV resists using the word *Messiah*, even when the title is demanded by the context).

Perhaps rather than defending ourselves, we should apologize.

Prof. Allen Kerkeslager
Eastern College
St. Davids, Pa.

✍ The author quotes Christian leaders from Chrysostom to Luther, which should make us do more than squirm. Perhaps our delicate Christian audiences would not be so shocked at the Holocaust Museum if our church curricula included an historical analysis of these events. Most Christians can attend a full range of church-sponsored educational programming from the cradle to the grave and fail to hear one word about the need to heal the relationship between the modern disciples of Jesus and his original brothers and sisters.

JoAnn Muguson
Lakeville, Minn.

Safeguarding MKs

Thank you for your good article on abuse of missionary kids (MKs) at Mamou Alliance Academy ["From Trauma to Truth," Apr. 27]. My parents and Henry and Hazel Neudorf, whom your article mentions, served with the Gospel Missionary Union (GMU), not the Christian & Missionary Alliance (C&MA) as your article implies. However, both GMU and C&MA required their missionary kids to be sent off to Mamou Alliance Academy at age six.

Unfortunately, the abuse of MKs is not just something that occurred in the past. Over the last few years, the Mamou Steering Committee has received reports of recent abuse of MKs at boarding schools. When, if ever, will the member missions of the IFMA and EFMA form an independent, permanent committee of professionals to oversee the 120-some MK schools they now run? Mission boards desperately need to be held accountable to some form of independent commission that will rectify the sins of the past and safeguard the present and future generations of missionary kids.

Pastor Richard Darr
Libertyville, Ill.

✍ As a house parent/head of station of the Mamou school during the era in question, and as one who appeared before the mentioned "commission to investigate" (and was exonerated), I am appalled that CT would print this article without examining the facts more carefully. I arrived first on the scene early in the era in question, and by the following year confronted an abusive situation personally; that confrontation ultimately led to the termi-

nation of the services of the guilty couple. When I later became house parent/head of station, the principal of the school and I were also instrumental in terminating the services of the abusive teacher in question. It is regrettable that these things should occur, but to say that they were never addressed at that time is even more regrettable.

Rev. Andrew D. Gardner
Brockton, Mass.

The article implies inactivity and cover-up. In reality, when accusations were first made, names and specifics were sought. These were not given, precluding an investigation. Once details were revealed, a commission was appointed to address the issue.

The C&MA is committed to dealing with this past situation in a comprehensive and sensitive manner to bring healing and closure to those who suffered. It has enacted measures to avoid a repeat of the problem, while resisting a "baby with the bathwater" mentality by closing down all such overseas schools.

Robert L. Niklaus, Dir. of Communications
The Christian and Missionary Alliance
Colorado Springs, Colo.

Alarming Prospects

With regard to "Does 'The Gift of Salvation' Sell Out the Reformation?" [News Apr. 27], I don't know which prospect I find more alarming: that God, in the process of "infusing" us with righteousness, would withhold full assurance of salvation or that in "imputing" righteousness to us he would ever be content to let us actually continue in sin. While uncertainty regarding salvation can lead to bondage, so can spiritual complacency. Since there are potential pitfalls and definite strengths on both sides, maybe there is nothing wrong with continuing to hope and work for the unity of purpose that transcends longstanding differences.

Marilyn Kincaid Clines
Delray Beach, Fla.

Correction

The photo of Bill McCartney on page 27 of the May 18 issue should have credited photographer Wayne Armstrong of Promise Keepers. CT regrets the omission.

Brief letters are welcome. They may be edited for space and clarity and **must include the writer's name and address** if intended for publication. Due to the volume of mail, we cannot respond personally to individual letters. Write to Eutychus, CHRISTIANITY TODAY, 465 Gundersen Drive, Carol Stream, IL 60188; fax: 630/260-0114. E-mail: cted-it@aol.com (✉).



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Conspirator? Pro-Life Action League executive director Joseph Scheidler (right) leaves court in Chicago with his daughter Annie after the first day of the trial.

Pro-Lifers Hit with Treble Damages

Pro-life activists Joseph Scheidler, Andrew Scholberg, and Timothy Murphy, found guilty of racketeering in April in connection with their nationwide abortion protests, say the convictions violate their free-speech rights.

"I'm a racketeer because I don't think cutting babies' heads off is a good idea," Scheidler says. "If this goes through, almost anybody who talks to someone or does something that hurts someone's business, that could be extortion. That's not America."

The successful 12-year-old suit, brought by the National Organization for Women (NOW) and two abortion facilities, was the first against the pro-life movement filed under the Racketeer-Influenced Corrupt Organizations (RICO) Act, originally designed to target organized crime.

NOW attorney Sara Love says the First Amendment did not protect the protesters' activities because they were forcefully "depriving women of their constitutional right and depriving clinics of their right to do business."

The jury in *NOW v. Scheidler* awarded the two abortion facilities nearly \$86,000 in damages. As a RICO conviction, the damage award will be tripled. Because of the suit's class-action status, abortion facilities nationwide can seek damages as well. Scheidler, executive director of the Pro-Life Action League, says they will pursue an appeal of the verdict.

Operation Rescue founder Randall Terry, originally named as a defendant in the suit but dropped because of a previous settlement with NOW, says he believes the pro-life movement will prevail in the end.

"If Joe Scheidler is a racketeer, then Martin Luther King is a racketeer," Terry says. "This verdict, if it's sustained at the Supreme Court, would spell the death of over 200 years of peaceful protest in America."

Despite the verdict and the potentially behemoth damages, Scheidler has no plans to retreat. "The more they try to stop it, the more they galvanize the movement," Scheidler says. "Jesus said to go out and teach. We have to take this truth out."

By Lincoln Brunner.

Smut Tax Raises Questions, but Not Revenue

Because pornography is cited as a cause of spouse and child abuse, Wisconsin State Rep. Dean Kaufert thought taxing smut might be a good way to raise up to \$1.5 million per year to help its victims.

Legislative colleagues agreed, and Gov. Tommy Thompson signed a law that would add a 5 percent tax to sexual products and services that are "harmful to children." But state officials had no guidelines on how to implement the law.

"We had some difficulty coming up with language that is going to meet the constitutional test in the eyes of the Department of Revenue," says Kaufert, a Republican from Neenah. "It's the first in the nation and we want to do it right."

The law did not cover pornographic movies or magazines because of First Amendment issues. It specifically targeted cover charges at strip clubs, but those businesses quickly devised loopholes. Kaufert wanted to include sex toys sold at pornographic video outlets, but lingerie dealers convinced lawmakers to back off.

The law was supposed to take effect April 1. On April 30, the Wisconsin Legislature Joint Finance Committee voted 16 to 0 to repeal the porn tax, citing difficulty in determining a definition. For now at least, pornography remains unfettered as far as state coffers are concerned.

Marvin Munyon of the Wisconsin Family Research Institute doubts that the legislature will resurrect the issue. "It will probably fizzle out because they can't figure out what is pornography and what isn't," Munyon says.

By Gordon Govier in Madison, Wisconsin.

CONGRESS

Homosexual Job-Protection Bill Back

Legislation that would prevent employers from discriminating against workers based on sexual preference has been reintroduced into Congress after sustaining a narrow defeat two years ago. Pro-family groups oppose the Employment Nondiscrimination Act (ENDA), calling it a threat to religious freedom.

The bill lost in the Senate in September 1996 by a vote of 50 to 49 (CT, Oct. 28, 1996, p. 80). But now homosexual

activists believe support from moderate Republicans in the Senate makes ENDA's passage possible. Although the bill has 158 cosponsors in the House, support there remains too shallow to ensure its passage.

Kim Mills of the Human Rights Campaign says, "We need a federal law to make a level playing field," even though more and more companies are offering "gay-friendly policies."

"It's not about civil rights,

it's about crushing dissent," says Robert Knight of the Family Research Council. He says the most worrisome part of the bill is the religious organization exemption. The current wording exempts religious organizations except for their commercial or for-profit activity. Knight says the wording is too weak to protect churches and Christian businesses from being forced to hire individuals in violation of their beliefs.

Currently, ten states have laws similar to ENDA.

By Walter R. Ratliff in Washington, D.C.

210 Groups Join Outreach Campaign

Mission America, a coalition of 150 parachurch groups and 60 denominations representing more than 40 million people, aims to "pray for and share Christ with every person in America by 2000" through its evangelism initiative Celebrate Jesus 2000.

The outreach, based in Minneapolis, has a budget of \$1.2 million financed by donors, foundations, and members. The program encourages churches to collaborate in communitywide evangelism.

Participating churches and ministries are carrying out Celebrate Jesus 2000 in four stages: last year was devoted to prayer; this year is for

door-to-door evangelism; next year will feature public events where the gospel is proclaimed; and 2000 will involve follow-up and discipleship of new believers.

Mission America is distributing resource packets to churches that include guidelines on how to present the gospel by telephone and direct mail. Guidelines for initiating evangelism partnerships among local churches are also included. Celebrate Jesus 2000 has been endorsed by the Southern Baptist Convention, Assemblies of God, and the National Association of Evangelicals. Paul Cedar is Mission America chair. **[CT]**

HOME SCHOOLING

Student Banned from Tournament

The North Dakota High School Activities Association (NDHSAA) banned 12-year-old Joshua Lawrence from competing in a regional speech tournament in April because he is being taught at home.

In North Dakota, home schoolers can participate in public-school activities without enrolling. However, last August

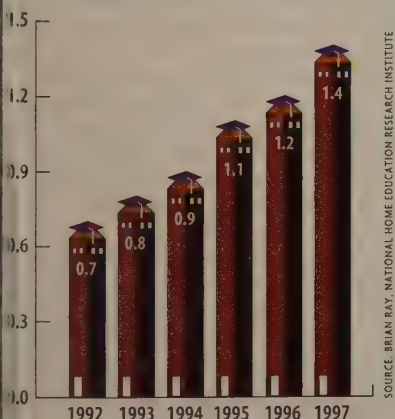
the NDHSAA adopted a policy preventing home schoolers from participating in private-school activities without enrolling first. Lawrence was ejected from competition as part of the Shiloh Christian private school team when his home schooling became known.

"The policy is discriminatory toward home schoolers," says

Jim Hofman, administrator of Shiloh Christian School. Children educated at home have competed on teams from Shiloh Christian School since 1991.

Nationally, home schooling is growing at an annual rate of 15 percent (CT, July 14, 1997, p. 68), and an estimated 1.5 million children are now taught at home. Public schools in some states can receive additional funds because of home schoolers who participate in activities. **[CT]**

HOME SCHOOLING DOUBLES IN SIX YEARS



News Briefs



Winchell



Stearns

◆ The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit ruled on April 13 that Crystal Evangelical Free Church in New Hope, Minnesota, may keep \$13,450 donated by Bruce and Nancy Young before they declared bankruptcy in 1992. Initially, the church pegged its hopes of retaining the tithes on 1993's federal **Religious Freedom Restoration Act**, but the Supreme Court ruled RFRA unconstitutional last year. In April, however, the appeals court decided that religiously motivated donations to churches and charities before a donor files for bankruptcy are protected.

◆ Richard Winchell, general director with **The Evangelical Alliance Mission (TEAM)** from 1975 to 1994, died April 13 in Stuart, Florida, after a long battle with cancer. Winchell, 69, had also been board president of the Interdenominational Foreign Mission Association of North America.

◆ Richard Edmund Stearns, 47, becomes the head of U.S. operations of **World Vision** in Federal Way, Washington, on June 15, succeeding Robert Seiple, who is retiring after 11 years of leading the largest privately funded Christian relief-and-development organization (see p. 49). Stearns has been president of Lenox, Inc., a New Jersey-based company that manufactures fine china.

◆ **Michael English**, 35, has announced his return to Christian music. In 1996, English released his secular debut album *Freedom* after confessing to adultery with a Christian singer (CT, June 20, 1994, p. 115). English won six Dove awards in 1994.

◆ Church historian **Jaroslav Pelikan**, a lifelong Lutheran, became a member of the Orthodox Church of America March 25 at Saint Vladimir's Seminary in Crestwood, New York. Pelikan, a 75-year-old former Yale University professor, is best known for his five-volume work *The Christian Tradition*.

◆ Ontario Bible College/Ontario Theological Seminary in Toronto has changed its name to **Tyndale College and Seminary**. The school, founded in 1894, has a combined enrollment of more than 1,000.

◆ Daniel Aleshire, 50, has been elected executive director of the Pittsburgh-based **Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada (ATS)**. Aleshire, a Southern Baptist Theological Seminary faculty member from 1978 to 1990, will succeed 62-year-old James L. Waits, who leaves the post on June 30 to become president of the ATS fund for theological education. ATS is the accrediting and program agency for graduate theological education in North America, with 229 Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox schools as members.

◆ Simon Greenleaf Law School in Anaheim, California, has merged with Trinity International University and changed its name to **Trinity Law School**. The new law school has 100 graduate students. Trinity International University, which includes Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, now has three campuses, in Illinois, Florida, and California.

◆ Charles Dokmo, 46, is the new president of Oak Brook, Illinois-based **Opportunity International/U.S.** Dokmo has been World Vision field director for Romania, Bulgaria, and Moldova. He replaces 51-year-old Eric Thurman, who has become a consultant for nonprofit organizations.

◆ Judy Mills Reimer is the new executive director of the Elgin, Illinois-based **Church of the Brethren's** 24-member general board. The denomination has 142,000 members.

◆ Construction has started on a 40-acre site for a \$5.2 million headquarters for Orlando, Florida-based **Pioneers**, a 19-year-old organization with 10,000 missionaries in 40 countries. **[CT]**

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Protestant Theologians Object to Lutheran-Catholic Accord

More than 165 of Germany's top Protestant theologians, including Jürgen Moltmann, are criticizing a new Lutheran-Catholic statement that attempts to resolve historic differences on the doctrine of justification.

The theologians' protest comes in response to the proposed Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification (JDDJ) devised by the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and the Vatican.

The LWF, which is made up of 124 member churches and 61 million members, is voting this month on whether to approve or reject the document.

The JDDJ proposal declares that Lutherans and Catholics have a "consensus in the basic truths" of justification, a doctrine that became "the crux" of all ensuing disputes, including mutual condemnations by and against both churches that remain valid today. The statement says there are remaining doctrinal differences but they "are no longer the occasion for doctrinal condemnations."

Germany's debate over the JDDJ has been characterized by cautious elation, serious reservations, partial rejection, and a great deal of confusion about what the document will mean at the practical level.

"The joint declaration shows that since there has been such great agreement [on justification], existing doctrinal differences should no longer warrant church divisions," says Bishop Horst Hirschler of Hannover, president of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church. Luther, he told CT, would have been "filled with joy" over the current debate and the JDDJ's emphasis on faith alone bringing "true freedom for the Christian."

Evangelicals have added their voices to the debate. "Theological discussions between different denominational confessions are helpful and necessary for mutual understanding," says Rolf Hille, chair of the German Evangelical Alliance. But Hille, who also chairs the Theological Commission of the World Evangelical Fellowship, notes that the JDDJ falls short in that it does not stipulate that faith includes the assurance of salvation. "What is, then, grace? What is faith? All of this remains unclear."

Most of Germany's regional Lutheran church bodies that have acted so far are

approving the accord, but with reservations—praising the effort as an important ecumenical step forward but agreeing in principle that they have not achieved full consensus on the basic truths of justification.

THEOLOGIANS OPPOSED: The largest and most critical opposition to the declaration has come from more than 165 Lutheran scholars who have signed a letter of protest initiated by theologians Gerhard Ebeling and Eberhard Jüngel. The professors argue, among other points, that there has been no consensus reached on justification by faith *alone* and the "importance of good works for salvation." They urged churches to reject the document completely, or at least deny that an overall consensus has been reached on justification.

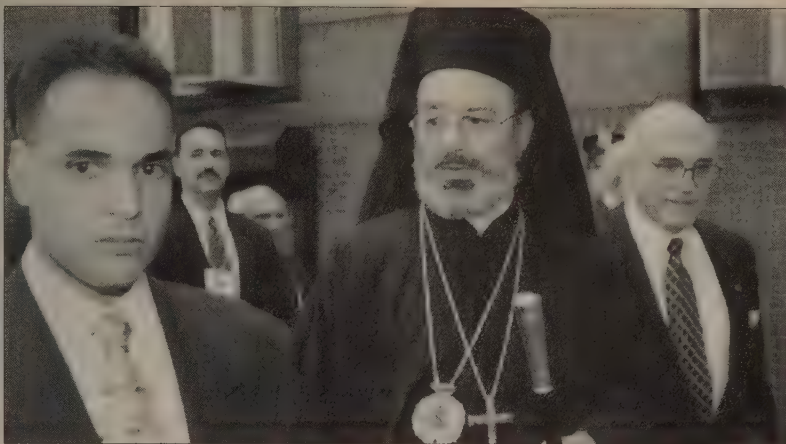
One of the signatories, Bonn University New Testament professor Michael Wolter, says key differences between Catholic and Lutheran tradition and understanding of ecclesiology and church authority are being "pushed in the background and handled as if these differences do not exist or as if they have no significance." He also questions how the LWF, which is not a church, could be authorized to enter into official talks on doctrinal issues with the Vatican.

Criticism of the Protestant professors' letter has come from several quarters. Presiding Catholic bishop Karl Lehmann, a JDDJ advocate, says formal protests against the document are cause for "serious concern." He warns that a 30-year ecumenical process leading up to the declaration could be derailed because of several "painful allegations and incomprehensible misinterpretations."

Scholars who support the declaration have not issued a position paper with a similarly large number of signatories to counter the JDDJ's academic critics.

Munich pastor Otto Kietzig told CT the protesting scholars have been unable to see the broad picture because of theological "nitpicking." Wolter's colleague in Bonn, church history professor Karl-Heinz von Mühlen, rejects Kietzig's view as "nonsense," arguing that justification by faith alone for the Lutheran is the central, indispensable Christian doctrine, which cannot be compromised.

By Richard Nyberg in Bonn.



Calmer times: Spyridon (center) leaves the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit in New York after being enthroned as the fifth leader—and first U.S.-born prelate—of the Greek Orthodox Church in America.

Lay Coalition Demands Removal of U.S. Archbishop Spyridon

A group of dissatisfied Orthodox lay leaders have demanded the removal of the head of the U.S. church in a growing dispute that has involved the Istanbul-based head of the worldwide Greek church. The unprecedented clash in the mystical, ancient faith pits clergy and lay leaders in a struggle over decision-making authority.

More than 400 lay leaders have called for the resignation or reassignment of Archbishop Spyridon, the spiritual head of the one million-member Greek Orthodox Archdiocese in the United States. The church's internal dispute over the role of their highest leader in America has reached a new pitch, as Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew declined to respond to their demands by May 1 as requested.

Members of the coalition Greek Orthodox American Leaders (GOAL) came from 28 states and met March 20–21 in Chicago to voice concerns and to devise resolutions. GOAL formed last November to address the crisis, maintaining that Spyridon has diminished the role of free lay participation in church life and accusing him of heavy-handed decisions and cover-ups since his appointment in 1996.

Bartholomew, the "first among equals" of the heads of the 15 autocephalous Orthodox churches, appointed Spyridon, who has his share of supporters. GOAL members have been careful to voice their support for the patriarch while disapproving of the actions of his appointee. The patriarch

heard complaints on his 16-city U.S. tour in November (CT, Dec. 8, 1997, p. 75).

OBJECTIONS PROLIFERATE: GOAL's concerns stem from the firing of three priests at the Hellenic College/Holy Cross Seminary in Brookline, Massachusetts, in June 1997. Many members believe the archbishop fired the clergy to cover up a sexual harassment incident at the seminary.

Members of GOAL also complain that Spyridon has enforced what they call a "pay and obey" mentality and has removed lay oversight of archdiocesan funds. Also, they charge that he frequently reassigns priests who question diocesan decisions.

In meetings, the group has called on Spyridon to help reinstitute support for a unified Orthodox Church in America, a move supported by his predecessor, Archbishop Iakovos.

George Stephens, a lifetime member of the Greek Orthodox Church who has held several leadership positions and is a faculty member at Tufts University, is one of the most vocal critics of Spyridon. "I've served the church for 15 years and have never spoken out before, but these are strange times," Stephens claims that the Holy Cross incident "created a reign of terror" because the three fired priests were very well known.

"Priests think that if they can get to them, then they can get to anybody," Stephens says. "Therefore, the clergy have been silent."

Furthermore, Stephens charges that "the archbishop has gone against the charter and stacked the deck with appointees instead of elected members. And if the people vote against him, then after the vote he simply replaces them." Stephens says Spyridon replaced him after he served on the Orthodox Christian Missions Board for 14 years.

GOAL TACTICS: Not everyone agrees with GOAL. In a February statement signed by Spyridon and all five bishops, the Greek Archdiocese criticized unnamed groups for "attempting to establish themselves as separate and self-proclaiming arbiters of church governance."

The larger issue to some Orthodox is not the alleged imperfections of Spyridon, but the way in which GOAL members have acted on their concerns.

Jim Jatras, an Orthodox Christian from Arlington, Virginia, who is a U.S. Senate Republican policy analyst, disagrees with Bartholomew on some issues but believes obedience to the bishop is a cornerstone of Orthodoxy.

"There are problems, but that doesn't justify a Protestant-style revolt in the church," Jatras says. "A friend called me and said, 'the revolution has begun,' and I told him I didn't agree with him."

MINORITY DISSENTS? Others, such as author Frank Schaeffer, who converted to Orthodox Christianity in 1990, believe GOAL does not represent the sentiments of most Greek Orthodox laity.

"I travel all over the country visiting churches, and from what I've seen, the concerns of GOAL are the concerns of a small minority, amplified by the Internet," says Schaeffer, of Newburyport, Massachusetts. "There have always been dissident groups, especially in the Greek community, which tends to thrive in factional disputes."

However, John Collis, a neurosurgeon and executive director of GOAL, says that Spyridon is not living up to the charter, which governs the American church. He says the charter clearly gives lay leaders a voice in governing the church and that Spyridon has acted autocratically without proper consultation.

"Our charter is clear. The laity has a voice in all matters. Neither laity nor clergy can back out of an agreement without the agreement of the other," Collis says. But George Passias, chancellor for the archdiocese, says, "The real issue here is that these people, a few disgruntled people of means, don't agree with the direction of the church."

By Shelly Houston, with RNS reports.

Caught Between Cultures

Recovery evangelism is used to spread the gospel to Native Americans at a joint Graham festival.

Garbed in full Native American head-dress with a bead medallion around his neck that read "Jesus Loves Me," the great-grandson of Apache chief Geronimo told a crowd of more than 14,000 New Mexicans that the words of an old Bible he was about to toss into a wood stove brought him new life.

Reynard Faber, a recovering alcoholic, left his life as a tribal medicine man to become one of the few Native American evangelists to 150,000 New Mexican Native Americans. He says, "I'm seeing Native people come to Jesus like never before."

Faber shared his testimony on "Native American night" at the beginning of the five-night Festival '98, May 6-10 at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque.

The event marked the first time that Billy Graham and his son Franklin shared preaching responsibilities at a U.S. crusade. Franklin preached the first three nights, Billy the two weekend services, to a total of 103,369 people. Franklin had preached in Farmington, New Mexico, in 1996. The elder Graham held crusades in Albuquerque in 1952 and 1975.

RELIGIOUS DISCRIMINATION: Native Americans find themselves torn between two cultures when they become Christians. "We want to be part of our community, but sometimes we just don't fit in," says Lorraine Galegos of the Santa Ana pueblo, one of 19 in the state. "We're kind of outcasts in our village, because we belong to another church." Only Roman Catholics have a church on the Native American land.

Christianity is viewed as an Anglo religion and a threat to Native American traditions. Darren Vicenti, a member of the Jicarilla Apache tribe, is the only Christian in his family. "There is a lot of pressure among those that have accepted the Lord." He says other tribe members say, " 'You're just trying to be a white man.' "

Faber agrees that animosities toward whites persist, but he

thinks it is an excuse for a "defeatist" lifestyle. Instead, Faber promotes Christianity while affirming Native American cultural heritage. "I tell them, 'You are Apache and you need to be proud of it.' But then I tell them about Christ and how he changed my life."

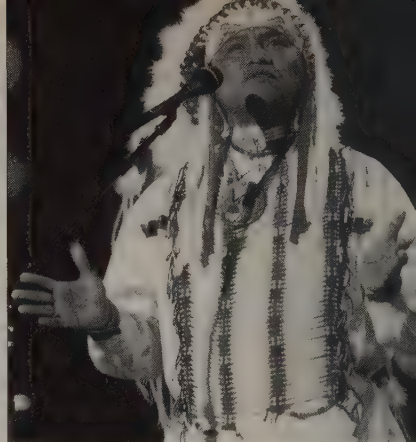
Native Americans in New Mexico have reason to think twice before joining a Protestant church because of the dire consequences. Faber says those in a pueblo who convert may be banished by the leaders. He says similar action is taken by the two Apache tribes and Navajo nation within the state.

Galegos is thrilled that her brother-in-law and seven-year-old son accepted Christ at the crusade, but she acknowledges the challenges they will face. Galegos says that three years ago the Santa Ana pueblo revoked her family's burial rites because of their Christian faith. She says there is a high number of "underground Christians" who, in fear of being discovered, sneak over mountains to attend church. "We live like in a glass fishbowl. Everything we do or say, people are watching."

BUILDING BRIDGES: Fifteen area tribal leaders were invited to join Franklin Graham on the platform for Native American night. Christian country singer Dennis Agajanian sang in Apache. "He might not have the perfect pronunciation, but people love that," says Skip Heitzig,



Tag team match: Billy and Franklin Graham take turns at the pulpit in New Mexico.



Cultural transition: Faber tells of his new life in Christ.

vice chair of the local crusade committee and pastor of the 10,000-member Calvary Chapel in Albuquerque. "It's like you're saying, 'You're important to me and your culture is important to me.' "

The neutral university location of Festival '98 and ecumenical appeal of the Grahams attracted an ethnic cross section that churches in New Mexico struggle to achieve.

The crusade also helped break down barriers between Protestant and Catholic churches, which historically have not worked together. "The Catholic diocese here has been very much in favor of what we are doing and even wrote a letter to every one of their parishes recommending they get involved," says festival director Herb McCarthy. "If we're really honest, the things that divide us are small in comparison to the things we hold in common."

RECOVERY EVANGELISM: The diverse audience responded to Franklin Graham's messages of sin and God's forgiveness, as well as God's power to stop addiction. Many of the testimonies each night included accounts of recovery from substance abuse. Heitzig, who became a Christian in 1973 while watching a Billy Graham crusade on television, admitted to dealing drugs in a church choir loft during his pre-Christian days.

Alcoholism is a significant social problem in New Mexico. "Alcoholism is to the Indian nation what AIDS is to the African nations," says Terence Kelshaw, ministerial vice chair for the crusade committee and bishop of the Rio Grande diocese of the Episcopal Church. The state

is regularly among the leaders in per capita deaths related to drunken driving.

PASSING THE TORCH: In 1995, the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association tabbed Franklin as his father's successor. While the historic joint appearance of father and son evangelists in Albuquerque may symbolize a transition of leadership, Billy Graham is not done preaching, even though he has Parkinson's disease.

"The doctors said 'slow down.' They didn't say 'stop,'" Graham, now 79, told reporters. "I'm going to retire when the Lord retires me." He has solo crusades scheduled this month in Ottawa and in October in Tampa. No further joint appearances are scheduled.

"Franklin and I preach the same gospel," says Billy Graham. "We approach it a little bit differently. He's not a clone of me." Stalwarts Cliff Barrows and George Beverly Shea joined the elder Graham at the crusade.

The message may be the same, but the men and the methods are different. Franklin, at 45, appeals to a younger generation with his "rebel with a cause" testimony. "Kids can relate to someone that rides a motorcycle and started out rough," says Pamela Faux, a counselor supervisor. "He wasn't an angel."

Of the 5,719 who made decisions for Christ during the crusade, 55 percent were under 18 years of age.

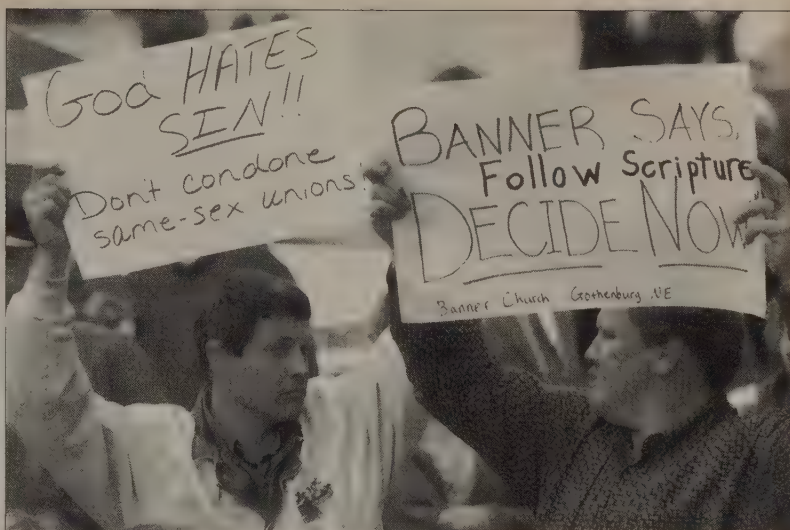
They may relate to Franklin, but they revere Billy. On the weekend, when the elder Graham preached, the Pit arena filled to its 18,000-seat capacity within minutes, forcing thousands of people into an outdoor overflow area.

On the final night, Graham's international stature drew Curtis Onco, 44, who is Kiowa-Cheyenne. Six months ago, Onco found himself homeless when his house burned down. The Bible that a friend had given him was among the few items not consumed. Yet, instead of turning to the Scriptures, Onco returned to alcohol.

He says, "Temptations are out there all over the place—people saying, 'Let's go drink, I'm buying. Let's go party.'"

Onco, who stopped drinking four months ago, says belief in God presents no problem for most Native Americans, but joining a church is a step few, including himself, are willing to risk. In the meantime, his Bible has become a steady companion. "I always like to come back to it," he says. "Now I'm trying to go ahead."

By Christine J. Gardner in Albuquerque.



Upset with denomination: Protesters let their sentiments be known outside a gathering of bishops in Nebraska.

Verdict Aftershocks

Bishops reject call for a special session, but protests lead to removal of minister Creech.

Despite a groundswell of protest, the United Methodist Church (UMC) council of bishops has rejected a request to hold a special session of the denomination's top legislative body to deal with the issue of same-sex "marriage."

The bishops, however, may already be taking a stronger stance. Bishop Joel Martinez of Nebraska announced on May 6 that he will not reappoint Jimmy Creech as pastor of First United Methodist Church in Omaha. Creech had been acquitted by a jury of UMC pastors in March for performing a same-sex marriage (CT, April 27, 1998, p. 14).

Martinez indicated Creech has lost support from his congregation in the aftermath of performing the lesbian ceremony. Last month's announcement pleased conservatives in the denomination, including Patricia Miller, executive director of the Confessing Movement (CM), an evangelical organization representing 1,100 UMC churches and 500,000 members. "It says that there will be repercussions if the United Methodist doctrine is not upheld."

Creech told CT he is extremely disappointed with Martinez's decision. "I will continue to celebrate covenant ceremonies," Creech says. He does not believe that removal will stop the UMC

from becoming "a more inclusive and open church."

SPECIAL SESSION SOUGHT: The only special session of the general conference, the denomination's highest legislative body, took place in 1970, when Methodists considered issues relating to the union with the Evangelical United Brethren. General conferences consist of 1,000 delegates, half laity and half clergy, elected by the annual conferences. The general conference meets every four years, with the next session scheduled for 2000 in Cleveland.

Nevertheless, there has been pressure for a special session to consider the Creech verdict and the issue of same-sex marriages. Those advocating such a move include Asbury Theological Seminary president Maxie Dunnam (a theological adviser to CT), North Carolina bishop Marion Edwards, Georgia bishop Lindsey Davis, the evangelical magazine *Good News*, and the CM.

In addition, the south-central College of Bishops, one of five such groups in the UMC, has requested that the judicial council, the denomination's top court, consider whether a statement in the denomination's Book of Discipline prohibiting same-sex unions is a punishable offense. The judicial

council will consider the issue August 7-8 in Dallas.

Among all the objections, the most serious came from the evangelical CM, which met in Tulsa, Oklahoma, in April. At the conference, about 1,000 CM members unanimously adopted a statement to be sent to all UMC bishops "to hold each other accountable in teaching and defending the doctrinal and ethical standards of the Book of Discipline."

In a separate statement to the UMC on homosexual rites, the movement warned, "If there is any weakening of these biblical and disciplinary standards, we will be forced to reconsider our commitments to the existing structures of the United Methodist Church."

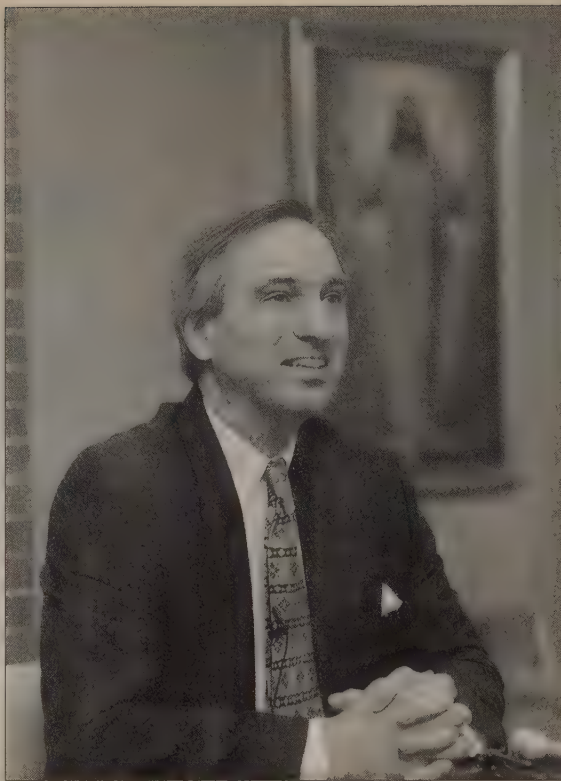
The bishops, however, indicated calling a special session would be unwise in light of the imminent judicial council meeting. The bishops also vowed to proclaim and defend the doctrine, order, and mission of the church, including the statements on homosexuality in the denomination's Book of Discipline that prohibit homosexual-union ceremonies. Despite requests from prominent denominational leaders, bishops made no reference to the Creech trial.

PULLOUT RUMBLINGS: Even with reassurances that the denomination's views on homosexuality have not changed, the CM warned that unless the church's stance on same-sex marriages is clarified during the judicial council meeting, then "we are fearful that there will be a radical hemorrhage of members leaving the denomination."

"We're disappointed that they did not deal with the Creech issue," *Good News* editor Steve Beard told CT. "The church needed something far more decisive on Creech." Beard also wonders why at least three bishops who are outspoken supporters of homosexuality agreed to abide by the Book of Discipline. He notes that one of these bishops, Melvin Talbert of California, allowed same-sex marriages to be performed by pastor Karen Oliveto of Bethany United Methodist Church in San Francisco.

Beard is also concerned about 184 UMC clergy who had signed a declaration in support of conducting same-sex marriages.

SEISMIC SHIFTS? The denomination is likely to grapple with fallout from the Creech affair. Some United Methodists call



Looking for work: Creech can no longer preach, at least as a Methodist in Omaha.

the recent events an unprecedented crisis. Others are leaving the denomination, organizing protests, or withholding funds.

"The failure of our judicial system on this one case has spread life-threatening frustration and confusion in our church," Georgia bishop Lindsey Davies says. "Our people deserve to have this issue clarified as soon as possible. To wait until 2000 would only result in spiritual damage to our church."

At least 300 demonstrators met UMC bishops as they left a service at Saint Paul United Methodist Church in Lincoln, Nebraska, on April 26. The demonstrators urged the bishops to uphold the Book of Discipline and carried placards reading, "God's law, not man's law." Bishop council president Emerito Nacpil of Manila indicated that the demonstration was the first he had witnessed in 18 years of attending council meetings.

The May/June issue of *Good News* displays a cover picture of a sinking *Titanic* with the headline, "Will homosexuality sink United Methodism?" Editor Jim Heidinger says United Methodism is reeling amid unprecedented waves of dis-

tress and turmoil because of the Creech trial.

DENOMINATIONAL DEPARTURES: The fallout from the Creech issue is also leading to an exodus of committed evangelicals who believe they can no longer remain in the denomination. While some former members of Creech's congregation are attending other United Methodist churches, 300 former members are holding an alternative service in an Omaha high school.

Another 22 evangelical UMC ministers in California and Nevada have asked to separate from the denomination, stating they are "beyond reconciliation" after some of the conference's leaders expressed support for Creech.

Two congregations in Georgia are withholding monies to "churchwide" causes while waiting for further developments in the case. Churchwide causes include supporting the work of bodies such as the National Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches. A

third Georgia congregation approved a similar move due to problems with the denomination's "doctrinal integrity," not merely because of the Creech verdict.

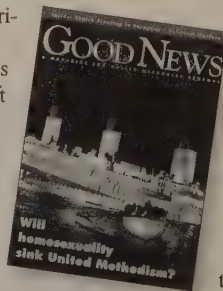
WAKE-UP CALL? William Abraham, professor of Wesley Studies at the Perkins School of Theology in Dallas sees the verdict as a wake-up call to UMC moderates and conservatives. "They realize for the

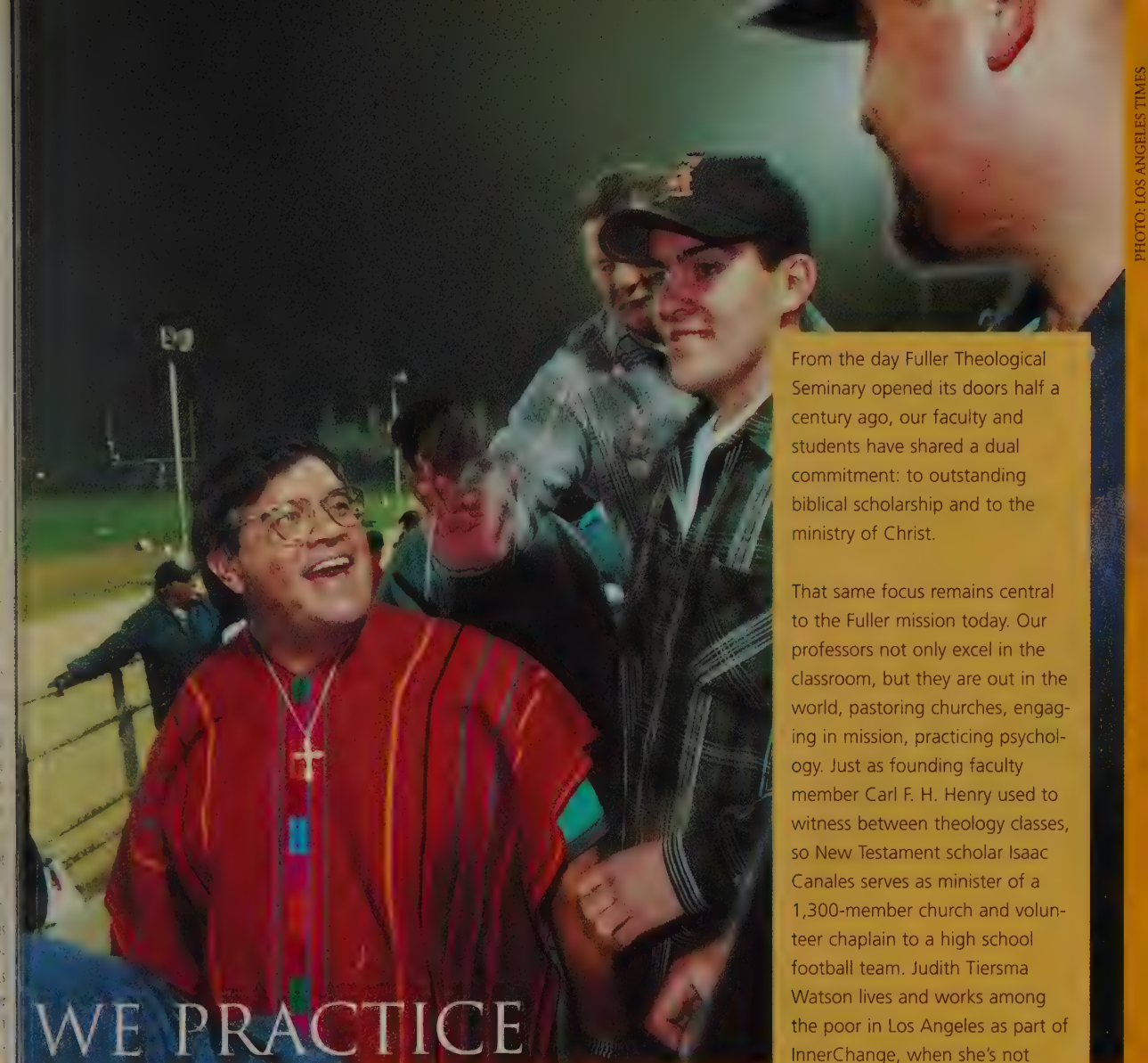
first time what their church will look like if those committed to theological and moral revisionism get their way," Abraham says.

According to Abraham, the Creech trial "triggered awareness of a network of differences concerning revelation, mission, and theology. For the first time these differences are being squarely identified and faced."

Abraham does not know how—or if—such vital divisions will be resolved. "Many believe that the differences can be contained within the one body over time," he says. "This consensus is now being challenged by liberals and conservative incompatibilists who argue that it is impractical. Only time will tell how the debate will play itself out."

By Mary Cagney.





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PERSECUTION

Pakistani Bishop's Death Sparks Riots

Rioting and turmoil have followed the death of Roman Catholic bishop and human-rights activist John Joseph, who killed himself in protest of a death sentence imposed on another Christian under Pakistan's blasphemy law.

On May 6, Joseph, 66, bishop of Faisalabad and

chair of the human-rights group National Justice and Peace Commission, shot himself in the head.

Joseph's suicide protested the death sentence pronounced on Ayub Masih, 25, by a local judge. Masih had been convicted April 27 of slandering Islam by speaking

favorably about Salman Rushdie, author of *Satanic Verses*. On May 12, the two-judge Lahore High Court suspended the death sentence of Masih, a Catholic.

Preaching at a mass on May 6, Joseph declared that the difficulties facing the Christian community in Pakistan would continue until someone made a large sacrifice.

Under the blasphemy law, introduced in 1986, "anyone who directly or indirectly by word, ges-



Karachi protest: Christians protest Pakistan's blasphemy law on May 8.

ture, innuendo, or otherwise defiles the name of the holy prophet Muhammad will be punished with death or life imprisonment." More than a dozen Christians have been jailed under the law. Three had been condemned to death but were acquitted on appeal.

Thousands of Christian mourners protested against the blasphemy laws at Joseph's funeral on May 8 in Faisalabad. Police fired tear gas into the crowd, and bullets injured three people. Christians also marched and rioted in Karachi.

A mob of Muslim extrem-

ists burned homes and shops in Faisalabad on May 10 in reaction to the protests by the Christian community. About 500 Muslims rampaged through the town screaming in favor of the blasphemy laws. Joseph was buried on the grounds of Saints Peter and Paul Cathedral in Faisalabad.

Thousands of Christians took to the streets May 15 to protest the laws. About 600 were arrested after they set fire to vehicles and shops. About 2 million of Pakistan's 140 million people are Christians.



Bishop's funeral: La'azarus Joseph kisses the coffin of his brother in Faisalabad.

GREAT BRITAIN

Is Millennium's Meaning Missing?

The millennium is receiving major media attention in Britain, but only one in six Britons realizes the year 2000 signifies the anniversary of the birth of Jesus, according to a Gallup poll.

British evangelicals are reminding the public of the importance of Christianity in their culture and are bringing a Christian dimension to the many secular celebrations being planned for the millennium.

The Evangelical Alliance (EA), representing more than one million Christians in 30 denominations, is making certain that when the new millennium arrives, no one in Britain will be unaware of

whose birth is being celebrated. EA has established Anno Domini (AD) as a coordinating group for evangelical millennium activities.

AD facilitates networking for the various millennium projects, including a 1,000-day prayer project. AD is also organizing quarterly meetings for project coordinators and is providing ideas for churches to celebrate the birth of Christ.

"Followers of Jesus Christ are in the best position to remind a lost and hurting world of the significance of the year 2000," says AD director Brian Clews.

Among the secular projects planned is a \$1 billion, 20-acre millennium dome being built

in Greenwich near London. The dome will have nine zones, including a "spirit zone" celebrating the influence of Christianity and other faiths.

However, EA general director Joel Edwards believes the government is using the dome to celebrate Britain's secular achievements. "Let's not get diverted by the politicizing of the dome," he says. "Let's respond practically to this unique period in history to present Christ creatively and convincingly."

Edwards is a member of a group of faith representatives that includes Muslims and Hindus who are advising the government and the New Millennium Experience Company, builders of the dome.



Dome: A \$1 billion tribute to merrymaking?

Meanwhile, the interdenominational Fanfare for a New Generation (FNG), led by Baptist minister Steve Chalke and singer Cliff Richard, plans to make churches in Britain "more relevant, welcoming, and challenging" in the new millennium. FNG is urging congregations to implement ten practical goals by January 2000.

Centennial of Protestantism Marked

About one million believers representing the major streams of Christianity in the Philippines are expected to gather in Manila in August to celebrate the centennial of Protestant missionaries arriving in the country.

Bishop Efraim Tendero, general secretary of the Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches, says the first Protestant service took place August 14, 1898, the day after Filipino and American troops seized control of Manila from Spanish forces. Even though the service was led by American YMCA laity for U.S. soldiers, a centennial coordinating committee considers it "the first open gospel proclamation in the country."

Many historians believe that when the Americans came in 1898 in the wake of the Spanish-American War, they stole the freedom already won by Filipino revolutionaries after 350 years of Spanish rule. The United States annexed the Philippines instead of allowing independence, as

happened in Cuba the same year. Filipinos finally gained independence in 1946.

Evangelical leaders, however, assert that God's greater purpose for the Philippines transcended America's imperialistic design: Americans brought Bible-based Christianity; allowed religious freedom, which paved the way for vigorous evangelization and indigenous church planting; and taught English, which today is a major reason Filipinos are considered ideal ambassadors for Christ.

After centuries of Spanish rule, the country remains two-thirds Catholic. But today, there are 32,000 Protestant and evangelical churches, compared to only 10,500 in 1980, according to World Evangelical Fellowship international director Jun Vencer, a Filipino. Although evangelicals account for only 7 percent of the population, the annual growth rate is 7 percent, and higher among Pentecostals, Vencer says.

By Jovie Galaraga in Manila.

NEW ZEALAND

Virgin in a Condom Provokes Outcry

When New Zealanders opened a \$250 million national museum in the capital, Wellington, in February, much was made of the museum's name *Te Papa*, Maori for "Our Place."

But one of the museum's first exhibits, *Virgin in a Condom*, a three-inch statue of the Virgin Mary sheathed in a transparent condom, has stretched the credibility of "Our Place" and caused a furor among Christians.

The outcry saw daily protests outside the museum, an attack on the statue itself, a national television debate, and a 33,000-signature petition

demanding the exhibit's removal. *Te Papa* officials refused to budge, and the exhibit remained on display until April 26 as planned. Another museum exhibit, a picture of *The Last Supper* with a bare-breasted, female Jesus, sparked further outrage. Catholics, joined by evangelical Christians and Muslims, led the outcry.

Christian Heritage Party leader Graham Capill says the museum took great care to observe Maori spiritual mores but ran roughshod over Christian values. "It's increasingly clear that any faith or belief is acceptable in New Zealand, except for the Christian faith," Capill says. "*Te Papa* needs to be not only culturally sensitive, but also spiritually sensitive."

By Vic Francis in Auckland, New Zealand.



New Testament site? Flour-grinding implements have been unearthed at Bethsaida.

Disciples' Village Opens to Tourists

Bethsaida, the third most frequently mentioned city in the New Testament and home of five of Jesus' disciples, has rolled out the welcome mat for visitors. It had been known as one apex of the triangle where Jesus targeted much of his ministry, along with Capernaum and Chorazin. But the location of Bethsaida was still unconfirmed as recently as a decade ago.

In 1987, Israeli archaeologist Rami Arav began a joint excavation with professor Richard Freund and the University of Nebraska-Omaha. They chose some likely looking ruins along the Jordan River about a mile north of the Galilee shore and struck pay dirt.

Not only are they uncover-

ing a first-century city—with-out the many later levels of occupation found at Capernaum and Chorazin—but underneath are the ruins of an Iron Age city. Arav believes it earlier had been the capital of the kingdom of Geshur, home of King David's father-in-law.

One area has been dubbed the "Fisherman's House" after excavation of anchors, fishing hooks, and a needle for mending nets. At "Salome's House," a wine cellar, an oven, and two basalt slabs for grinding grain have been unearthed.

The Israeli Tourism Ministry helped finance the excavation, and the grand opening this year is in recognition of the millennial celebration.

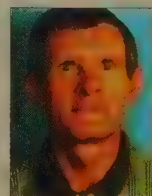
By Gordon Govier.

News Briefs

◆ Archbishop Seraphim, 84, the head of the **Orthodox Church** in Greece since 1974, died April 10 in Athens of a viral infection. Seraphim opposed Greece's military government between 1967 and 1974 and was a resistance fighter when that country was under Nazi occupation. Seraphim's replacement, broadminded reformer Metropolitan Christodoulos, 59, was elected on April 28 by a group of senior clerics. One of his first challenges will be to heal a rift between the Greek Orthodox Church and ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, symbolic head of the world's 350 million Orthodox Christians.

◆ Bent Moeller Nielsen, 56, director of the Adventist Development and Relief Agency in **Burundi**, was shot to death by bandits April 22 as he drove through Bujumbura.

◆ **Southern Baptist missionary** Charles Hood, Jr., 44, was shot to death at his Bogotá, Colombia, home on April 21. Two unknown assailants sped away on a motorcycle. Colombia has the world's highest murder rate, with 2,700 people murdered in Bogotá last year (CT, May 18, 1998, p. 40).



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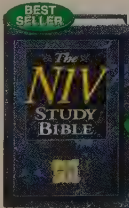
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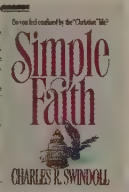
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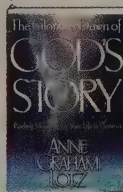
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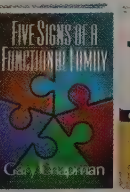
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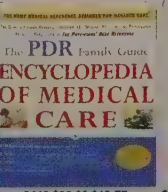
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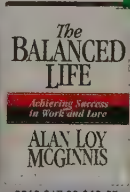
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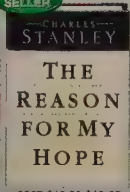
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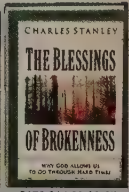
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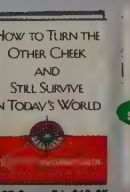
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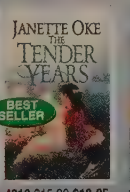
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Home Is Where the Parent Should Be

How to resist a society that pulls parents in every direction but home.



It's 4:00 P.M. Do You Know Where Your Children Are?" asked *Newsweek* in its April 27 issue. Late afternoon—not late night—is when kids are most likely to get into trouble or be victimized by others, said the magazine as it tried to provoke concern for kids who are home alone after school with little or no adult supervision. "Three out of four mothers of school-age children work outside the home. So it's not so surprising that by the time they are 12 years old, nearly 35 percent of American children are regularly left on their own," the report said.

Many kids fill this time alone by watching TV—1,500 hours a year, on average, compared to 900 hours a year spent in school. Good parenting includes passing on our faith and values, but where is support for biblical values on TV? The entertainment media teach our youth that sex outside marriage is routine, and homosexual relationships are normal. In films and news shows our children see violence used to resolve conflicts or to get one's own way—and senseless violence is glamorized. They learn from advertising that happiness can be found through acquiring material things. These messages eat away at the foundations of our culture like termites, and our young seem to be especially vulnerable to the appetites of these voracious insects. Media critic Michael Medved

goes further, arguing that TV as a medium (never mind the content) inculcates short attention spans, encourages a gloomy outlook on life, and teaches self-gratification by projecting fun as the highest goal of human existence. There is good reason for the uneasy conscience of American parents.

Lack of adult supervision is just one deprivation that plagues our children today. Just as frightening is a lack of moral guidance. *Chicago Tribune* columnist Eric Zorn, who usually champions liberal causes by scorning conservatives, now lauds social conservatives for "leading the current renaissance in character education—those [school] programs . . . that emphasize the development of virtue, ethical thinking and moral behavior. Children don't magically acquire such things any more than they magically learn long division." Writes Zorn, "A kid who grows up without a good moral education is disadvantaged, too, just like a kid who grows up poor, who gets lousy medical care, who attends shabby schools."

Tough job assignment

There never has been a Golden Age of Parenting. Yet our culture seems particularly unfriendly to families and children. "One of the best-kept secrets of the last thirty years is that big business, government, and the wider culture have waged a silent war against parents, undermining the work that they do," Sylvia Ann Hewlett and Cornel West argue in their recent book, *The War Against Parents*. This is especially true because our society measures everything by the bottom line. Children don't earn their keep as they did in an agrarian society. Instead, they cost money and threaten personal liberties and career goals in an age of individualism. As a result, Hewlett and West conclude, parenting has become a countercultural activity.

It would help, of course, if the culture supported our values. We wish for government leaders to emulate biblical virtues, for schools to teach our children right from wrong, and for mass media to portray positive role models of people who *really do* work hard and play by the rules. But we haven't time for that kind of cultural turnaround. It will take a generation or more, waiting and working, for that to happen. Christian parents must do something for their children now.

Should we even expect our culture to prop up our values and serve as moral nanny for our kids? The

biblical way, from Israel to the church, runs in the opposite direction—the people of God are a light to the world, salt and yeast in the dough of our culture. We are to influence the world and its structures positively, not clamor for government or the public schools or the dollar-driven media industry to be a light to us. Ironically, this disparity of values is an opportunity, as Rodney Clapp put it, for “the Christian family to be Christian, to live freely and unabashedly out of its particular story.”

Job description posted

Christian parents who want to swim against the tide need to be especially intentional in several areas:

Time in. Values are like viruses: they are caught in the environment in which they reside. But how are children “catching” Christian values if the significant adults in their lives have so little time for them and with them—after school or any other time?

Newsweek's interest in the kids who are home alone after school seems aimed at creating public interest in after-school programs that engage children in wholesome, safe activities. But *Newsweek* did not ask the more radical questions that Christian families should be asking themselves: Is it really necessary in all cases that both parents work outside the home? And if so, is it because we are chasing the American dream of a big home in the suburbs with two late-model cars in the driveway?

This is not to argue that a woman's place is only in the home. In a child's earlier years, Mother usually has to be the primary nurturer; but many couples find creative ways of sharing responsibility after their children's infant years. While some couples must have dual incomes just to put bread on the table and a roof over their heads, Christian parents who are willing and able to live on less than two full salaries are to be commended for putting family ahead of career or lifestyle.

Preach what we practice. Besides spending time with their children, Christian parents also need to *teach* them to discern right from wrong and the biblical reasons behind the differences. Our children need more than injunctions; “Just do it” is not sufficient motivation for doing the right thing. As they grow older, children must have explained to them the biblical logic of the commands to love God, neighbor and enemy, the common sense of the Golden Rule, and the sanctity and sanity of sex within a lifelong, monogamous, heterosexual relationship. The commands of God are not just law; they are also grace, for when we live within the ways of God we grow and thrive, personally and together. No wonder David said that God has placed the boundary lines at pleasant places (Ps. 16:6). He should have known since he transgressed them numerous times (see “Bathsheba-Gate,” p. 38).

Extend the family. Aristotle believed that the good society was one in which the moral education of the young was shared by the whole society through its laws, practices, and mores. It was a task too important and too encompassing to be left to schools or families alone. If it doesn't take a village to raise a

child, it at least takes a church.

In the absence of a supportive society, Christian families need this communal effort in the corporate life of the church. Parenting cannot be left to two adults, much less to one in the case of single parents. Children need the mentoring of other adults in their lives, while parents, too, need the support of older adults who can pass on their wisdom about parenting or give them respite from the strains of child care.

Most evangelicals do not name godparents—sponsors who take a special interest in the growth and development of those being baptized. Yet something like that is happening with congregational mentoring programs that match children with adults who commit themselves to relating one on one to a particular child, giving him or her another adult model to emulate, someone to whom the child can turn when communication breaks down between parent and child. Perhaps churches also need to consider “godgrandparents”—senior adults who can provide support and relief to parents.

In our mobile society, when so many nuclear families are removed from their extended, biological families, the community of faith must function as an extended family. Through this family of God—through its corporate worship and service and nurture—children take on an identity and choose a God-oriented way of life.

Time spent well

“Child rearing is not some mysterious process,” write Hewlett and West. “At the heart of the matter is time, huge amounts of it, freely given.” Based on national research they conducted, they claim that a majority of parents realize that most of what their children need, such as love and character development, cannot be delegated to others.

Lamin Sanneh, professor of missions and world Christianity at Yale University, understands this well. As an African living in Western culture, he senses very keenly the tension between child rearing and professional involvement. In a recent dinner-table conversation, he told CT what “family values” have meant for him and his wife: “We believed two things were necessary in raising our children: showing them unconditional love, no matter what. And being there for them. One of us always arranged to be home after school, not just to look out for them, but also to talk with them about their day, to process what went on at school.”

That is parenting worth emulating. And it's an investment of time that no government or private funding can buy. 

Parents realize that what their children need most cannot be delegated to others.



Southern Baptists Take Up the **MORMON** *Challenge*

JOHN W. KENNEDY
in Salt Lake City and Provo

Michael B. Bennett has heard the accusations many times: Mormons are not Christians. But to Bennett, who converted at age 18, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) has provided answers he did not find as a Southern Baptist.

Bennett grew up in the heavily Baptist region of Baton Rouge, Louisiana. His parents and grandparents had been active Baptists and he was baptized at age 12. He attended youth rallies and Billy Graham crusades. "I was about as active a Baptist as you can be," recalls Bennett, now 39.

Yet he found the behavior of some churchgoers inconsistent. His friends at youth group fervently testified about Christ one week, then smoked dope the next. An adulterous deacon continued to hold office after a hasty confession. Gos-

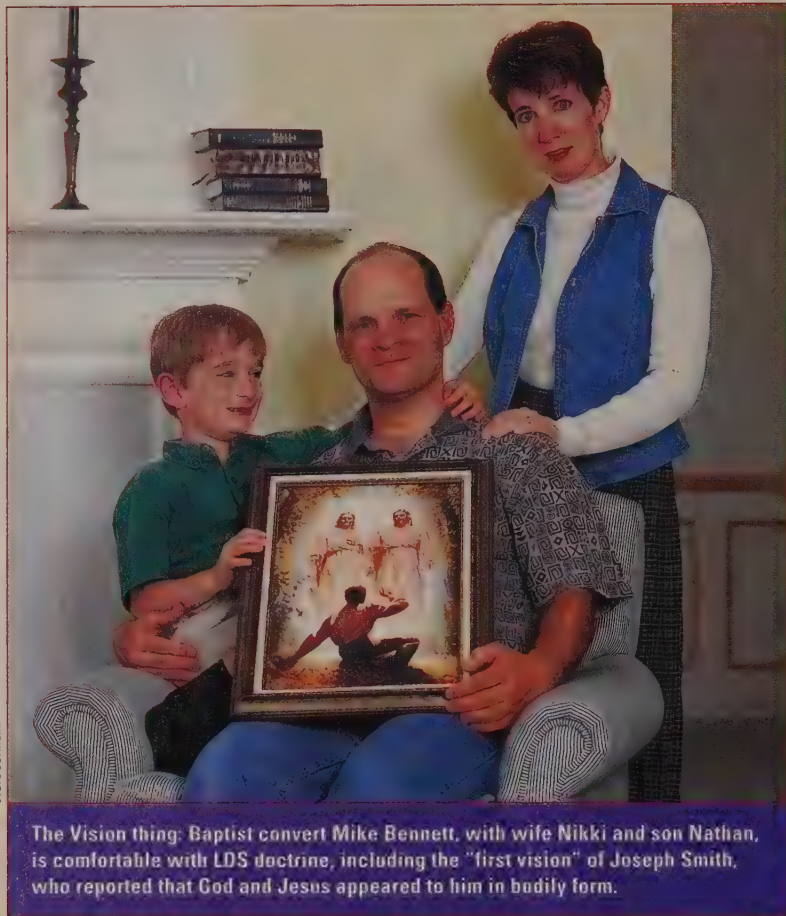
sip and backbiting preoccupied many churchgoers.

Bennett was ripe for a change. When a high-school friend told him that his church had unpaid leaders, it sparked Bennett's interest. After attending several weekly LDS sacrament meetings and seeing a community that seemed genuinely to care and love, Bennett, now a lawyer in Salt Lake City, felt "compelled by the spirit" to be rebaptized as a Mormon. As a counselor to his congregation's bishop, Bennett devotes 20 hours a week to church activities.

While LDS theology is what separates Mormonism from orthodox Christianity, it had little to do with Bennett's attraction to America's most successful home-grown religion.

Sandra Tanner, 57, codirector of Utah Lighthouse Ministry in Salt Lake City,

Evangelism explosion: Utah Southern Baptists Gray (left) and Harding at Salt Lake City's Temple Square expect pointed, but courteous, interactions with Mormons.



The Vision thing: Baptist convert Mike Bennett, with wife Nikki and son Nathan, is comfortable with LDS doctrine, including the "first vision" of Joseph Smith, who reported that God and Jesus appeared to him in bodily form.

says, "You join Mormonism because of friendship ties, a sense of belonging, a hope for your deceased family. It is a religion that gives the best of both worlds."

Though evangelicals generally concede that Mormons are good neighbors who promote family values, the theological chasm is wide. Mormons profoundly distance themselves from orthodox Christianity in that they:

- Do not interpret canonical Scripture as being solely the Old Testament and New Testament. They add the Book of Mormon and founder Joseph Smith's other works, *The Pearl of Great Price* and *Doctrine and Covenants*.

- Do not believe in the Trinity. Mormons believe God the Father and God the Son have fleshly bodies and that the Holy Ghost is a spirit man.

- Teach that God was once a finite being who achieved his exalted rank by "progressing."

Based on supernatural visitations in the 1820s, Smith believed he was called to restore the true Christian church that had

been lost 16 centuries earlier. According to this great apostasy, God told Smith that all churches—with specific reference to Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians—were wrong, and to join none.

While evangelical and Catholic theologians have been able to agree on such unofficial initiatives as "The Gift of Salvation" (CT, Dec. 8, 1997, p. 34), it is unlikely there will be an equivalent Mormon-evangelical document anytime soon. "Their theology has declared us to be an abomination," says Mike Gray, 47, pastor of Salt Lake City's Southeast Baptist Church. "It's hard to do joint projects when they claim to be the only true church."

"On every major doctrine, the fundamental teachings of evangelical Christianity and Mormon doctrine are diametrically opposed," says Norman Geisler, dean of Southern Evangelical Seminary.

Protestant leaders have limited official contact with the LDS church. The Presbyterian Church U.S.A. is typical, calling for openness to *interfaith* dialogue with Mormons and telling members they

"should not hesitate to share the gospel with people of Mormon background."

In February in Salt Lake City, the first formal discussions on theology, polity, and sacramental practice occurred between Mormons and United Methodists. "The two have historically looked upon each other with suspicion, or at best disinterest," says Doug Slaughter, a United Methodist minister in Ogden. "With the growth of the LDS community into a world religious influence there has come more interest to understand this faith."

Tanner, who left Mormonism at age 19 and has written more than 40 books on the religion, says, "All Christians should be concerned about the growth of Mormonism. The Jesus of the Bible is different from the Jesus of the Mormons."

THE BAPTISTS ARE COMING: Few denominations are eager to hold a national convention outside the comfort zone of their membership. But Southern Baptists—who have one of the largest career missionary forces with 5,000 workers in 147 countries—are gathering June 9–11 for an annual convention on the Mormons' home turf of Salt Lake City. The state of Utah is about 2 percent Baptist and nearly 70 percent Mormon.

In Utah, the SBC will be using pages out of the LDS playbook for mass evangelism. Around 2,500 Baptists—including 1,000 college and seminary students—are expected to knock on 150,000 doors. Starting for a week on June 3, Southern Baptists will run 500 radio commercials, 150 television spots, a dozen newspaper advertisements, and six billboard advertisements urging residents to rethink their commitment to Mormonism.

"In the end, salvation is not a marketing issue," says SBC president Tom Elliff. "It depends on a personal relationship with Jesus Christ."

Direct mailings containing testimonies of local Southern Baptists are also being sent to 390,000 households in the region. All the media and mail efforts carry a toll-free number offering a hand-delivered free copy of the *Jesus* video produced by Campus Crusade for Christ. The total cost of the one-week blitz is \$260,000.

An estimated 9,500 messengers, or delegates, are expected to attend the convention. With spouses and children in tow, there could be more than 30,000 Southern Baptists visiting the state where only 6,000 Baptists live.

Every four or five years the convention meets in a pioneer area where the membership is comparatively small. The pur-

pose is to encourage SBC churches in such areas and to let others in the region know the SBC is not just a Southern phenomenon. For example, in Las Vegas, several hundred Southern Baptists marched down the city's strip of casinos and hotels handing out Bibles and tracts (CT, July 14, 1989, p. 50).

Utah Baptists have had significant success with Mormon-focused outreach. At least once a year, Southeast's pastor Gray hosts a local conference on understanding Mormonism. Southeast's membership has grown from 120 to 1,000 in Gray's 14 years there, making it the largest Southern Baptist church in the state. About one in five members is a former Mormon.

READY TO TANGLE: However, Southern Baptists are not likely to win converts simply by knocking on doors and leaving tracts in Salt Lake City. "It's like going to minister among Muslims," says Tanner, now a member of the Christian and Missionary Alliance. She says former Mormons are often isolated from their cultural heritage and families.

Southern Baptists have prepared their

pastors and lay leaders for outreach to Mormons with a 75-minute video, *The Mormon Puzzle*. In all, more than 50,000 videos and accompanying study guides have been distributed. In addition, during the week of June 1 the six SBC seminaries are jointly sponsoring workshops on Mormon theology and effective witnessing to Mormons. Jim Harding, the top SBC executive in Utah, sees the convention visit as a "divine appointment."

"For Southern Baptists, Utah is a mission field," Harding says. He is recommending that messengers not engage in a doctrinal shouting match, but simply "share the truth of Jesus Christ."

R. Philip Roberts, 47, director of the SBC North American Mission Board's interfaith witness evangelism team, says, "Accountability before God is the most important issue. Before you have a harvest you need to plant the seed of the biblical gospel. It's our duty to do all that we can to share the good news of Jesus Christ with them."

If the SBC evangelism blitz becomes too overwhelming, LDS headquarters may issue

advice to local church leaders, according to M. Russell Ballard, 69, a member since 1985 of the Council of the Twelve, the church's ruling body. Ballard says, "We won't get into bashing over doctrine."

Likewise, SBC president Elliff is gracious. "There's no reason for any of us to be caustic and uncharitable in our speech," Elliff says. "But we won't compromise our beliefs." Ballard, a car dealer before being called as a full-time ecclesiastical leader, says *The Mormon Puzzle* is "relatively positive" because it introduces essential LDS teachings such as restoration of priesthood authority. Ballard says he traces his authority as an ordained apostle directly to Christ: Jesus ordained Peter, James, and John, who, Mormons believe, transferred authority directly to Joseph Smith by laying hands on his head in an 1830 appearance. The authority has been transferred in an earthly manner to LDS apostles since then.

NEXT WORLD RELIGION? Mormons, who were much maligned and persecuted in nineteenth-century America, are in some ways unrivaled in spiritual seed-

Sunday Among the Suburban Salt Lake Saints

Wherever there is a growing number of Latter-day Saints, church headquarters authorizes construction of a new meeting house for a ward, or a local congregation. In the burgeoning suburbs between Ogden and Provo, where there are nearly 3,500 wards, buildings are erected often. The unadorned buildings typically have a spire, but no crosses or stained-glass windows.

Mormons attend a three-hour block of Sunday gatherings: the sacrament meeting, Sunday school, and finally, a gender-segregated "gospel doctrine" Priesthood meeting for men and Relief Society meeting for women. The starting time is decided by headquarters, which also selects the bishop, the presiding leader, from within the local ward. The bishop's role is largely administrative. While he does not preach, he will counsel parishioners and perform weddings. The bishop may earn his livelihood in a career such as a lawyer, banker, or department store manager, while devoting up to 40 hours a week in unpaid church duties. A bishop's term typically runs between three and five years.

A recent sacrament meeting in the Salt Lake City suburb of Draper has the appearance of a Baptist worship service in many respects. There is an organ prelude, a choir on the platform, an opening hymn and prayer followed by announcements, leather-bound Scriptures carried by attendees, three church leaders seated on stage. But differences are soon noticeable.

The Scriptures that members tote include three additional LDS canonical books. The opening hymn, "Families Can Be Together Forever," is a confirmation of the LDS belief in eter-

nal marriage. Babies are blessed according to the Melchizedek priesthood, with petitions that the boys will one day be worthy to go on a church mission, then find a faithful wife to marry in a temple for time and eternity. Boys age 12 and older who are ordained to the Aaronic priesthood distribute the sacraments of bread and water; Joseph Smith wrote in *Doctrines and Covenants* 27:2 that substituting another drink for wine is permissible.

Because of the strong belief in family, children are not taken to a nursery during the service. Many mothers are preoccupied with trying to keep jabbering toddlers quiet.

One Sunday a month, instead of a teaching session, LDS wards have a fast and testimony meeting (money that would have been spent on two meals of the day are given to the needy). Any member of the ward may testify. The faith-building talks frequently reinforce the worth of the LDS system: thankfulness for the prophets and their closeness to God, appreciation for the power of the priesthood, declarations that "I know this church is true."

The closing hymn, "Home Can Be a Heaven of Earth," reiterates the idea of church as family and family as eternal. The most significant difference that Protestant visitors are likely to spot is hanging in the foyer: a painting depicting Joseph Smith's first vision. Two nearly indistinguishable bearded personages are portrayed: one Jesus and one God—in the flesh—appearing to a 14-year-old farm boy who has just uttered his first vocal prayer.

By John W. Kennedy in Draper, Utah.



Resurrection appearance: Latter-day Saints believe Jesus Christ made himself known in a visit to the American continent nearly 2,000 years ago.

planting. Worldwide, there are 56,530 LDS missionaries, three-fourths of them young males, knocking on doors in 162 countries. Last year, 318,000 people converted to Mormonism, primarily from Christian groups.

The LDS church is experiencing rapid growth, with 10,070,500 Mormons worldwide. Seven out of ten Mormons live in North, Central, or South America. "At any given moment, the majority of Mormons are first-generation converts," says Rodney Stark, author and University of Washington sociologist. Most have significant attachments to non-Mormon relatives and friends, who then are ripe for conversion themselves. Stark projects that Mormonism will become the next world religion, with a membership of 267 million by 2080.

This month, the fifty-second LDS temple in the world will open. Another 46 are under construction or on the drawing board, including one in Nashville, headquarters of the SBC.

LDS missionaries have had the greatest

success in countries with sizable Christian populations, where Christian missionaries have blazed the trail. The key LDS doctrine of restoration of the church is more easily grasped by people who have already been introduced to Christianity.

LDS missions efforts are well-financed, in part because all but 85 top church leaders are volunteers. Also, Mormons are the most generous donors of all American church members, giving on average nearly 7.5 percent of income.

While 95 percent of Mormons in the United States are white, the church is growing elsewhere by appealing to a multitude of racial and ethnic groups, aided by the acceptance of blacks into the priesthood in 1978. Latin America is the fastest-growing region, with 3.4 million members, 2 million more than a decade ago.

The Book of Mormon has a strong American appeal with its narrative about an early American civilization and the appearance of the risen Christ to the ancient Americans. Stark predicts there will

be 60 million Mormons in Latin America alone by 2010.

Tanner notes that LDS membership does not necessarily translate into lifelong commitment. Weekly sacrament meeting attendance is between 40 and 50 percent in the United States, and only around 25 percent in Latin America. Infants are counted as members as soon as they start attending, and adults who stop attending may still be counted.

SHEEP-STEALING? Mormons live in a subculture immersed in their own books, magazines, hymns, organizations, and conferences.

New releases at the 34 LDS Deseret bookstores include *Isaiah in the Book of Mormon*; *Joseph Smith: Martyr, Prophet of God*; and *The Genealogist's Handbook: Plain and Precious Truths Restored*. There are "Mormon fiction" sections that appeal to women, with titles such as *Sunset Across the Rockies* and *Hannah: Mormon Midwife*. They even have their own board games such as *Missionary Impossible*.

Yet Mormons have increased their numbers largely by slowly exporting their subculture around the globe.

"Members of our church are constantly looking for opportunities to share the message of the restored gospel with friends, family members, neighbors, and anyone else who will listen," LDS leader Ballard writes in *Our Search for Happiness* (Deseret Book Company, 1993).

While Mormons unapologetically see themselves fulfilling their purpose, the SBC's Roberts sees it as sheep-stealing. "Mormons shamelessly proselytize members of Christian churches, encouraging them to leave their own denomination and renounce the validity of their former group," Roberts writes in *Mormonism Unmasked*, released last month by Broadman & Holman.

John L. Smith, a 78-year-old Southern Baptist who has written 10 books on Mormonism and is the founder of Utah Missions, warns Christians not to let door-knocking Mormons enter the house. Smith, who served as a pastor for 17 years, says Baptists are especially susceptible because they are eager to engage in theological discussions.

INTENSE MISSIONS FOCUS: From the moment of their children's birth, many LDS parents hope to send them out as missionaries. In a world of shifting values, a fresh-faced, well-attired, neatly groomed, smiling, confident teenager can be a persuasive advertisement for the church.

Two years ago, Matthew R. Tate, then

19, reached the age where tens of thousands of Mormons radically alter their lives. Although raised in an LDS family in Salt Lake City, he did not fully commit to the church's teachings until just before his mission trip. "I had to decide whether this church was real or not," Tate explains. "Deep in my heart I felt it was true." Mormons cite Moroni 10:3-5 in the Book of Mormon as evidence. In that passage, a resurrected angel, Moroni, exhorts seekers to ponder in their hearts and ask God whether the claims are true; then the power of the Holy Ghost will make it clear.

LDS prophet and president Gordon B. Hinckley and his two counselors pray about where to send each missionary. For Tate, the two-year assignment was New York City. Beforehand, he spent a month in preparation in Provo, site of the largest of 15 LDS missionary-training centers. Recruits live in a cloistered, dormlike atmosphere, where they learn LDS doctrine. Many learn a foreign language.

While the church paid Tate's airfares to New York and back, his family had to provide daily living expenses. Once on assignment, the schedule is arduous. Tate spent 12 hours a day, six days a week, trying to proselytize. Another two hours each day he prayed and studied the Book of Mormon and the Bible. Tate lived in an apartment with three to seven other missionaries, and he could telephone home only on Christmas and Mother's Day.

"All I've done for two years is eat, drink, and sleep religion," Tate says. "You don't worry about yourself. You worry about other people."

A WIDE DIVIDE: As LDS church growth has accelerated, orthodox Christian scholars have refocused on Mormon teaching and practice.

Last year's publication of *How Wide The Divide: A Mormon and an Evangelical in Conversation* (InterVarsity Press) has done more to raise the profile of Mormonism among evangelical leaders than any other effort in the past decade.

In the book, Stephen E. Robinson, Brigham Young University (BYU) professor of ancient Scripture, and Craig L. Blomberg, professor of New Testament at Denver Seminary and also an ordained Baptist pastor, concluded the divide is not as wide as they once believed. But it still is significant. *How Wide the Divide?* did not attempt to discuss irreconcilable differences such as baptism for the dead, the premortal existence of souls, or the early history of the Americas. Rather, the

book provides a forum to measure potential common ground.

Evangelical critics contend Blomberg showed too much respect for LDS beliefs, and that he should not have written a book with "the enemy." They also say Robinson is not representative of true LDS doctrine.

"Robinson mops up on Blomberg," says John L. Smith, whose ministry in Marlow, Oklahoma, was under the auspices of the SBC North American Mission Board until last year. "The book is a great evangelism tool—for Mormons."

Tyndale College and Seminary professor James Beverley says *How Wide the Divide?* provides a necessary first step for dialogue. But he says Blomberg failed adequately to rebut some of Robinson's charges. "The book suffers from a dialogue that doesn't lay all the cards on the table," Beverley says.

At an April conference, "Mormonism and Christianity: How Great the Divide!" Southern Evangelical Seminary's Geisler asserted, "Robinson said things that were definitely contrary to historic Mormon teaching."

Blomberg notes, however, that LDS authorities often lack academic theological training, so the church often turns to BYU leaders such as Robinson for official theological comment. Robinson and Robert L. Millet, 50, dean of religious education at BYU, are key LDS spokespersons in *The Mormon Puzzle*.

Blomberg concedes he could have asked several more specific questions and that more articulate wording could have deflected some criticism, but he says overall he is pleased with the effort.

EMBRACING THE MAINSTREAM: Although Mormons have moved toward the cultural mainstream of American Christianity, they continue to insist the LDS faith represents the purified and true church. At the LDS semiannual general conference in April, LDS president Hinckley said, "There are some of other faiths who do not regard us as Christians. How we regard ourselves is what is important."

Mormons believe that spiritual darkness covered the earth for 16 centuries after the death of Jesus' apostles until the restoration through Joseph Smith. At the conference, Hinckley also stressed there would be no compromise on the idea that the LDS church is true—and others are not. "This is a restoration of that which was instituted by the Savior of the world," Hinckley proclaimed. "It is not a reformation of perceived false practice

and doctrine that may have developed through the centuries."

Mormons are gaining respectability from some unlikely sources. Last November, former President Jimmy Carter, who still teaches Sunday school at his SBC church in Georgia, said Mormons do not need to be evangelized. He criticized Southern Baptists for "trying to act as the Pharisees did" in defining who is "considered an acceptable person in the eyes of God."

The SBC's Roberts says, "Mormons want to be fully Mormon and fully Christian, but they can't be both." Ex-Mormon Tanner agrees. "Its theology is as close to Christianity as Hinduism," she says. "It's a totally different view of man and God and Creation."

LDS apostle Ballard told CT, "We believe God, the eternal Father, is literally our father. He's a man glorified, exalted, perfected, resurrected."

Millet says, "Human spirits were born sons and daughters of God before this life, and if they will be born again now, they can be empowered and transformed by Jesus Christ, becoming eventually as he is. We believe in the ultimate deification of man."

WHERE ARE THE ARTIFACTS? One of the most persistent critiques of doctrine focuses on the teaching that ancient Hebrews immigrated to the Americas.

LDS doctrine says that in 1827 Moroni, a resurrected angel, instructed Smith to unearth golden plates buried in New York. For two years, Smith translated the "reformed Egyptian," which told of the migration of Israelites to this continent. Their descendants divided into Lamanites, the ancestors of today's Native Americans, and Nephites. Mormon, the last surviving Nephite leader, inscribed the race's history before their demise. Moroni, Mormon's son, whisked the plates back to heaven after Smith's translation.

Faith plays a large role in believing the accounts in the Book of Mormon, because Smith's version is the only written record of Israeli immigrants living in the Americas between 600 B.C. and A.D. 400. Tanner says no archaeological evidence supports the existence of such a culture.

"There may be some things we'll never find simply because the vast majority of human artifacts disappear," says Daniel C. Peterson, 45, chair of the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies at BYU, which, at 29,000 full-time students, is the largest privately owned campus in the United States.

While Smith's Book of Mormon is considered infallible, the Bible is not. "We accept the Bible as the Word of God as far as it is translated correctly," Ballard told CT.

"The Bible has been through countless translations from the time its chapters were originally penned to the present," Ballard writes in *Our Search for Happiness*. "Along the way there have been changes and alterations that have diminished the purity of the doctrine." On the other hand, "the Book of Mormon offers pure, concise doctrine that hasn't been tampered with by religious philosophers, councils, panels, and kings."

But LDS scriptures are not so pristine, Tanner says. She cites Smith providing different versions of his visions in 1833 and 1835. "Revelations are suddenly twice as long as before, bringing in new concepts such as the priesthood," says Tanner. "Why would he have to rewrite it after only two years?"

ONGOING REVELATION: Among Mormons, the restoration of the true church means that their top leader is a living prophet, able to clarify, modify, or enhance existing doctrine.

And new revelations can reverse earlier LDS teaching, the most famous example being the 1890 discontinuance of polygamy, which 47 years earlier Joseph Smith declared had been commanded by the Lord. "Latter-day Saints believe the canon of Scripture is open, flexible, and expanding," Millet says.

"What God has said to apostles and prophets in the past is always secondary to what God is saying directly to his apostles and prophets now," Robinson writes in *How Wide the Divide?*

Subsequently, LDS revere their president as God's mouthpiece on earth, the "prophet, seer, and revelator." When the president of the church dies, the member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles who has served the longest automatically succeeds him, usually leaving an aged leader to head the religion founded by a 24-year-old prophet. The last three presidents have started service at the average age of 86. Hinckley turns 88 this month.

In the LDS church, males confer everything required for a family to gain eternal exaltation. At 12, boys begin through the Aaronic priesthood offices of deacon, teacher, and priest. Males in the higher Melchizedek priesthood can advance through the offices of elder, high priest, patriarch, seventy, and apostle.

"The patriarchy—the loss of the priesthood—is one of the fears of people leaving Mormonism," Tanner says. "For instance, the husband is the one who can pray for a child if he gets sick. Men are the connection to make sure that, at whatever level, things are done the way God wants them to be done."

Advancement in church leadership is dependent on individual accomplishment, Tanner contends. "To reach the celestial kingdom you must go to the temple," she says. "In order to go to the temple, you have to be a full tithe payer and do everything the church asks you to do. There is control to get to that end reward."

Not only are there earthly incentives for faithful Mormons, but more important, there are many eternal bonuses, based on individual merit.

"We don't believe in a heaven and a hell," Ballard told CT. "We believe in degrees of glory. People are not going to live into the eternities in misery."

The LDS doctrine that husbands and wives are married "for time and eternity" allows some high-achieving Mormon couples to have eternal offspring and create and populate their own world.

Those Mormons who aspire to the top of three tiers of heavenly paradise must be baptized according to the LDS priesthood and live a worthy life.

Among Mormon leaders, temple activities are focused in part on the controversial practice of vicarious baptisms and marriage in which living members stand in proxy for the deceased.

"How do we know whether or not your great-great-grandfather, who never heard the gospel as it was restored, nor ever had the opportunity to be baptized by the priesthood, is going to accept?" Ballard asks. "We don't. But we do the work anyway." Under LDS doctrine, not just baptism, but salvation itself is available to the dead.

"The person may have heard the gospel a hundred times, but it never really clicked," Peterson says. "So maybe that hundredth time is the chance. That can happen in this life or the next."

LDS doctrines about baptism, salvation, and the afterlife place them at odds with centuries of Christian teaching in the Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant traditions.

BEFRIEND, NOT ATTACK? Despite vastly different theology, Mormon and evangelical leaders at times work together against common foes such as gambling, pornography, and abortion. A

Baptist and a Mormon are congressional sponsors of legislation to protect churches from creditors seeking to confiscate donations made by members who went bankrupt (CT, April 27, p. 14.)

The works of C. S. Lewis have emerged as another area of religious common ground. "He is so well received by Latter-day Saints because of his broad and inclusive vision of Christianity," says BYU dean Millet, who spoke about Lewis at an April theology conference at Wheaton (Ill.) College.

Blomberg, among others, holds out hope that projects such as *How Wide the Divide?* can be an initial step in Mormons moving to orthodoxy, as happened when the Worldwide Church of God founded by Herbert W. Armstrong altered its unique teachings (CT, July 15, 1996, p. 16). "I still believe in respectful, courteous dialogue," Blomberg says. "As LDS church membership continues to increase, and friends and relatives convert to Mormonism, it will behoove evangelicals to befriend rather than attack."

Yet deep disagreements remain over bedrock truth. "We have a prophet that receives direction from the Lord Jesus Christ," Ballard says. "We simply say to the world, 'Keep everything you have that is true and add to it the fullness of the everlasting gospel as it's been restored.'"

Roberts counters, "The gospel does have a cutting edge. It can be offensive when you explain there's no such thing as celestial heaven." Roberts and Tanner are coauthors of the new Harvest House book *The Counterfeit Gospel of Mormonism*.

Recent rhetoric from Baptist leaders referring to Utah as a "stronghold of Satan" and a "spiritual cloud of oppressiveness" may motivate Baptists, but alienate Mormons.

In the meantime, Mormons persist in their own media outreach. In April, the LDS church bought a commercial on the Gospel Music Association's nationally televised Dove Awards program.

For Bennett, the former Southern Baptist, there is great eagerness to share his new faith. "I feel more dedicated and closer to the Lord than I've ever felt," Bennett says. "The confluence of cultures and religions will be good for both the Mormons and the Baptists."

But for evangelicals, a faithful follower of LDS doctrine is at eternal peril. "Mormonism is either totally true or totally false," Utah Mission's leader John L. Smith says. "If it's true, every other religion in America is false." [CT]

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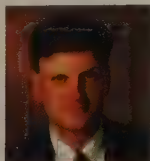
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God's Green



Acres

How Calvin DeWitt is helping Dunn, Wisconsin, reflect the glory of God's good creation.

TIM STAFFORD

I met Cal DeWitt, the environmentalist, some years ago at a conference on world population. He was expounding eloquently on the need for living in harmony with God's creation when I asked him, in an offhand way, whether he had seen any place that would serve as a model.

My question was not, I admit, entirely innocent. In my experience, environmentalists can be very clear on what aspects of modern life they are against, but when asked what kind of society they admire, they may refer to the way Native Americans once lived on the land, or to some remote tribe in Central Africa. I am looking for an environmental vision that applies to modern America, suburbs and cities and all.

So DeWitt's answer surprised me. "Yes," he said cheerfully, "Dunn, Wisconsin."

"Dunn? Where's that?" I asked, suspecting a commune in the northern woods that raised organic vegetables for the farmer's market.

"Just south of Madison," he told me. "It's my town."

Dunn, the un-town

I visited Dunn in late spring last year. Leaving the freeway behind me, I took a meandering road through Wisconsin farm country, cornfields covering easygoing hills patched with black and brown oak woods. I was looking for a town to appear, but it never did. The first thing I learned about the town of Dunn, Wisconsin, is that it's not a town. In Wisconsin, the place where you find stores

and schools and inevitable taverns—what I call a town—is a village. A town in Wisconsin is a subset of the county, a square of open country six miles on a side.

That doesn't imply, however, that there is no "there" to Dunn. At one time few residents thought much about the locale. They lived in the country "just south of Madison." That has changed quite dramatically over the 25 years since DeWitt came to live there. Now the 4,000 citizens say proudly what town they live in. They note the difference (perhaps not so visible to others) when they cross over the town line into other towns. DeWitt says that one of the most notable developments of recent years is the expansion of the town cemetery, previously overgrown and almost forgotten. People in Dunn feel they belong to the place and plan to plant their bones there.

Eyes to see

Calvin DeWitt is a wetlands ecologist who teaches in the University of Wisconsin's interdisciplinary Institute for Environmental Studies. He's also director for the Au Sable Institute, a Christian study center in the Michigan woods that offers summer field courses for Christian college students. He is a formidable scholar, recognized by the university as one of its best teachers. Ron Sider says he is "Mr. Evangelical" regarding the environment—the person with the scholarly credentials, the outspoken faith, the long track record.

What he is best at, though, is field trips. He has a way of taking students into the most ordinary landscapes and

PHOTOS BY BILL BILSEY

showing them a creation they hadn't seen. He is good at explaining complex features of the terrain and its living creatures, and he conveys a sense of wondering joy as he does it. DeWitt sees the world as a scientist and as a Christian, and he puts remarkably little space between those two. He is committed to preserving nature, but it isn't humanity against nature for him. Rather, he sees nature serving humanity by offering testimony to the glory of God.

It is one thing to proclaim God's glory on field trips. It is quite another in the vexed and politicized subject of land-use planning. Dunn's north boundary runs a mere stone's throw from Madison, a city that is spreading fast into the dairy, corn, and soybean farmland all around. When the DeWitts bought their home in 1972, the familiar process of turning farmland to suburb was well under way. Small subdivisions and five-acre "farmettes" were spreading across the landscape. Farmers whose children showed no interest in farming could foresee selling out to home builders for a bundle.

DeWitt was studying rural land-use decisions and, as part of his research, went to observe a meeting of the Dunn town board, an elected council of three. The discussion was over a new hot-mix and rock-crushing plant that the town council had approved. Some of the neighbors were upset at the prospect of the plant polluting their environment, but the supervisors were in no mood to listen. One of them rudely told the dozen attendees that they were wasting time trying to argue the issue; if they didn't like the decision they should elect somebody else, but in the meantime, just go home.

DeWitt had come to observe, but these comments drove him to his feet. He spoke passionately to the small gathering on the nature of democracy. He spoke of an active, involved citizenry, not a passive electorate that votes every few years on who should make decisions for them.

The talk made an impression, and shortly thereafter he was invited to a meeting in a local farmer's living room. The purpose was to recruit a slate to run for the town board, to throw out the old, unresponsive supervisors. DeWitt was new to Dunn, but he was asked to stand for election.

DeWitt the politician

It is not easy to imagine Cal DeWitt running for elected office. He seems too idealistic for the grit of governance. "I often use Rembrandt for an illustration," he says. "Is it conceivable that we could give acclaim to the artist but not to his masterpieces? Is there anyone who honors Picasso without any reference to his paintings?" Our proper relation to God's creation is awe and wonder, DeWitt says. This does not sound like a land-use stump speech.

Once, he told me, he stopped his car on the Interstate freeway near Gary, Indiana, and tried to read Psalm 19 aloud. "I looked up into the night sky and couldn't see any stars because of all the lights and pollution. The noise of traffic was deafening. Semitrailers slammed by, literally sucking at my car. The psalm made no sense at all there. I thought, 'Here is a community that has been deprived, and has deprived itself, of nature's testimony.'"

DeWitt worries when human creation entirely supplants God's, when the natural world is so blotted out by city as to be unknown. He worries, too, about mental deprivation. "For some of my students, *Star Trek* is more real than the biosphere.

Calvin DeWitt sees the world
as a scientist and as a Christian,
and he puts remarkably
little space between the two.

They can tell you more about the starship *Enterprise* but don't know the boundaries of the town they live in. We even abstract nature in science, so it doesn't provide for awe and wonder."

In the world of politics, the Dunn town board sat very near the bottom of the food chain. Most planning decisions rested with the county. The town government was responsible for plowing snow and repairing local roads, and little else. Furthermore, many Dunn residents were vague on whether they lived within Dunn's boundaries, as their mail was addressed through one of the local villages. There was no cafe or post office where the people of Dunn gathered. Few paid attention to town elections.

Nevertheless, DeWitt approached his campaign with all the verve of a military assault. He helped mobilize a large pool of volunteers and dedicated himself to visiting every home in the town personally. He is an affable, easygoing conversationalist who treats even his enemies like old friends. His style of campaigning is perhaps best captured by his conversation with pike fishermen.

Some of Dunn's constituents, DeWitt explains, have settled in the area strictly for the pike. So, as DeWitt tells the story, he greets one such fisherman outside his home and asks cheerily, "How are things going with the pike nursery?"

The man looks confused, so DeWitt repeats the question.

"What's a pike nursery?" the fisherman asks.

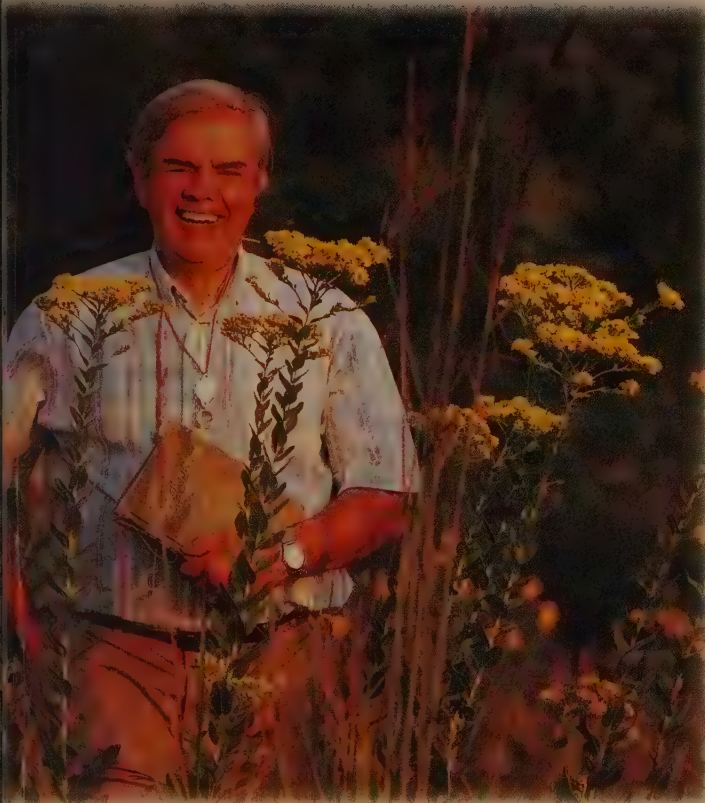
"You like to catch pike?" DeWitt says. "I understand they get pretty big in this lake."

"Yeah, they do. Real big."

"Well," says DeWitt easily, "they don't start out that big. They start out as little ones. The place the little pike come from is what you call the pike nursery. I figured if you were a pike fisherman you would be able to tell me how things are going in the pike nursery."

The guy summons his neighbor, also a fisherman, and asks if he knows where pike come from. His neighbor doesn't know. DeWitt suggests they ask some more of their buddies. By now they're curious. Eventually there are eight pike fishermen standing around in the yard, none of whom knows where pike come from. So DeWitt explains that mature pike go into the marshes to spawn, and the little pike live in the shallow safety of the marshlands until they're big enough to venture out into the lake. That's one of the reasons DeWitt is running for town council, because the marshes are getting spoiled. If there isn't a marsh, there isn't a pike nursery; and without a pike nursery, there soon won't be any pike.

Needless to say, DeWitt won the pike-fisherman vote. He



believes firmly that "when people really know their world, they will take care of it." A lot of his neighbors love the country—that's why they live in it—but they didn't really understand it. For DeWitt, loving the country and understanding its ecology go naturally together. His goal was not merely to win an election but to build a broad understanding of and involvement in town decisions.

The moratorium on development

DeWitt won his election and was able to scuttle the hot-mix plant. ("He did it with a filibuster," says supervisor Eleanor White. "Cal kept talking and talking. . . . He wore them down.")

Two years later, DeWitt was elected town chairman, and an ally, Ed Minihan, became a supervisor with him. Their two votes controlled the board, but it took some clever work for them to figure out how to use their power effectively. They learned that every new construction site needed town permission for access off the town roads. They used that as the choke point to control development.

There was a certain "last-one-in-close-the-door" quality to these restraints, as most of DeWitt's allies were recent arrivals from the city who wanted the countryside preserved as they had found it. Rosalind Gausman, who married into an old farm family, told me that DeWitt and his group were seen as "new people coming in and taking over our town. I had [Cal] pegged as an outsider and a troublemaker." Old-time farmers felt their property rights slipping away.

Their alarm grew when the town board slapped a two-year moratorium on all property subdivisions. Dunn had never had a land-use plan, and the continuing surge of applications for land divisions meant the council couldn't get its head above water. The debate was often framed in terms of development: Are you for or against it? But DeWitt noted that when people said "development," they only meant housing tracts. "We said,

'We're for development. We want to develop farms.' " They wanted Dunn to grow in a way that would make sense to its citizens and preserve the qualities that they loved. A moratorium would give them time to think through a plan.

Housing developers sued the town, which managed to survive through some good legal counsel and a \$100,000 surplus built up by not building any roads for a year. Gausman says, "Cal is so amazing—how he could have a room full of hostile people, and he could calm the crowd. He would let them talk, would really try to understand them. Then he would start explaining his side. He would just calm things down. He always listens to people."

Prairie fire

DeWitt also likes to talk, and when he talks, his love for nature and his awe toward its splendors always comes through. When I first arrived in Dunn, Cal and Ruth DeWitt welcomed me to their home, set on a drumlin nearly surrounded by marsh. Cal was busy at his computer, manipulating images from a digital camera he had just acquired. He enthusiastically showed me how the software could be used to extract environmental data from a photograph of daffodils blooming on his lawn. Then, while Ruth prepared dinner, he walked me around the drumlin.

A drumlin, as DeWitt explained to me, is a cigar-shaped pile of rock and soil left by an ancient glacier. DeWitt pointed out the glacier's path, from Lake Waubesa just out of sight to the north, down the silver marsh at his front door, and on to Lake Kegonsa south and east. A mile away, on the other side of the marsh, ran a thin strip of black. "That's prairie," Cal said. "It's just been burned a few days ago." Fires are set in the marshlands at regular intervals, he explained, one section at a time, for both prairie and marsh depend on wildfire to sustain their balance.

Over dinner, we talked more about fire. "People ask me why I have a lawn around the house instead of prairie," Cal said. "I used to want to bring the prairie in a lot closer, but I learned that's not the most practical thing to do." He told how, lighting backfires to burn the grasslands on his property, he underestimated the power of wildfire. The fire department arrived just in time to save the house.

Suddenly Cal got up out of his seat, a look of excitement on his square, Dutch features. By his porch light, he pointed out the characteristic features of a burr oak tree growing near the door. A burr oak has thick, fire-resistant cork bark, which expresses itself in knife-edged ridges running up and down the trunk and along all but the thinnest branches. DeWitt took some time explaining this to me, telling me the relation of this oak tree to the cork trees of Spain, making me punch my fingers into the firm resiliency of the bark. I was not sure why he was excited until he began to talk about fire again.

"An oak savanna like this one is an island in the fire," he said, his voice full of awe. "When the marsh and prairie burn, the fire will usually peter out in the oak savanna, because the tall grasses don't grow in the shade of the trees. Occasionally, though, a fire will get into the crowns of the trees. The oak savanna would be destroyed except for the burr oak, which won't burn through. These cork ridges will light, and glow, but the heat won't pene-

"We're for development," says DeWitt.
"We want to develop farms."

trate to the life of the tree. If you see a burr oak after a wildfire you see every branch outlined in red, glowing with fire."

The budding naturalist

DeWitt grew up in Grand Rapids, Michigan, the child of devout Christian Reformed parents. His father was a house painter who encouraged his son to pursue whatever he loved. What Calvin loved was studying God's creatures. He had a pond in his back yard where he kept all nine species of Michigan turtles. He maintained a zoo with other wild creatures, including an extensive aquarium in the basement. Their home was on an ordinary 40-foot-wide city lot, but DeWitt used his bicycle to explore nearby fields and forests.

Educated in Christian Reformed schools, including nearby Calvin College, DeWitt never conceived of science as opposed to God. The book of nature was God's other book, a revelation of his nature.

When DeWitt went for doctoral studies at the University of Michigan, he expected a rigorous challenge to his faith, but he found that if his professors were materialists, they weren't dogmatically so. He was surprised to find a secular university such a congenial place for a Christian.

That's characteristic. Where others see sharp divisions, he finds it easy to unite his faith and his science. When it was popular in his field of ecology to blame Christianity for the degradation of the natural world, he established the Au Sable Institute with its explicitly Christian basis. He enthusiastically speaks of the Christian faculty and graduate students that he works with at the University of Wisconsin, a place hardly known as a bastion of faith.

DeWitt is reticent when asked his thoughts on evolution. He finds the whole discussion of origins very bookish, quite removed from the actual observation of God's handiwork. "Whatever God did is what God did. Whatever means he is using to create is okay with me," he says. Evolution has never been a cutting issue for him, he says. "Sometimes [it is] for two or three days, when I'm with people who think it is very important. Then I'm out in the field, singing psalms, enjoying God's marvelous work, and the discussion doesn't seem so significant."

Land-use

The plan for Dunn, Wisconsin, began with taking inventory. That's a natural approach for DeWitt. He hoped that when people got a firm understanding of their land, they would find that they mostly agreed on how to treat it. Taking inventory gave time to defuse the winners-and-losers mentality that land-use decisions often create.

A newly formed plan commission compiled a detailed description of their town's geology, water resources (including lakes, rivers, and streams), woodlands, wetlands, wildlife, fisheries, historic and cultural resources. They mapped bird flight patterns and assessed pollution in all surface water. They studied how locations for homes and businesses affect their surroundings. The University of Wisconsin and governmental authorities provided all

kinds of expert testimony. Eventually, the town published their study so that every citizen could become familiar with the town's natural resources.

"Coming to know their place, they liked what they found and decided to care for it and keep it." That is DeWitt's published summary. The land-use plan the town wrote into law essentially tried to keep Dunn the

way it is by severely limiting new subdivisions and businesses. It enabled property taxes for farms to be set on a basis that assumed agricultural use (rather than on a higher basis assuming the land's use for housing). Plans for parks and trails were made. Roadsides were replanted to prairie. Preserves were plotted out. And every detail of the plan assumed the active involvement of its citizens.

For example, community parks are planned and developed by the neighborhood they are in, not by a town parks department. Someone building a new home can live in a trailer on the property while he builds—to encourage families on a limited budget—but only if they personally get the okay from all their neighbors.

The plan, in fact, was adopted by a referendum, even though the town board had legal authority in itself. The idea was to involve as many citizens as possible in discussions about the plan.

You can certainly argue over the plan. By limiting building, the planners have made Dunn a kind of park land for Madison. Housing in Dunn is bound to grow expensive, simply by the law of supply and demand. Other locales will have to carry the burden of providing housing and jobs for a growing population. (Nearby villages will continue to expand, and Madison itself will push in other directions.) Dunn isn't everybody's solution.

Clearly, though, it's the favored plan of the people of Dunn. In the early days there were lawsuits and meetings where people shouted, and one election where the reformers were voted out of office. (Two years later they were voted back in.) In recent elections, there hasn't even been opposition. Most of the old-time farmers have come to see that, as town clerk Rosalind Gausman says, "these guys are not out for their own good." In fact, one of the clearest objectives of the Dunn plan is to create conditions where farming can be a viable way of life forever.

In a 1996 referendum, Dunn voted to raise its taxes, the money to be used to purchase development rights for crucial parcels of land. The idea is to lock in the land-use plan permanently. It helped that a frugal approach to town government had kept their taxes lower than anywhere else in the area.

User-friendly environment

I concluded a day-long tour of Dunn standing with DeWitt in a small oak grove overlooking the northwest corner of the town. Looking north, we could just make out a ribbon of cars and trucks moving on the Madison beltway. Otherwise, the scene was an American pastoral, now preserved permanently as farmland and park. Through complicated negotiations, Dunn officials had succeeded in using their new tax dollars to buy a large tract of the land there, then reselling it, stripped of its development rights, to a local farmer. DeWitt told me about the pig farmer who had increased his farm's economic viability, about the heirs of a large tract who had agreed to sell to the town for a reduced price, and about others involved in delicate financial negotiations. Just a few days before, the town had celebrated with a picnic on the grounds where we stood.

I noticed a stand of small conifers, aliens in the landscape, growing on the northern edge of the oak grove. I asked

DeWitt whether they would be removed.

"No," he said. "If we were the Nature Conservancy [an environmental preservation group, which has bought land for preservation in nearby marshes] the conifers would go, because they aren't indigenous. But they make a good wind screen for picnickers, so we'll leave them."

In a small way, that captures DeWitt's philosophy. He's not such a purist that human concerns have to get out of nature's way. Rather, he seeks ways for the natural world and the human world to live as neighbors. That's good for the natural creation, because when humans live with it and get to know it, they love it and want to take care of it. And it's good for humans, because through the natural world they get a dose of the reality of God's reign. Community is a natural result. Picnics—an expression of community—are a result. DeWitt takes a serious interest in picnics.

Lessons learned

DeWitt really thinks we can find common ground between environmental concerns and humanity's needs when we *experience* the creation (as distinct from arguing about it). That's why, in his university classroom, his chief objectives are "awe and wonder" and "developing community." He takes his students on field trips to develop both. He believes, in fact, that the natural world offers the best resource for saving the university from its factionalism, its rigidity, its inhumanity.

It's the same with Dunn. People scattered in a country setting, commuting elsewhere, often live isolated lives. Dunn has no gathering place where they bump into neighbors—not even a school. (Dunn's children go to school in nearby villages.) Yet Dunn's environment brought its citizens together. Through the long, ongoing process of figuring out how to care for Dunn and to keep it, they came to know and value each other.

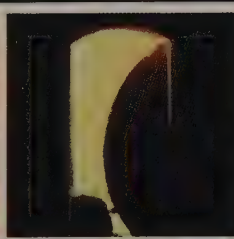
Does Dunn offer anything to the rest of America, cities and suburbs and all? Two things, I believe. First, it reminds us that God's beautiful creation can exist harmoniously on the very border of a large city. Madison will have Wisconsin marsh and farm a bike ride away, perpetually.

Second, it suggests that the beauty around us really can help us find common ground. Not, of course, that decisions about the land are easy to make. Differing political and economic ideas, applied to the environment, can make for heated combat. Yet when people take a break from arguing and actually look at the world God has made, they generally want to keep it and care for it. It's a rare person who doesn't value parks, whether they are as grand as Yellowstone or as ordinary as a prairie path reclaimed from an old railroad. It's a rare person who feels no sense of loss in seeing condos line the Gulf Coast, or hearing of the extinction of any species. Dunn, Wisconsin, is one small example of how people can come together around such deep, instinctive responses. It is an example not just of preserving nature. It is also people and community who are being preserved.

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What Bible heroes can teach us about scandals.

EUGENE H. PETERSON

The allegations against President Clinton have unsettled many American Christians. He holds a position we honor and uphold in prayer; and he professes to be a Christian. But the trial by mass media—all the talk of moral impropriety and criminality—has led many to believe he betrays the very values and office for which we pray.

We Christians should be accustomed to leaders whose private behavior and public words and actions appear to be at odds. We've been dealing with them for a long time now.

We want our leaders to be above reproach. We project our fantasies onto them, and soon they loom larger than life. David is our premier biblical instance. Michelangelo sculpted in marble what many Jews and Christians have carved in their imaginations—a flawless David, the spirited human body in perfection. But the biblical text does not give us a flawless David. Putting people on pedestals is a way of not having to deal with who they really are (and who the God working in them really is).

The biblical narrator insists on telling us every-

thing bad about David: he married many women, kept a harem of concubines, was an indifferent father, and capped his moral dossier ingloriously with adultery and murder. The narrator refuses to idealize or glamorize him to show that God's sovereignty works through just such a mixed bag of human failure and sin.

We Christians should be well trained through our Bible reading to see how God's sovereignty is worked out through the lives of frail, willful, disobedient—sometimes repentant and sometimes not—men and women who are created to live to God's glory. That is what keeps us reading this story over and over again and finding it "good news."

In the moral maelstrom of our age, people ask, "How do we keep our moral equilibrium with a story like this in the middle of our Bibles?" and the answer is this: "By keeping it in the middle of our Bibles."

In an age of diminishing respect for life, accelerating violence on all fronts, and widespread moral mayhem, we accept the seemingly unembarrassed inclusion of David as part of the salvation story. What then happens is that we give our glamorizing, celebrity-glossed concepts of leadership a thorough biblical chastening. Our flawed ideas of leadership need chastening quite as much as our flawed leaders.

The Bible is not a story of moral uplift. We would much prefer Abraham without his self-serving lies, Jacob open and above board, Moses without his impulsive anger, Samson without his Philistine whore, Samuel with a better track record in child-raising, Solomon without all those women, and Peter without his cussing. There is a long history in the church of pious readings of the Bible that overlook or suppress behaviors in our honored ancestors that don't match our best ethical norms.

But there is no hint of that in the narrative itself. This is unlauded history: unholy men and women with whom God works to fashion his holy work in history. They turn out to be no better nor worse than the people with whom he works still, the very ones we meet in daily newspapers and on television screens, and whom we face in the mirror each morning.

The age of the Bible was not a moral golden age that we are now trying to reproduce; it is rather a presentation of the conditions and people that God in Christ uses to work salvation. The biblical story, from beginning to end, is told in the terms of the social, cultural, political, and ethical world as it is, not as it should be.

God's holy kingdom is not a moral or spiritual utopia that descends into our midst in which Christians are put to work as moral policemen, arresting and jailing anyone who violates the holiness. God works from the inside, taking whatever the world hands him as stuff to be worked on by his kingdom presence and saving will. That he used David is a continuing source of wonder. Morality, it seems, is not a precondition for salvation.

Charles Williams, in a brilliant exposition of the

coming into being of the first Christian community (*The Descent of the Dove*), wrote that Jesus was born under three conditions: Roman power, Greek culture, and human sin. Williams insisted that the Holy Spirit is *always* at work in these conditions. These conditions don't limit the Spirit's work; instead, our Lord chooses to work within the limits. Nor does the Spirit baptize the conditions; not many of us look on first-century Palestine, for example, as an ideal we seek. What we understand here is twofold: there are virtually no conditions that preclude the Spirit's work, and the Spirit never works apart from conditions. God can use any conditions at hand in the making of his kingdom.

The conditions out of which David's life was lived and narrated were made up in large part of Philistine culture and Canaanite morality, which is to say, violence and sex. The Philistine beer mugs and Canaanite fertility goddesses that archaeologists dig up from old Iron Age ruins symbolize the two cultures. It is hard to imagine a more uncongenial time or more unlikely conditions for living to the glory of God than tenth century B.C. Canaan—except, perhaps, twentieth-century America.

And yet, here it is: David—born, living, and dying in Iron Age violence and sex, not exempt from their influence but not confined to it either—in quite incredible ways transcending them so that it is possible, and common, for us to read the story and hardly notice the conditions. But we *must* notice them, for we live under conditions that are equally and similarly unfavorable.

The cultural embodiments of violence and sex, war and promiscuity don't seem to have changed much. And because they are *human* conditions, they're the only conditions in which a holy life can be lived by the men and women who continue to pray as Jesus taught us, "Thy kingdom come."

The entire biblical story never lets us forget that it is a *God* story of our salvation, not a collection of moral achievements for use as a moral handbook. This is the narrative of what God does to save us, not what we do to please him. We are always wanting to take over this story, finding ways to do it on our own so that God becomes a pleased spectator to our finely wrought lives.

This doesn't mean that there is nothing we can do to please him; there is much—our human believing and obedience is insistently and constantly worked into the story of what God is doing; and our unbelieving and disobedience is forever introducing needless pain and difficulties for others. Still, it is clear enough that what the Bible reveals is a world of God's sovereignty and salvation, not a showcase for displaying human achievement in politics or art or religion.

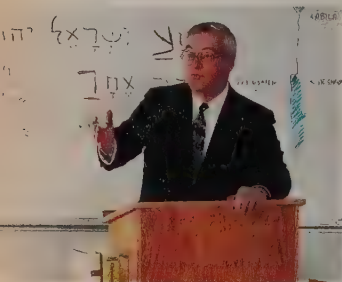
As we read these narratives, we learn not to "take sides" too quickly but rather discern God's presence coming into view and his will being worked out all over the place, often in persons and places we least expect.

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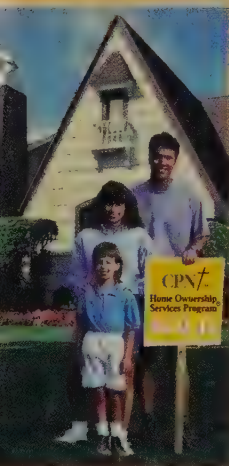


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ways of the world within the far larger context of God's sovereignty, depending on our biblical writers to give us the "sovereignty" perspective. If we get our theology—that is, our understanding of what is really and eternally God-important—from the journalists, we get a few facts, almost no truth, and nothing at all of God. But a biblically trained imagination accustomed to dealing with flawed leaders, discerns our sovereign God working out his salvation purposes in our history. This counters cynicism and even despair as we are handed daily bulletins documenting the failures of our leaders in government and church.

That's what Israel did. Israel developed a most impressive theology of God as king, God alive and present in sovereign justice and mercy during the very five-hundred-year period (from 1000 to 500 B.C.) when their daily experience of kings was most unsatisfactory. "The Lord reigns!" was the key motif in their theology (Pss. 93:1; 97:1; 99:1). Also, the early church cultivated a habit of intercession for the rulers of the day (1 Tim. 2:1-2), most of whom were either ignorant or defiant of the God revealed in Jesus Christ. Neither Israel's God-anointed kings nor Rome's pagan emperors ever gave evidence of a moral life that was much to write home about. One of our ancestors put it so graphically: "God rides the lame horse and draws straight lines with a crooked stick."

The way a leader lives, of course, has enormous effects on a society and culture. Sin cannot be contained in the sinner—it spills out of the self into society, making a mess. And when that happens the rest of us have the job of mopping up, and we are understandably angry. But mopping up is honorable work, this moral cleanup that Christians are called to engage in generation after generation.

Christians have a long history of passionate concern for God's rule that gets expressed in the social and political world in which we live. But we have never gotten much help from our leaders, whether ecclesiastical or political. And so we are not especially upset or dismayed when they turn out to be less than advertised. **CT**

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What I'd Like to Tell the Pope About the Church



Responding to the main criticism Catholics have against evangelicals: that we have no doctrine of the church.

TIMOTHY GEORGE

When Catholics debate evangelicals, the most common question they have is, *Do evangelicals have a doctrine of the church? If so, what is it?* Timothy George, dean of Beeson Divinity School at Samford University and a senior adviser for *CHRISTIANITY TODAY*, found himself answering just those questions last year before a group of Catholic theologians, including representatives from the Vatican. His talk at this meeting of *Evangelicals and Catholics Together* addressed what many consider an oxymoron—evangelical ecclesiology. Here is a radically condensed version of that talk, which shows that evangelicals have good answers to these questions.

On July 29, 1928, a young evangelical pastor began his sermon on Paul's teaching on the body of Christ in 1 Corinthians with these words: "There is a word that, when a Catholic hears it, kindles all his feeling of love and bliss; that stirs all the depths of his religious sensibility, from dread and awe of the Last Judgment to the sweetness of God's presence; and that certainly awak-

ens in him the feeling of home; the feeling that only a child has in relation to its mother, made up of gratitude, reverence, and devoted love. . . .

"And there is a word that to Protestants has the sound of something infinitely commonplace, more or less indifferent and superfluous, that does not make their heart beat faster; something with which a sense of boredom is so

often associated. . . . And yet our fate is sealed, if we are unable again to attach a new, or perhaps a very old, meaning to it. Woe to us if that word does not become important to us soon again. . . . Yes, the word to which I am referring is *Church*."

So spoke Dietrich Bonhoeffer to a small German congregation in Barcelona. These words present both a diagnosis and a challenge for evangelicals today who are called to set forth a clear, compelling doctrine of the church in their new conversations with their Roman Catholic brothers and sisters, and who need it to help them sort out their loyalties in a bewildering bazaar of denominations, parachurch ministries, and independent congregations.

As a global, transdenominational fellowship of one-half billion believers, evangelicalism is an amazing ecumenical fact. As a theological movement, however, evangelicalism has been slow to develop a distinctive understanding of the church. There are several reasons for this:



First, evangelical scholars have been preoccupied with other theological themes such as bib-

lical revelation, religious epistemology, and apologetics. For example, Carl F. H. Henry's six-volume magnum opus, *God, Revelation and Authority*, extends to more than 3,000 pages with little ink spent on the doctrine of the church.

Second, as an activist movement committed to evangelism and missions, evangelicalism has not made reflective ecclesiology a high priority. As some might say, "We are too busy winning people to Christ to engage in navel gazing." This objection should not be quickly dismissed, for as missiologist J. C. Hoekendijk observed, "In history a keen ecclesiological interest has, almost without exception, been a sign of spiritual decadence."

Third, evangelicalism is a splintering movement representing a bewildering diversity of congregations, denominations, and parachurch movements. Their shared identity is not tied to a particular view of church polity or ministerial orders.

Amidst such variety, is it even possible to describe one single, or even central, evangelical ecclesiology? The evangelical witness emerged not only as a protest against abuses in the church but also as a testimony for the truth of the gospel (we are protestants). How evangelicalism maintains the centrality of gospel truth within ostensibly weak structures of church authority is perhaps its greatest challenge today. However, within the evangelical tradition—in its confessions and hymns no less than its formal theological reflections—there exists a rich reservoir for articulating a strong doctrine of the church. One resource we share with the broader Christian tradition is the Nicene Creed. I would like to explore here what evangelicals mean when we affirm our belief in the church as "one, holy, catholic, and apostolic."

The church is one

In his letter to the Ephesians, the Magna Carta of the church, Paul urges, "Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one spirit—just as you were called to one hope when you were called—one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all" (4:3-6; all references taken from the NIV). Thus the unity of the church is based on the fact

that we worship one God.

Neither Luther nor Calvin intended to start a new church, but to reform the church. As Calvin put it, "To leave the church is nothing less than a denial of God and Christ." By contrast, Continental Anabaptists, English Separatists, and biblical restorationists sought not so much to purify the church as to restore it to its original New Testament condition. Thus by gathering new congregations of "visible saints," these radical reformers believed they could restore, as one of them put it, "the old glorious face of primitive Christianity."

The result was the proliferation of numerous denominations and sects, "separated brethren," who were often more separated than brotherly in their relations! This little ditty from the early nineteenth century describes the resulting confusion:

*Ten thousand reformers like so many moles,
Have plowed all the Bible and cut it in holes;
And each has his church at the end of his trace,
Built up as he thinks of the subjects of grace.*

At the same time, we must realize that the restorationist impulse was itself motivated by a concern for Christian unity. In the early nineteenth century, Alexander Campbell wanted his followers to be called simply "Christians" or "disciples of Christ" as a way of overcoming denominational disharmony, even if in the end his movement too added still another competing note to the Protestant chorus.

Evangelicals today are heirs of both reformational and restorational models of ecclesiology. Their approach to church order, ministry, and ecumenism often depends on which of these two paradigms they more identify with.

The fact that most evangelicals are less than enthusiastic about the modern ecumenical movement in its liberal Protestant modality does not mean that they have no concern for the unity of the church. It does mean, however, that the question of the church's unity cannot be divorced from the question of the church's integrity. The call to be one in Christ rings hollow when it comes from church leaders who either themselves deny, or wink at others who do, the most basic Christological affirmations of the faith, including the virgin birth, bodily resurrection, and actual return of Christ himself.

Thomas Oden speaks for many evan-

gelicals when he declares: "Too many pretentious pseudoeccumenical efforts have been themselves divisive, intolerant, ultra-political, misconceived, utopian, abusive, nationalistic, and culturally imperialistic. . . . Hence modern ecumenical movements are themselves called to repentance on behalf of the unity of the Church."

But evangelicals too are called to repentance. We too have sinned against the body of Christ by confusing loyalty to the truth with party spirit, and kingdom advancement with self-aggrandizement. We need the wisdom of the Holy Spirit to know when, like the Confessing Church in Nazi Germany, it is necessary to stand against schemes of false church unity and compromised theology to declare, "Jesus Christ, as he is testified to us in the Holy Scripture, is the one Word of God, whom we are to hear, whom we are to trust and obey in life and in death."

The church is holy

Of the four classic attributes of the church, holiness is the one best attested in the most primitive versions of the baptismal creed: "I believe in the holy church."

The church on earth is holy not because it is set apart in its external organization, as though it were a sanitarium in the midst of contagion. It is holy only because it is animated by the Holy Spirit and joined with its heavenly Head, Jesus Christ.

Evangelicals insist, however, that the holiness of God be clearly distinguished from the holiness of the church. The holiness of the church on Earth is entirely derived, emergent, and incomplete. God's is eternal and unbroken by imperfection and finitude. Thus we take exception to the statement of Yves Congar that "there is no more sin in the church than in Christ, of whom she is the body; and she is his mystical personality."

Luther, though insisting that the one crucial mark of the church was and remained the gospel, also said much about good works and growth in holiness as the fruit of having been declared righteous by God through faith alone. Later Reformers placed more emphasis on the "marks of the true church" (Word and sacrament for Luther and Calvin, discipline as well for later Reformed confessions, English Separatists, and Anabaptists). Calvin, in particular, is clear about the function of the marks: "For, in order that the title 'church' may not deceive us, every congregation that claims the name 'church' must be tested by this standard as by a touchstone."

The evangelical marks—proclamation, worship, and discipline—are thus distinguished from the Nicene attributes because they are not merely descriptive, but dynamic: they call into question the unity, catholicity, apostolicity, and holiness of every congregation that claims to be a church. In this way, as Calvin says, “the face of the church” emerges into visibility before our eyes.

By elevating discipline as a distinguishing mark of the church, Puritans, Pietists, and the early Methodists defined the true visible church as a covenanted company of gathered saints. It is separated from the world in its organization and through its congregational discipline of erring members.

Such disciplinary measures weren’t meant as punitive. They were intended to underscore the imperatives of life and growth within the church. The church, in turn, was understood as an intentional community of mutual service and mutual obligation by which “the whole body, bonded and knit together by every constituent joint . . . grows through the due activity of each part, and builds itself up” (Eph. 4:16). The strenuous use of church discipline sometimes degenerated into petty legalism. But at its best, it provided a context for Christian catechesis, nurture, and outreach that stands in marked contrast to the kind of casual Christianity so prevalent in our own day.

The church is catholic

Most evangelicals are happy to confess that the church is one, holy, and apostolic. These are, after all, not only biblical concepts but also New Testament terms. But in what sense can evangelicals affirm “We believe in the catholic church”? Many contemporary evangelical churches have long abandoned the word *catholic*. Some have gone so far as to alter the traditional wording of the creeds to avoid even pronouncing the word! But none of this changes the fact that evangelicals are catholics. They believe that in its essence the Christian community is in all places and in all ages the one, holy, universal church.

The Reformers of the sixteenth century and the Puritans of the seventeenth, not excluding Baptists, were happy for their churches to be called catholic. Indeed, they opposed the Church of Rome not because it was too catholic, but because it was not catholic enough. They spoke of the evidence for catholicity in three ways: in its geographical extent (the church is spread over the whole

world); in its inclusive membership (the church is gathered from all ranks of society); and in its indefectibility (the church is built on the promise of the risen Christ: “I will be with you always, to the very end of the age”).

Evangelical expositors, however, were careful to point out that historical continuity, numerical quantity, and cultural variety do not themselves constitute true catholicity. The true church may be quite small: Where two or three of you are gathered together in my name, Jesus said, there I am in your midst. This “I” is the only basis of true catholicity. As Barth wrote, “The Real Church is the assembly which is called, united, held together and governed by the Word of her Lord, or she is not the Real Church.”

Perhaps evangelical catholicity today is best seen in its worldwide missionary vision. Indeed, what ecumenism is to post-Vatican II Catholicism, world evangelization is for evangelicalism: not an added appendix, but an organic part of its life and work. The effort to share the gospel with those who have never heard was at the heart of William Carey’s mission to India in 1793, an event that launched what Kenneth Scott Latourette called “the great century” of Protestant missions. This witness continues today through the mission boards of evangelical denominations and a vast network of international parachurch ministries such as the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, Campus Crusade for Christ, World Vision, and Prison Fellowship.

The church is apostolic

Because the church is one, holy, and catholic, it is also *apostolic*. This word was added to the Nicene description of the church in 381, but it was clearly expressed already in Paul’s metaphor of the church as God’s house, “built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets” (Eph. 2:20). That church is apostolic which stands under the authority of the apostles, whom Jesus chose and sent forth in his name.

Evangelicals, no less than Roman Catholics, claim to be apostolic in this sense. But the two traditions differ sharply in understanding the transmission of the

apostolic witness from the first century until now. Catholics believe that the church continues to be “taught, sanctified, and guided by the apostles . . . through their successors in pastoral office: the college of bishops, assisted by priests, in union with the successor of Peter, the church’s supreme pastor.” As heirs of the Reformation, evangelicals do not define apostolicity in terms of a literal, linear succession of duly ordained bishops. They point instead to the primordial character of the gospel, the inscripturated witness of the apostles, and the succession of apostolic proclamation.

While the church is indeed built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets, there is something even more basic: the message they proclaimed—Jesus Christ and him crucified. This is a constant note throughout the ministry of Paul, who wrote to the Corinthians, “For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake” (2 Cor. 4:5).

As the authorized representatives of Jesus Christ, the apostles have faithfully and accurately transmitted their authoritative witness to their Lord in the divinely inspired writings of Holy Scripture. The teaching authority of the apostles, evangelicals believe, thus resides in the Old and New Testaments, the self-authenticating Word of God.

Evangelicals and Catholics differ about which books are included in the canon of Scripture and also about the role of the early church in its formation: Was the canon the creation of the church, or was the church the place of reception for the canon? Both, nonetheless, share a common commitment to the Scriptures as the divinely inspired Word of God. (Indeed, documents in both traditions appeal to the Bible as “inerrant.”)

For evangelicals, the principle of *sola Scriptura* means that all the teachings, interpretations, and traditions of the church must be subjected to the divine touchstone of Holy Scripture itself. But *sola Scriptura* is not *nuda Scriptura*. While evangelicals cannot accept the idea of tradition as a coequal or supplementary source of revelation, neither can we ignore the rich

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est word from today's guilded scholars. The consensus of thoughtful Christian interpretation of the Word through the ages—and on central issues of faith there is such a thing—is not likely to be wrong. Evangelicals have much to learn from the way the Bible was read in ages past.

For evangelicals, public preaching of the Word of God is a sign of apostolicity. Through the words of the preacher, the living voice of the gospel is heard. The church, Luther said, is not a "pen house" but a "mouth house." The Second Helvetic Confession (1566) goes so far as to say that "the preaching of the Word of God is the Word of God." But evangelicals should not let the almost sacramental quality of preaching in our tradition obscure the importance of the "visible words" of God in baptism and the Lord's Supper. Evangelicals, no less than Catholics, should strive for a proper balance among these constituent acts of worship. In doing so, of course, evangelicals must not compromise the priority of proclamation, for as in the time of the apostles, "God was pleased through the foolishness of what is preached to save those who believe" (1 Cor. 1:21).

A worthy maid

"I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic church," Archbishop William Temple once remarked, "but regret that it doesn't exist." To which the evangelical responds: If by *exist* we mean perfect, complete, unbroken, infallibly secure, verifiably visible in its external structures, then it is clear that such a church does not exist in this world. In this world the true church is always in a state of becoming. It is buffeted by struggles and beset by the eschatological "groanings" that mark those "on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come" (Rom. 8:18-25; 1 Cor. 10:11).

In 1525, Luther wrote a lyrical hymn praising the church:

*To me she's dear, the worthy maid,
and I cannot forget her;
Praise, honor, virtue of her are said;
then all I love her better.*

*On earth, all mad with murder,
the mother now alone is she,
But God will watchful guard her,
and the right Father be.*

To the eyes of faith, the church is a "worthy maid," the Bride of Christ. But by the standards of the world, she is a poor Cinderella surrounded by many foes. Wrote Luther: "If, then, a person desires to draw the church as he sees her, he will picture her as a deformed and poor girl sitting in an unsafe forest in the midst of hungry lions . . . in the midst of infuriated men who set sword, fire, and water in motion in order to kill her and wipe her from the face of the earth." In God's sight, the church is pure, holy, unspotted, the Bridegroom, Christ: "hacked to pieces, marked with scratches, despised, crucified, mocked."

As evangelicals and Catholics pursue theological dialogue, moved by our love for the truth and for one another, we must not forget this ecclesiology by opting for an easy armchair ecumenism, heady and aloof. All our plans will ring hollow unless we stand in solidarity with our brothers and sisters in Christ, who live under the shadow of the cross and whose faithful witness is leading many of them to the shedding of their blood for the gospel.

Several months ago on a visit to Germany, I was taken to what remains of the concentration camp at Buchenwald near Weimar. Here more than 65,000 people were put to death by a totalitarian regime which saw in the Christian faith, in both its Catholic and Protestant expressions, a threat to the ideology of death. At Buchenwald there was one block of cells reserved for especially "dangerous" prisoners.

In cell 27 they placed Paul Schneider, a Lutheran pastor, who came to be called "the Preacher of Buchenwald." From the small window in his cell he loudly proclaimed Jesus Christ in defiance of the orders of the Gestapo guards. In cell 23 they placed Otto Neururer, a Catholic priest, whose work on behalf of the Jews and other so-called undesirables had made him a threat to the Nazi war lords. He too ministered to the prisoners in Jesus' name.

Together, a son of Rome and a son of the Reformation, separated no longer by four centuries but only by four cells, walked the way of the cross and together bore witness to their Lord. Their common witness does not remove all the differences between their respective communities of faith. But we remember them and thank God for them as well as for the countless others who have and will share a fellowship in the sufferings of Jesus. For today, as in ages past, the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church—the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church.

Can God Be Trusted?

Cornelius Plantinga, Jr.

Many adults can recall a certain childhood feeling that has now pretty much faded away. Unhappily, one of the things that fades away is a childlike feeling of security in the nest. It's a sense that you are loved, protected, and perfectly safe. It's a sense, above all, that somebody else is in charge. In properly functioning homes, children often have this feeling. Adults do not, and they miss it.

Years ago, on the old *Candid Camera* television program, a very large and dangerous-looking truck driver—a man of about 50—was asked in an interview what age he would be if he could be any age he wanted. There was a silence for a while as the trucker contemplated the question. What was he thinking? Was he hankering for age 65 and retirement so he could trade his Kenworth four-and-a-quarter semi down to a John Deere riding lawn mower? Or was he yearning for age 18 and the chance to go back and take some turn he had missed?

Finally he turned to the interviewer and said that if it was up to him he'd like to be three. Three? Why three? the interviewer wanted to know. "Well," said the trucker, "when you're three you don't have any responsibilities."

When I first heard the interview I thought this man was trying to be cute. I now think he said something wistful. What he knew was that when you are a child, and if your family is running the right way, your burdens are usually small. You can go to bed without worrying about ice backup under your shingles. You don't wonder if the tingling in your leg might be a symptom of some exotic nerve disease. You don't wrestle half the night with a tax deduction you claimed, wondering whether a federal investigator might find it a little too creative. No, you squirm deliciously in your bed, drowsily aware of the murmur of adult conversations elsewhere in the house. You hover wonderfully at the edge of slumber. Then you let go and fall away.

You dare to do this not only because you fully expect that in the morning you shall be resurrected. You also dare to do it because you are sleeping under your parents' wings. If parents take proper care of you, you can give yourself up to sleep, secure in the knowledge that somebody else is in charge; some-



body big and strong and experienced. As far as children know, parents stay up all night, checking doors and windows, adjusting temperature controls, fearlessly driving away marauders. They never go off duty. If a shadow falls over the house, or demons begin to stir, or a storm rises, parents will handle it. That's one reason children sleep so well. Their nest is sheltered and feathered.

I think children might be alarmed to discover how much adults crave this same sense of security. Adults need to be sheltered, warmed, embraced. Some of us have been betrayed. Some of us have grown old and are not happy about it.

People get betrayed, or they get old or sick. Some are deeply disappointed that their lives have not turned out as they had hoped. Others have been staggered by a report that has just come back from a pathology lab. Still others are unspeakably ignored

*He will
cover you
with his
pinions,
and under
his wings
you will find
refuge.*

(Ps. 91:4, NRSV)

by people they treasure. Some are simply high-tension human beings, strung tight as piano wire.

To all such folk, the psalmist speaks a word of comfort. It is one of the great themes of the Scriptures: God is our shelter. *He will cover you with his pinions, and under his wings you will find refuge.*

The image here is that of an eagle, or maybe a hen; in any case, it's a picture of a bird that senses danger and then protectively spreads its wings over its young. An expert on birds once told me that this move is very common. A bird senses the approach of a predator, or the threat of something falling from above, and instinctively spreads out its wings like a canopy. Then the fledglings scuttle underneath for shelter. The move is so deeply instinctive that an adult bird will spread those wings even when no fledglings are around!

And the psalmist—who has almost surely seen this lovely thing happen—the psalmist thinks of God. *He will cover you with his pinions, and under his wings you will find refuge.* The point is that God is our shelter when the winds begin to howl; under God's providence we are defended, protected, perfectly safe—someone else is in charge—someone big, strong, and experienced, who never goes off duty.

In one of his books, John Timmer, my former pastor, tells of his experience as a boy in the Netherlands at the start of World War II. German troops had invaded Holland a few days before, but nobody knew just what to expect. Then, on the second Sunday of May 1940, as the Timmer family was sitting around the dinner table in their home in Haarlem, suddenly they heard the eerie whining of an air-raid siren and then the droning of German bombers.

Of course, all of them were scared out of their minds. "Let's go stand in the hallway," John's father said. "They say it's the safest place in the house." In the hall, John's father said, "Why don't we pray? There's nothing else we can do."

John says he has long ago forgotten the exact wording of his father's prayer—all except for one phrase. Somewhere in that prayer to God to protect his family from Hitler's Luftwaffe, Mr. Timmer said, "O God, in the shadow of your wings we take refuge."

God spreads his wings over us. Here is a picture that all the Jewish and Christian generations have cherished, in part because it invites us to recover our childhood feeling of security in the nest. Or, to discover it for the first time if we have had a terrorized childhood. It's a picture that offers sublime comfort, and



*How true
is the picture of a
sheltering God?
How secure are we in the nest?*

only a pretty numb Christian would fail to be touched by it.

Still, a disturbing question pricks us. How true is the picture of a sheltering God? How secure are we in the nest? I wonder whether in 1940, on the second Sunday of May, some other Dutch family begged God to spread his wings over their house. I wonder if the bombs of the German air force pierced those wings and blew that house and its people to rubble.

You read Psalm 91 and you begin to wonder. It offers such comprehensive coverage. *He will cover you with his pinions, and under his wings you will find refuge. . . . You will not fear the terror of the night, or the arrow that flies by day, or the pestilence that stalks in darkness, or the destruction that wastes at noonday.*

Really? I need not fear any of these things? I can sleep in a dangerous neighborhood with my windows open? I shall not fear the terror of the night? My child's temperature soars and his white blood count plummets: I shall not fear the pestilence that stalks in darkness? I can plunge into my work at an AIDS clinic: I shall not fear the destruction that wastes at midday? Really? Is there a level of faith that can honestly say such things even after all allowance has been made for poetic exaggeration?

In his book *From Beirut to Jerusalem*, Thomas L. Friedman writes of his years in the Middle East. One of the terrors of life in Beirut during the civil war there was the prospect of dying a random death. Long-distance sniping and shelling made it hard to tell where bullets or shells

might land, and the people who launched them often didn't care. You never knew whether the car you walked past might explode into a fireball, stripping trees of their leaves so that in the terrible silence that followed, scores of leaves would come fluttering down in a soft shower on top of the dead and the maimed.

No one kept score. Police would even

lose track of the *names* of the dead. "Death in Beirut had no echo," says Friedman.

I shall not fear the grenade that flies by day. Could a believer say this in Beirut?

Let us face the truth. Faith in the sheltering wings of God does not remove physical danger or the need for precaution against it. We cannot ignore Beirut tourist advisories, or feed wild animals on our camping trips, or jump a hot motorcycle over a row of parked cars and trust God to keep us safe. We cannot smoke cigarettes like the Marlboro man and then claim the promises of Psalm 91 as our protection against lung cancer. A person who did these things would be a foolish believer and a foolish reader of Psalm 91.

You may recall that in Matthew's gospel Satan quotes this psalm to Jesus in the temptation at the pinnacle of the temple. "Throw yourself down," says Satan. After all, it says right in Psalm 91 that "God will give his angels charge over you." And Jesus replies that it is not right to put God to the test. God's protection is good only for certain events, and restrictions may apply. Jesus was teaching us that we cannot act like a fool and then count on God to bail us out. God may do it—and some of us can recall times when we acted like fools and God bailed us out. But we may not *count* on it.

But, of course, some believers get hurt, terribly hurt, by no folly of their own. Suppose a drunk driver smashes into your family car. Suppose an I-beam falls on you in a storm. What if you make the mistake of visiting a great city during tourist-hunting season?

Or suppose you are a devout middle-aged Christian woman who lives in Grand Rapids, Michigan. One June you start to feel sick. So you visit your primary-care physician, who sends you for tests, and then a visit to a specialist, and then more tests. Finally you go back to your own physician, and she says, "Ma'am, I'm sorry to say that you had better get your affairs in order." She says more, far more, about treatments and research and making you as comfortable as possible—on and on with all kinds of stuff that is well-meant. But you have grown deaf. All you can think is that you are 46 years old and you are going to die before your parents do and before your children get married.

Whatever happened to the wings of God? Can you get brain cancer under those wings? Get molested by a family member? Get knifed by some emotionless teenager in a subway in New York? Can you find, suddenly one summer, that your own 17-year-old has become a stranger and that everything in your family seems to be cascading out of control?

Where are those wings?

What troubles us is not so much the sheer fact that believers suffer along with everybody else. C. S. Lewis once pondered this. If the children of God were always saved from floods like believing Noah and his family; if every time somebody pointed a gun at a Christian, the gun just turned to salami; if we really had a money-back guarantee against hatred, disease, and the acts of terrorists, then of course we wouldn't have to worry about church growth. Our churches would fill with people attracted to the faith for secondary reasons. These are people who want an insurance agent, not a church. For security they want Colin Powell, not God. We *already* have people becoming Christians because they want to get rich or get happy. What would happen to people's integrity if becoming a believer really did give you blanket protection against poverty, accident, and the wages of sin?

No, it's not the fact that we have to take our share of the world's suffering that surprises us. After all, our experience and the rest of Scripture have taught us to expect hardship. What worries us is that

Psalm 91 tells us not to worry. It says "a thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you." This is advertising that sounds too good to be true. In fact, the psalmist says, "Because you have made the Lord your refuge . . . no evil shall befall you." And the statement troubles us. What about Paul? What about Stephen? What about our Lord himself? He wanted to gather the citizens of Jerusalem as a hen gathers her chicks. What some of those citizens did was to take him outside of town one day and nail his wings to some two-by-fours.

So what is going on in Psalm 91? How are its extravagant promises God's Word to us?

What Psalm 91 does is express *one*—one of the loveliest, one of the most treasured—but just *one* of the moods of faith. It's a mood of exuberant confidence in the sheltering providence of God. Probably the psalmist has been protected by God in some dangerous incident, and he is celebrating.

On other days, and in other moods—in

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other and darker seasons of his life—this same psalmist might have called to God out of despair and a sense of abandonment. Remember that when our Lord was crucified, when our Lord shouted at our God, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”—when Jesus shouted this in astonishment, and with maybe even a note of accusation, remember that he was quoting another psalm (22). Despair or astonishment at what can happen to us under God’s providence—that too is natural and biblical.

Psalm 91 gives us only part of the picture and only one of the moods of faith. With a kind of quiet amazement, the psalmist bears witness that under the wings of God good things happen to bad people. You need another psalm or two to fill in the picture, to cry out that under those same wings bad things sometimes happen to good people.

Psalm 91 says no evil shall befall us. When we have cashed out some of the poetry and then added in the witness of

the rest of Scripture, what we get, I believe, is the conclusion that no *final* evil shall befall us. We know that we can believe God with all our heart and yet have our heart broken by the loss of a child or the treachery of a spouse or the menace of a fatal disease. We know this is true—everyone in the church knows it. And yet, generation after generation of bruised saints have known something else and spoken of it. In the mystery of faith, we find a hand on us in the darkness, a voice that calls our name, and the sheer certainty that nothing can ever separate us from the love of God—not for this life and not for the life to come. We may be scarred and shaken, but, as Lewis Smedes says in one of his luminous sermons, we come to know that it’s all right, even when everything is all wrong.

We are like fledglings who scuttle under the wings of their parent. The forces of evil beat on those wings with everything they have. The pitchforks of the Evil One, falling tree limbs in the storm, merciless rain and hail—everything beats on those wings. When it is finished, when evil has done its worst, those wings are all bloodied and busted and hanging at wrong angles. And, to tell you the truth, in all the commotion we too get roughed up quite a lot.

But we are all right, because those wings have never folded. They are spread out to be wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities. And when the feathers quit flying, we peep out and discover that we have been in the only place that was not leveled. Yes, we have been bumped and bruised and hurt. Sometimes badly hurt. But the other choice was to be dead—the other choice was to break out of the embrace of God. If we had not stayed under those wings we could never have felt the body shudders and heard the groans of the one who loved us so much that those wings stayed out there no matter what came whistling in. This is the one who protects us from final evil, now and in the life to come—the life in which, at last, it is safe for God to fold his wings.

He will cover you with his pinions, and under his wings you will find refuge. It’s not a simple truth, but it is the truth. And we ought to believe it with everything that is in us.

CT

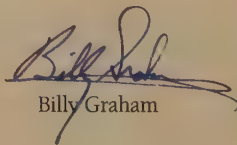
Cornelius Plantinga, Jr., is dean of the chapel at Calvin Theological Seminary and author of Not the Way It’s Supposed to Be: A Breviary of Sin (Eerdmans).

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De-Seiple-ing World Vision

Straight talk from Bob Seiple on myopic Americans and the new realities facing international development.

Bob Seiple:
"People die in this world not simply because they don't have food or water, but because they don't have hope."

After serving more than a decade at World Vision, Robert Seiple is stepping down this month as president of the largest privately funded Christian relief-and-development organization in the world. During his tenure, Seiple doubled the funding for relief work and moved WV's headquarters from California to Federal Way, Washington (south of Seattle). His most lasting contribution, however, may prove to be his pushing the organization beyond the first two steps of relief and development into effective engagement of the deep-seated nationalistic conflicts that have erupted around the globe in recent years. World Vision, which was founded in 1950 when Seiple was eight years old, today operates in 100 countries worldwide. Before coming to World Vision, Seiple served as a United States Marine captain during the Vietnam War and was president of Eastern College and Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary.



BILL YOUNGBLOOD

INTERVIEW BY KEVIN D. MILLER

How has the landscape of relief and development changed since you came to World Vision in 1987?

I began during the last two years of the Cold War, which was followed by the chaotic, dysfunctional, transitional era we're still in. Without the balance caused by having two world superpowers, we've seen virulent identity wars break out that are difficult to stop and that continue to burn like fires in the back 40. Relief-and-development agencies need to bring a new emphasis to conflict analysis and reconciliation that relief agencies have never had.

For instance, you can go to the border of [the former] Zaire and Rwanda and feed refugees in the camp, but if you stay long enough, the refugees not only recover physically but begin to monetize the food they're getting so they can buy guns and go back over the border and continue the carnage. Bringing reconciliation in these circumstances requires a new level of geopolitical sophistication, for which we have precious few models.

Do faith-based organizations receive more respect now in the international community than when you began?

Absolutely. We are invited to sit at tables we have never sat at before. We are listened to in ways that we've never been listened to before. I don't know how long this window of opportunity will stay open for faith-based organizations, but the world realizes it doesn't have answers for the Bosnias and the Rwandas of our time.

How does the modifier "Christian" distinguish the work of Christian development agencies?

Where others see intractability, Christians see possibility because of the reality of a sovereign God. Our hope is not just an abstract theological concept, but a hope made tangible by the resurrection of Christ and the reality of his second coming. This gives us a sustainable hope, which is a very important commodity in development work. People die in this world not simply because they

don't have food or water, but because they don't have hope.

Some have criticized World Vision for losing its original Christ-centered focus. What is driving this criticism?

Some of it has been a perception problem. This is an organization that was founded in the heart of an evangelist, Bob Pierce. Those who followed him didn't keep all his *methodologies*. Pierce went to the pastors, for instance. Stan Mooneyham, who came second, went to the folks in the pews. When you bypass the pastors and go to the folks in the pews, you create a dynamic that might raise some questions.

Also, in 1978 World Vision began the process of internationalization. This means simply that we began to give the ministry away to other entities around the world on an equal basis, a process that's still going on. I think we failed to properly explain to churches what was happening.

Having said that, however, I don't think we ever lost that evangelistic heart. Admittedly, our job description is a little different than for people who do crusades or hand out Bibles or do translations. We are charged with undertaking relief-and-development work. But this work is a sign and an outworking of the gospel of Jesus Christ. I think some people feel that when you become more holistic, you have to give something else up. That's not true. It just might make the witness to the gospel a bit richer.

Does World Vision sometimes undertake relief work without mentioning the name of Jesus?

In terms of evangelism, you just mentioned one methodology: saying the name of Jesus. Whether we are in a restrictive context or not, our emphasis should always be to show the love of Jesus through our work and share his name where we can share it. But there are places where we'll be expelled from the country if we were to broadcast the name of Jesus. So we need to be wise as serpents and gentle as doves in those contexts. In a broad sense, our method of witnessing is incarnational. We walk the talk. People have to be drawn to the gospel, especially people who have been brought up with another story.

Does that mean replacing their religious stories with the gospel story?

Yes, over time. This is not only true with those in non-Christian nations, it's

also true in so-called Christian nations. In America we have a lot of Christians talking about truth but demonstrating something less in their actions. This makes the gospel unattractive. In fact, when we're not careful about how we treat one another, we can inoculate the unconverted against the gospel we say we believe. That's one of Satan's great methodologies.

So, I think if we were going into a country where you can't speak openly the Word, that's probably not all bad. Saint Francis said to preach the gospel every chance you get—use words if necessary. That's very real and important in a restrictive country, but it's also increasingly important in the Western context, where we have the freedom to say anything.

Evangelical Politics

You've been president of Eastern College and of World Vision, and you understand the politics that operate in evangelical organizations. What message would you like to communicate to the leaders of our institutions?

I don't want to suggest that I have all the answers, but I think the church is very much in need of a way of doing business that brings back the purity of the faith. The saddest part of my 15 years of working with Christian ministries is how Christians treat Christians and the energy that's expended in trying to purify a denomination or in trying to create an ascendant organization, one that's better or bigger or takes in more money than the next one.

I think we've gotten away from the ethic of love and grace. All too often in the public square, our Christianity comes across as either triumphal or judgmental. The Great Commission gets short shrift because we have yet to figure out how to love in terms of the Great Commandment, which was given before the Great Commission.

I believe there's a need for repentance among visible Christians today in terms of the Great Commandment to love God and neighbor. I say that from the perspective of someone who was raised in the church, saved in the church, memorized his catechism and his King James Version of the Bible in the church, and who loves the church. I say it because I'm bothered by the amount of our energy being dissipated by answering questions that Christians ask of Christians. They're not questions about loving Jesus. They are theological nitpicking that border on the political and have an ideologi-

cal bent. They are less than holistic and are designed as a litmus test for who will be included in the circle. As we balance the number of angels on the tip of a pin, we've not noticed the world is going to hell in a handbasket.

But aren't there questions of truth for which one should fight to the death?

There are questions of truth that one should be prepared to die for. There are questions that one should be prepared to discuss. And there are questions about which one should simply say, "That's a good question; after we stop seeing through the glass darkly, maybe we won't have to ask it again. Or maybe we don't need to ask what even Christ never chose to ask." Each case needs to be looked at individually.

But look at the enormous amounts of energy that go into these fights. At what expense? Do they strengthen our foreign missions efforts? Is the perception of Christian solutions to ecclesial problems in the eyes of the unconverted as good as it could be? Is there any possibility that in our internal catfights—which have become anything but internal—we have turned people off?

Mahatma Gandhi once was asked what it would take for India to become Christian. He answered that Christians would have to start acting as Christians. I think all of us who have platforms for speaking need to be very, very careful. This is where leaders are going to be held up and judged, not by one another, but by almighty God.

Do you see this infighting as unique to North American Christianity?

Yes, pretty much so. As I go around the world, I see people whose commitments to almighty God are much purer and a faith that's much richer than ours. We have insulated ourselves like we insulate our homes and have made faith less than necessary. We like a good argument, and we like to be heard in the public square. We don't care if folks are falling off the sides of the kingdom platform as long as we can make our points.

I find there are a lot of questions and definitions that only Americans talk about and divide over that are never thought about in other parts of the world. They don't have time to think about them. They're persecuted, they're less than whole physically, they're fighting for their families' lives, they're trying to hold onto the last shred of hope. Their faith—the subject of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen—is real.

Where the Money Goes

What percentage of World Vision revenue comes from government sources?

We are the largest privately funded relief-and-development agency in the world. Just under 18 percent of our funding comes from government sources, which means the great majority of our funds is from private sources.

What percent goes for administrative overhead?

Last year our administrative overhead was about 20 percent.

Is that considered an acceptable percentage for donor-based organizations?

In terms of the watchdog agencies, anything 35 percent or better is acceptable. I think most thinking people feel that it's a very good ratio, given how we raise money and how we use it. At the same time, we constantly try to get it lower when we can do so without destroying the effectiveness of the ministry. Some ministries cost money—and working in the developing world is not inexpensive in terms of its structure.

The Next Millennium

What do you think your legacy will be?

I tend to look forward and let other people figure that out. But I would hope my legacy would be one of keeping the faith of our forefathers. I would hope it would be one of courage in doing what was right, even when it was difficult or disruptive. By that I mean things like moving an organization 1,100 miles and putting everything on the line so that we could position that organization to be better able to work in the twenty-first century. I hope folks would see the work we've done with the reconciliation methodologies that we've been discussing. And I would also hope that we've become more reflective in working with the right agenda during the decade-plus that I've been here.

Then there would be other people who would look at the numbers and note that we went from a \$145 million organization to a \$350 million organization, plus or minus. That's fairly dramatic.

What will face your successor?

The world is changing at exponential rates, and organizations that are going to have an impact in the twenty-first century have to do two things right. They have to make the changes that will be necessary, and then they are going to have to pick their partners with wisdom and discernment. The humbling part of our world

is that no one organization is going to operate by itself. We're going to be working alongside folks in the next century, I think, that we've never thought of working with before.

Leaving World Vision, how do you understand God in a world where 33,000 children die daily from hunger-related causes?

In my travels, I saw young children who had almost never experienced the human touch banging their heads against orphanage walls. As these kids died, their names were taken off the cribs and their bodies were carried out at night. Such tragedies are impossible to grasp, and we will always ponder the question of where God is. The concise answer, of course, is that God was the same place he was when his Son was hanging on the cross.

At the same time, we must be careful that we don't blame God for the fallenness of humanity. For instance, we still live in a world—albeit with 6 billion people—that can still feed itself and has the means to

generate food stores to feed many more. The dominion God has given human beings over the earth is not just a gift, but also a challenge and a responsibility. If a two-year-old North Korean girl starves to death because we can't get food to her, I think we've failed in our responsibility. We are to use the tools God has given us to solve these problems.

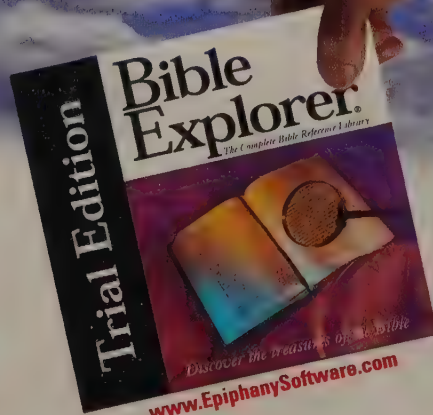
I remember standing on a bridge over the Kagera River on the border of Tanzania and Rwanda about a month after the killing started there. Looking into that river swollen with dead bodies—old and young, boys and girls—I saw there the depth of evil in the world. At the same time, as the water sprayed down over the falls, a rainbow hovered over the entire scene. While there is much to despair over in this world, believers know this is a world God so loved. That's a good starting point as we go out into the world. We do not have to bring God with us when we go. He's there first, even before the foundations of the world. And that's tremendously comforting. CT

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Doubting Thomas's Gospel

Q: A friend of mine recently read *The Five Gospels*, which I understand was written by the "Jesus Seminar." She tells me that the fifth Gospel is the Gospel of Thomas and that it is as authentic and trustworthy as the Gospels in the Bible. Is this true? What is this Gospel of Thomas and where did it come from? Why isn't it part of the New Testament?

*Norma Erickson Poling
Scottsdale, Arizona*

A: One hundred years ago, three Greek fragments of what is called the Gospel of Thomas were found in the dry sands of Egypt. They dated to the third century after Christ. Then, shortly after World War II, a complete manuscript of Thomas was found, also in Egypt. It was written in the Coptic language and dated to the middle of the fourth century. This complete Thomas is made up of 114 sayings with no narrative framework and no mention of Jesus' Passion or Resurrection.

Scholars have studied this text with great interest since its discovery. The Jesus Seminar places high value on the historical basis of the Gospel of Thomas—that it recovers for us words Jesus actually spoke that are not found in our four Gospels. But many other scholars, conservatives and liberals alike, view this document more cautiously. Most think that it is no more than a second-century collection of sayings loosely based on the canonical Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) and other writings, and that it offers nothing that is original or older.

So why does the Jesus Seminar interpret it differently? This group of scholars and pastors—which does not represent a broad cross section of biblical scholarship—continues to be in the news and popular media. On the basis of ten years of deliberations over the sayings of Jesus in the New Testament Gospels, they have color-coded the words of Jesus according to their reckoning of authenticity (red = Jesus really said it; pink = close to something Jesus said; gray = Jesus probably did not say it, or the members of the seminar were sharply divided; black = Jesus definitely did not say it). Their work is conveniently displayed in the book you mentioned, *The Five Gospels* (Macmillan, 1993).

Thus, the seminar claims to have deduced what Jesus actually said and didn't say. According to its thinking, however, the New Testament Gospels and the Gospel of Thomas contain a relatively small amount of authentic material. Virtually nothing in

the Gospel of John is rated red or pink, while only about one-quarter of the Synoptic Gospels is favored with these colors. By minimizing the authenticity of the four Gospels and elevating the authenticity of at least some of the sayings in Thomas, the seminar not only calls into question the traditional understanding of the biblical canon but also how we should view the historical Jesus.

The Jesus that emerges in the writings of the Jesus Seminar is an itinerant philosopher who calls for justice and the implementation of egalitarian principles. In itself this is not objectionable. But it stops conspicuously short of answering why the earliest Christians claimed Jesus was God's Son and Israel's Messiah whose death on the cross fulfilled Scripture and whose resurrection from the grave vindicated his claims and gave humanity new hope.

This may explain the seminar's preoccupation with the Gospel of Thomas. As in the case of many of the authors of postcanonical writings (consider, for example, just those apocryphal pieces using Thomas's name: Acts of Thomas, Apocalypse of Thomas, Infancy Gospel of Thomas), the author or compiler of the Gospel of Thomas wished to present Jesus in a way that was compatible with his views. Jesus appears as a mysterious figure, strangely aloof from his world. He speaks in riddles, has anti-Semitic tendencies, has no positive interest in Israel or her Scriptures, and has embraced some aspects of early Gnosticism.

With the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls and other earlier writings from Palestine, scholars are recognizing, in the light of the Hebrew Scriptures, the complete Jewishness of Jesus, which makes the use of Thomas for understanding Jesus even less tenable. The Jesus of Thomas is indeed very different from the Jesus of the New Testament Gospels. And it is not surprising that the early church, guided by the Holy Spirit, passed over Thomas, just as it passed over many other writings, in the long process of deciding what belonged in the New Testament canon and what did not. Although serious scholars will continue to study Thomas, it is unlikely that they will ever embrace the eccentric views of it espoused by the Jesus Seminar. **CT**

By Craig Evans, professor of biblical studies at Trinity Western University in British Columbia.

WANTED: YOUR QUESTIONS. Send questions to be answered by evangelical scholars to "Directions" at CTedit@aol.com; or CHRISTIANITY TODAY, 465 Gundersen Dr., Carol Stream, IL 60188.

"Jesus said,
'Damn the
Pharisees,
or they are like
a dog sleeping
in the cattle
manger, for it
neither eats
nor [lets]
the cattle eat.'"
—Gospel of Thomas

The Early Church's Health Plan

The gods feel no love for humans, Aristotle taught. "God so loved the world," Christians answered. That response changed the standard of living in this world, says Rodney Stark, author of *The Rise of Christianity: A Sociologist Reconsiders History* (Princeton) and a professor at the University of Washington. His article is condensed from CT's sister magazine **CHRISTIAN HISTORY**.

**Christians
practiced neither
abortion nor
infanticide and
thus attracted
women.**

A little-known fact is that Christians in the ancient world had longer life expectancies than did their pagan neighbors. In fact, many pagans were attracted to the Christian faith because the church produced tangible (not only "spiritual") blessings for its adherents. These benefits included:

Social services. In a world entirely lacking in social services, Christians were their brothers' keepers. At the end of the second century, Tertullian wrote that while pagan temples spent their donations "on feasts and drinking bouts," Christians spent theirs "to support and bury poor people, to supply the wants of boys and girls destitute of means and parents, and of old persons confined to the house."

Similarly, in a letter to the bishop of Antioch in 251, the bishop of Rome mentioned that "more than 1,500 widows and distressed persons" were in the care of his congregation. This charity was confirmed by pagan observers, too. "The impious Galileans support not only their poor," noted the emperor Julian, "but ours as well."

Health services. When two great plagues swept the empire in 165 and 251, mortality rates climbed higher than 30 percent. Pagans tried to avoid all contact with the afflicted, often casting the still living into the gutters. Christians nursed the sick, even though some believers died doing so. We now know that elementary nursing—simply giving victims food and water without any drugs—reduces mortality in epidemics by as much as two-thirds. Consequently, Christians were more likely than pagans to recover.

Women's rights. Women greatly outnumbered men among early converts. However, in the empire men vastly outnumbered women because of female infanticide. "If you are delivered of a child," wrote a man named Hilarion to his pregnant wife, "if it is a boy, keep it, if it is a girl, discard it." Frequent abortions "entailing great risk" (in the words of Celsus) killed many women and left even more barren. Christians, however, practiced neither abortion nor infanticide and thus attracted women.

Women also enjoyed higher status and security than they did among their pagan neighbors. Pagan women typically were married at a young age (often before puberty) to much older men. But Christian women were older when they married and had more choice in whom, and even if, they would marry. In addition, Christian men could not easily divorce their wives, and both genders were subject to strongly enforced rules against extramarital sex. The apostle Paul indicates that women held positions of leadership within the church, as was confirmed by Pliny the Younger, who reported to Emperor Trajan that he had tortured two young Christian women "who were called deaconesses."

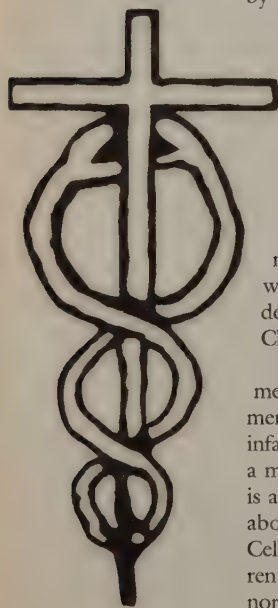
Urban sanctuary. Greco-Roman cities were terribly overpopulated. Antioch in Syria, for example, had a population density of about 117 inhabitants per acre—more than three times that of New York City today. Tenement cubicles were smoky, dark, often damp, and always dirty. On the street, mud, open sewers, and manure lay everywhere. Newcomers and strangers, divided into many ethnic groups, harbored antagonism that often erupted into riots. For these ills, Christianity offered a unifying subculture, bridging divisions and providing a strong sense of common identity. To cities filled with the homeless and impoverished, Christianity offered charity and hope. To cities filled with newcomers and strangers, Christianity offered an immediate fellowship. To cities filled with orphans and widows, Christianity provided a new and expanded sense of family.

Close-knit community. Because the church asked much of its members, it followed that it gave much. Because Christians were expected to aid the less fortunate, they could expect to receive such aid, and all could feel greater security against bad times. Because they were asked to nurse the sick and dying, they too would receive such nursing. Because they were asked to love others, they in turn would be loved.

In similar fashion, Christianity mitigated relations among social classes, and at the very time when the gap between rich and poor was growing. It did not preach that everyone could or should be socially or politically equal, but that all were equal in the eyes of God, and that the more fortunate had a responsibility to help those in need.

Behind tangible motives Christians believe the Holy Spirit prodded and persuaded pagans to believe. Christian conversion, after all, is ultimately a spiritual affair. But it is not too much to think that God used the tangible to influence the spiritual. **CT**

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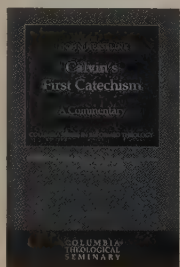
BOOKS

**Why Christianity Must Change or Die:
A Bishop Speaks to Believers in Exile**

By John Shelby Spong

Why Calvin Was a Calvinist

Rediscovering the Geneva Reformer in his long-lost catechism.



Calvin's First Catechism: A Commentary, by I. John Hesselink, featuring Ford Lewis Battles's translation of the 1538 Catechism (Westminster John Knox Press, 224 pp.; \$19, hardcover). Reviewed by Michael Horton, associate professor of historical theology at Westminster Theological Seminary in California.

Why are we here? If God has planned everything, why pray? How do we know God's will for our lives? What is God like? How can I be sure that I'm forgiven? Hardly academic questions, these form the warp and woof of Christian experience. How one answers them makes all the difference.

Although the ancient church provided manuals of instruction for new believers and children, only in the Reformation was the practice of explicitly "catechizing" the laity restored as part of a program to raise up a new generation of Word-shaped people. Among these catechisms, some became official standards (e.g., Luther's Large and Small catechisms, the Heidelberg Catechism, and Westminster's Shorter and Larger Catechisms). Despite the popular impression that such formal statements of doctrinal belief cause division, they have actually bound together diverse church bodies across geographical, historical, linguistic, socioeconomic, and ethnic lines.

Some catechisms, however, did not fare so well, usually because they were replaced. Such is the case with the first catechism of the Genevan reformer, John Calvin (1509–64). Not even rediscovered until 1877, it was republished in Geneva, in Germany, and even in Italy, but no English translation of the Latin text existed until now. Before his death in 1979, the distinguished Calvin translator-scholar, Ford Lewis Battles, agreed to have his English translation bound together with a commentary by the Reformed theologian I. John Hesselink, and the result is in many ways superb. English translations of both the French edition of this first catechism



BILLY GRAHAM CENTER MUSEUM

(Fuhrmann, 1949) and of Calvin's later catechism, which has been in continuous circulation (the so-called Geneva Catechism [French 1541; Latin 1545]), make this joint effort something short of a landmark, but important nonetheless.

First, the catechism itself. Similar to his preface in the *Institutes* (1535), Calvin's preface to the catechism announces both pastoral and polemical objectives, instructing children and new believers in the gospel as well as refuting false charges. Friends and family members were being imprisoned, tortured, and even burned for their confidence in the gospel, while Geneva swelled with refugees. These were hardly moments of calm, ivory-tower, academic speculation. And ordinary Christians were willing to give up everything for the beliefs that Calvin here summarizes.

Organized in a topical format that Calvin would later abandon for the more practical question-and-answer approach, this first catechism reads like a select anthology of the *Institutes*, which was still evolving at this time. Like Luther's catechisms, it follows the pattern of Law (Ten Commandments) and Gospel (the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the sacraments). And, like the catechisms influenced by Calvin (Heidelberg and Westminster), it begins with the claim that all people are created for God; though being preoccupied with the immediate and with our own demands, we engage in idolatry and selfish ambition, failing to attain that true and saving knowledge of God for which we were created.

So how *do* we know God? Is it by stealing into God's presence by speculation? "Now since God's majesty in itself far outstrips the capacity of human understanding and cannot even be comprehended by it at all, it is fitting for us to adore rather than to investigate its loftiness, lest we be utterly overwhelmed by such great splendor." Professor Hesselink marks Calvin's contempt for speculation and his insistence that truth was chiefly aimed at the

affections, not merely to "flit about the brain." Thus, it is not by philosophizing but by actually paying attention to God's works in history, narrated and interpreted by Scripture, that one gains the sort of knowledge that is of eternal value. "This is not something that keeps our minds in suspense with vain and empty speculations, but something that is beneficial for us to know," says Calvin. And this knowledge has to do chiefly with two things: the depth of our misery and the depth of God's grace in Christ (which is also the division of the Heidelberg Catechism).

Sections 4-7 contrast the majesty of humanity made in God's image with the depravity of the fallen race. The will is in bondage to sin, but this does not mean that we sin involuntarily. On the contrary, the direction of our own fallen hearts leads us to rebel and resist God's will. God's Law reveals perfect righteousness and makes us aware of the painful fact that we are under its curse, incapable of attaining righteousness. And here Calvin, like Luther, introduces the Law, emphasizing its "first use" (namely, to drive us to Christ).

After briefly treating the Decalogue, he turns to the Gospel: "By Faith We Grasp Christ." This introduction is followed by a statement on election and predestination. There would be fewer caricatures of Calvin's theology if he were actually read, and this section (13) of his first catechism offers an excellent as well as typical opportunity. The doctrine's pastoral importance is central: it emphasizes God's steadfast grace, so long as the believer does not "seek to penetrate into heaven itself and to fathom what God from eternity decreed for us." The Scriptures must be sufficient, and we must not avoid their clear teaching on these remarkable truths, but if we have life in Christ, "we have not business investigating anything beyond this concerning God's eternal plan." Christ is a sufficient mirror and pledge of our election.

Sections 14 through 16 treat faith and justification in rich terms, and here the clarity of Battles's translation allows us to see the brilliance of the gospel: "Thus stripped of our own righteousness, we are clad with Christ's righteousness; unrighteous in our works, we are justified by faith in Christ." Calvin will pick



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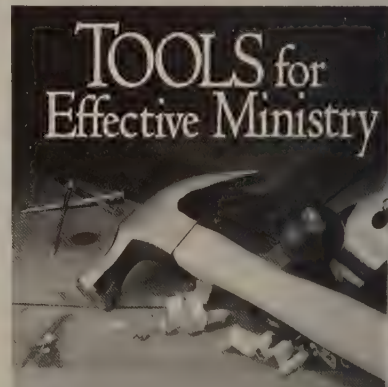
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up this theme again in his treatment of the Creed.

Section 17 concerns the inseparable relation between justification and sanctification, followed by the topics of repentance and regeneration and the connection between faith and works. Sections 20–21 cover the Creed, ending on what may be the most remarkable note in the entire catechism, “What Hope Is.” From the Creed, Calvin turns to the Lord’s Prayer (sections 22–25), giving a great deal of attention to the importance of prayer in the Christian life. Finally, the catechism closes with treatments of the sacraments and the power of the keys (i.e., the Ministry).

Professor Hesselink’s commentary provides rich historical insight, inviting nonspecialists into Calvin’s theological universe. He is less concerned with defending a hero against slanders than with demonstrating how Calvin’s teaching, minus the popular distortions, originates in Scripture and animates faith, hope, and love.

For instance, Hesselink notes the remarkable depth of Calvin’s ecumenical commitment: “In his lifelong quest for the unity of the church his first approach was to share doctrinal statements—quite different from some ecumenical efforts which concentrate more on organizational unity than doctrinal unity.”

A common bad habit, into which Hesselink sometimes falls, is to pit Calvin against the Calvinists, a practice that is (happily) coming under increasing criticism, thanks in no small measure to Richard Muller’s close study of the sources. For instance, Calvin says that we recognize the veracity of God’s Word by the Spirit’s inseparable testimony to it, but also by its evidences (fulfilled prophecy, etc.). Granted, the Westminster divines reverse the order: We recognize Scripture’s veracity by the evidences and the Spirit’s testimony. But the order in which each stated the terms is a slender thread on which to hang so much. Even the doctrine of total depravity is credited to later Calvinism, despite the severe sections 4–6 of this catechism, which Hesselink acknowledges as bleak.

Nevertheless, he offers useful distinctions where misunderstandings of Calvin’s theology thrive. For instance, he reminds us that for Calvin human depravity renders us ignorant of “things heavenly,” but it does not leave us without any wisdom, skill, art, or intelligence in “things earthly.” And there is a very good discussion of Calvin’s view of the will in contrast to

determinism, as well as extensive treatment of the “three uses of the Law.”

In the discussion of justification, Hesselink is eager to defend Calvin’s doctrine from the (Roman Catholic) charge that it is a “legal fiction,” that is, a declaration without foundation: “It is clear that for Calvin justification is no mere forensic legal transaction or a formal technicality. It is an experiential reality, one of the greatest gifts of the gospel.” But Hesselink’s language here could give rise to confusion. While salvation in the broader sense (encompassing sanctification and glorification) is more than a “forensic legal transaction,” justification is not. In fact, Calvin is quite clear about limiting justification to “the remission of sins and the imputation of Christ’s righteousness” (*Inst.* 3.11.2). For Calvin, as for the other Reformers, although justification is inseparable from regeneration and sanctification, it is to be distinguished from these by its exclusively forensic character.

The author rightly stresses that Calvin’s doctrine of God is dominated by the notions of “gratuitous mercy,” goodness, love, and “fatherly tenderness.” This was a point that B.B. Warfield emphasized at the turn of the century against critics who claim that the notion of sovereignty is Calvin’s all-consuming motif. Such reductionism appears not only among critics, but also among some recent versions of Calvinism that lack the Reformer’s balance. Hesselink provides ample support for the centrality of God’s “fatherhood” in Calvin from recent studies.

There is also a superbly concise discussion of Calvin’s understanding of the Atonement, especially in relation to Anselm and Aulen’s *Christus Victor* motif, underscoring Calvin’s distinctive contributions to our understanding of this axis of Christian faith and practice. As God the Redeemer is known only in Christ, so every Christian truth is related somehow to the person and work of Christ. Neither the Word nor the sacraments gives us anything beyond Christ and his benefits. Baptism is “like a sealed document to confirm to us that all our sins are so abolished, remitted, and effaced that they can never come to his sight, be recalled, or charged against us” (*Inst.* 4.15.1).

And because this knowledge or “good news” is entrusted especially to ministers, Calvin has a high doctrine of the visible church. Hesselink emphasizes this with good reason, especially since American Protestantism seems to have such a low estimate of the visible church and its ministry.

One of the most fruitful contributions is Hesselink’s fresh evaluation of Warfield’s description of Calvin as “theologian of the Holy Spirit.” Hesselink observes that Calvin offers us no novel doctrine of the Holy Spirit but gives more attention to the Holy Spirit’s ministry of linking believers to Christ. Thus, union with Christ, faith and regeneration, as well as the sacraments become occasions for elaborating on the absolute necessity of the Holy Spirit’s work. Against those who would either confuse effectual grace with water, bread, and wine or separate it from these physical elements, Calvin emphasized the Holy Spirit’s role in uniting the sign to the thing signified. This had immense importance in the Eucharistic controversy. Poised against Zwingli’s symbolism and the Lutheran doctrine of ubiquity, Calvin insisted that in the Supper believers receive nothing less than the body and blood of Christ, and yet not by the ascended Savior’s physical presence at the altar, but by the union with Christ in heaven which is effected by the Holy Spirit.

Professor Hesselink has fulfilled his goal of not only making accessible Battles’s English translation of Calvin’s first catechism but also providing a reliable introductory summary of the Reformer’s thought. And he is right when he says that Calvin “hated ‘frigid speculation,’ and always tried to show the relevance and ‘usefulness’ of a doctrine.” This is even more observable in Calvin’s final catechism with its question-and-answer form, especially when he occasionally asks, “But do you derive any benefit from this?” (*Geneva Catechism*). It is this spirit that pervades other Reformed symbols, as in the Heidelberg Catechism’s first question, “What is your only comfort in life and death?” Such examples should dispell the widespread fear that doctrine and life, faith and practice, theology and relevance are sibling rivals.

Hesselink’s pastoral motivations in preparing this work compare favorably with those of Calvin himself in preparing his first catechism. This commentary was not written for the Calvin scholar, nor does it offer any surprises for specialists. Hesselink cites the translator of the French edition: “The reader will find, moreover, that the thought of this *Instruction* is clear and definite, qualities sadly needed in current Protestantism, so foggy and cold in comparison with that faith which was then an illumination of the mind and a warming of the heart.”

CT

Saving the Church by Killing God

John Shelby Spong is not only piloting a theological Titanic, he is aiming for the icebergs.

Why Christianity Must Change or Die: A Bishop Speaks to Believers in Exile, by John Shelby Spong (Harper-San Francisco, 258 pp.; \$22, hardcover).
Reviewed by Michael G. Maudlin.

Unchurched Sally finds herself in a sanctuary, a little confused by her surroundings. Suddenly there appears on Sally's shoulder a little, haloed baby boomer who looks a lot like Bill Hybels. He tells her not to be put off by these strange cultural trappings, and with a snap of his fingers he gets rid of the stained glass, the pulpit, the organ, the pews, even the steeple. While her head is still spinning, he invites her to take a cushioned chair and listen to a guitar-wielding worship team and a talk on some practical topic that Bill will infuse with the gospel message. Just as he is urging her toward the small-group sign-up table, she suddenly stops, distracted.

On her other shoulder perches a red-robed figure with a mitred hat so that we can't see what is growing underneath. He whispers to Sally, "That's nothing. He doesn't go far enough! He is still trapped in a primitive theistic understanding of God. We need to find a way to journey through the Christian system to what lies beyond all systems. We need to be seekers who hold on to the Ground of Being without ignoring the insights of the knowledge revolution, the sexual revolution, and revolution against tribal identity and prejudices. By the way, did I mention that I am a bishop?"

Which strategy for "saving" Christianity speaks to Sally's soul? Bill Hybels's seeker-sensitive church, of course. He packs in over 15,000 every weekend. As for the red-robed bishop, John Shelby Spong, the Episcopal shepherd of Newark, let's just say that in a denomination that is the ecclesiastical equivalent of the *Titanic*, Bishop Spong's diocese is sinking twice as fast as the national average.

Yet the bishop knows how to sell books. Spong is famous not so much for what he says as for what he is willing to say. In *Living in Sin*, he called for the church to recognize same-sex marriage and homosexual ordination. In *Rescuing*

the Bible from Fundamentalism, he speculated that Paul was a "deeply repressed, self-rejecting gay man." In *Born of a Woman*, he "raised the possibility" that the Virgin Birth was created to cover up Jesus' illegitimacy and that Jesus may have married Mary Magdalene. He calls this writing ministry "consciousness raising."

Spong's latest offering reveals that the bishop is getting worried. It appears that too many people are still listening to those fundamentalists. So now this: *Why Christianity Must Change or Die*. Here's the pitch: The Bible and the creeds were "fashioned inside a worldview that no longer exists" (Bultmann! *Gesundheit*). This world-view has been "obliterated by the expansion of knowledge." (Since we can split the atom, miracles can't happen. Get it?) So we must jettison the supernaturalism, the literalness, and the most obvious teaching of Scripture and bow down to "the Ground of Being," "the transcending reality present in the very heart of life," namely, God, who is "not concrete or specific," who "can only be pointed to" but "never be enclosed by propositional statements." And we are lucky to have Spong as our pointer.

I don't want to give the impression that Spong is merely a naïve rehasher of tired liberal thought. No, he is a *shrewd* rehasher of tired liberal thought. Instead of bemoaning Newark's empty pews, he has been busy keeping up on all the latest scholarship. He knows his Bible. Still, all his points rest on three premises: atheism; the stupidity of people in the past; and, "if you don't agree with me, you are stupid, fearful, and uncool."

Take his evaluation of the opening line of the Apostles' Creed, where God is described as *Father Almighty*. "Both of these words offend me deeply. . . . The word *Father* is such a human word—so male, so dated. . . . It shouts the masculinity of the deity, a concept that has been used for thousands of years to justify the oppression of women." *Almighty* is "equally troubling" because it implies God has the "power to remedy any wrong," yet "the traditional arguments about free will and the virtues developed through suffering are today so weak and so unconvincing. . . . The problem of evil simply cannot be solved by those pious claims of antiquity."

But John Shelby Spong is a bishop, and so he gets at least one thing right: "Those who think that Christianity consists of a supernatural deity who invades the world periodically, who works through a virgin birth, a physical resuscitation, and a cosmic ascension . . . those who believe that creeds are literally true, Bibles are inerrant . . . will call this heresy." Amen and amen. **CT**

EXCERPT Spongisms

I have been attacked in books from the religious right by such people as Alistair McGrath, N. T. (Tom) Wright, and Luke Timothy Johnson.

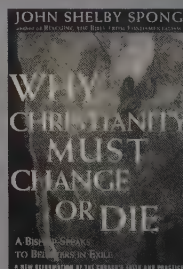
We are forced to recognize that other gods have died in human history . . . Baal, Astarte, Molech, Re, Jupiter, Zeus, Mars, or Mithra. We wonder if deicide is happening again, only now to our God.

If Christianity depends on a theistic definition of God, then we must face the fact that we are watching this noble religious system enter the rigor mortis of its own death throes.

I would choose to loathe rather than to worship a deity who required the sacrifice of his son.

All evangelical and missionary activities designed to convert the heathen are base born. They are expressions of our sense of superiority and our hostility toward those who are different.

I am first, last, and always a believer. **CT**



Classic and contemporary excerpts



Not I, but Christ

To close the gap between what I am and what God wants of me, I must empty myself and let Jesus come in and take over. I have prayed to understand his agenda for me. . . .

It is unsettling to pray to be emptied of self; it seems a challenge almost beyond our reach as humans. But if we try, I have learned, God does most of the work. I must simply let myself go in love and trust of the Lord.

—Joseph Cardinal Bernardin in *The Gift of Peace*

Perspective Matters

One sees great things from the valley; only small things from the peak.

—G. K. Chesterton in *The Hammer of God*

Adults Under Authority

Authority and dictatorship are not the same thing, and all of us need authority; we need the authority of law, . . . the authority of parents, the authority of teachers. And this doesn't mean blind obedience: it means . . . we all need guidance. . . . [W]e are children in the eyes of God. It's very important in organized society that we are adults, making free choices, but we should have the humility to recognize that we are in many respects children. . . .

[W]e had a great party in the Sixties and thereafter over the destruction of authority, and now we've got the hangover. . . . [I]n the Nineties . . . we know we've got something wrong. We're pessimistic. The Sixties was very silly in many ways, but it was . . . optimis-

tic. Now we know that we have overthrown authority and we wish we hadn't, but we don't quite know how to re-establish it.

—Charles Moore in *Third Way*

Of Deeds and Motives

The last temptation is the greatest treason:

To do the right deed for the wrong reason.

—T. S. Eliot in *Murder in the Cathedral*

Praise God Anyway

Authentic praise of God acknowledges what is true about God; it responds to qualities that are "there" and not simply "there for me." . . . In other words, God is to be praised because God is God, because of what God is and does, quite apart from what God is and does for me. Anyone can, and should, praise God when the Lord blesses one and keeps one. . . . Gratitude is indeed often expressed as praise, and rightly. But that does not make praise and gra-

titude identical. Or does God cease to be praiseworthy when gratitude has fled because the Lord seems to withhold blessing, when the divine face appears to be set against us, and when agony drives out peace?

—Leander E. Keck in the *Christian Century* (Dec. 16, 1992)

Be Not Silent

A silent love is acceptable only from the lower animals. God has given us speech that we should call upon his name. Worship is to religion what fragrance is to the flower.

—Henry Van Dyke in *The Upward Path*

More Than Luv

Love should cast out terror, but not awe. True love must include awe. This is one of the great truths about sex and marriage that our age has tragically forgotten. . . .

God is love. But love is not love. Love is a fire, storm, earthquake, volcano, lightning and hurricane. Love banged out the Big Bang and endured the hell of the cross. . . .

Next time you hear "All you need is luv," think of the captain of the Titanic singing it to his passengers. As for me, I'd rather have a lifeboat.

—Peter Kreeft in *New Covenant* (July 1993)

In the Image of Man

I think it says something that the only form of life that we have created so far is purely destructive. Talk about creating life in our own image.

—Stephen W. Hawking at a computer convention, quoted in *World* (Aug. 27, 1994)

Birds of a Feather

If you're going to care about the fall of the sparrow, you can't pick and choose who's going to be the sparrow. It's everybody.

—Madeleine L'Engle quoted in *Context* (Jan. 15, 1995)

Live or Rot

It may be hard for an egg to turn into a bird: it would be a jolly sight harder for it to learn to fly while remaining an egg. We are like eggs at present. And you cannot go on indefinitely being just an ordinary, decent egg. We must be hatched or go bad.

—C. S. Lewis, quoted in *Good News* (May/June 1995)

Navel Gazing

Look outward. You have been rightly taught Socrates' dictum that the unexamined life is not worth living. I would add: The too-examined life is not worth living either.

Perhaps previous ages suffered from a lack of self-examination. The Age of Oprah does not. One of the defining features of modernity is self-consciousness: psychological self-consciousness as popularized by Freud; historical self-consciousness as introduced by Hegel and Marx; literary self-consciousness as practiced in the interior, self-referential, self-absorbed world of modern fiction.

—Charles Krauthammer in *Time* (June 28, 1993)

Fear Fosters Progress

Fear is not a bad place to start a spiritual journey. If you know what makes you afraid, you can see more clearly that the way out is through the fear.

—Kathleen Norris in *Dakota: A Spiritual Geography*

THE MARKETPLACE

Cost: 46 cents per character (each space & punctuation counts as a character); avg. 45 characters per line. Min. \$39.10 (85 characters). CT blind box number available at \$6 each insertion; checkmark box ☒ \$14 each insertion. Supply permanent street address and phone number. Ads set display style: \$276/column inch. Combination package available for CHRISTIANITY TODAY, CHRISTIAN READER, & YOUR CHURCH: 2 magazines—44 cents per character per insertion; 3 magazines—42 cents per character per insertion. Display style: 2 magazines—\$263 per insertion; 3 magazines—\$252 per insertion. All classified ads will now be automatically placed on CHRISTIANITY ONLINE at no additional charge. IMPORTANT: Prepayment & written confirmation required to process ads. Visa, MasterCard, or personal check accepted; fax (630) 260-0114. Employment ads are given priority. All other ads will be placed in first available issue. Deadline for reservation or cancellation is seven weeks prior to actual issue date. Address correspondence to: Classified Advertising, Christianity Today, 465 Gundersen Dr., Carol Stream, IL 60188.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT for Pioneer Clubs, dedicated to Christian education of children. Need experienced professional to manage total development program. Must have experience with various acquisition techniques and planned giving. Experience with Pioneer Clubs a plus! Salaried with benefits. Send résumé to Mary Hackman, Pioneer Clubs, Box 788, Wheaton, IL 60189.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Rochester Family Mission, Rochester, NY, is seeking an energetic leader who possesses the experience and personal characteristics of a pastor to lead this urban multi-staff ministry composed of a local congregation, midweek youth programs, food and clothing distribution, and a continuing Christian education institute. Experience in evangelism required. Salary and benefits. Please send a résumé and cover letter to Rochester Family Mission, 388 Tremont Street, Rochester, NY 14608; fax: (716) 436-0607 or e-mail: BCCNY@aol.com

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES: Advent Group Ministries, a Christian social service agency located in San Jose, CA, seeks resident counselors, night counselors, summer interns for adolescent residential treatment programs. Competitive salary, benefits. Residential positions provide room & board. Contact Deborah Norris: (408) 281-0708; (1-800) 98ADVENT; fax: (408) 281-2658.

NATIONAL FELLOWS PROGRAM in Leadership, Sept. 1998-May 1999, offered to college graduates in their 20s as a supplement to their internship/work experience in the Washington, D.C., area. Explore new faith-based models in leadership with affordable, covenant group housing. For application: (202) 244-6424; www.natpresch.org/ncl.html

AMERICA'S FOREMOST INNER-CITY FREE children's camp. Lifeguards and camp recreational workers needed. Camp Penuel Ministry now leads 1,000 to Christ yearly. Write: Camp Penuel, Box 367, Ironton, MO 63650, or call: (573) 546-3020.

DIRECTOR OF DOCTOR OF MINISTRY PROGRAM

Asbury Theological Seminary, a confessional, evangelical seminary in the Wesleyan-Arminian tradition, invites applications for an administrative-faculty position as director of the Doctor of Ministry program. Applicants should have a doctoral degree, substantial pastoral experience, and competency in field research. Experience in seminary teaching and computer literacy are highly desired. Interested persons should send a letter of application, c.v., and list of at least three references to: Dr. Leslie A. Andrews, Dean of Doctor of Ministry Studies, Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, KY 40390. Applications from racial/ethnic minority candidates are encouraged. Application deadline: Open until position filled.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

DUE TO GROWTH AND EXPANSION, Belhaven College seeks those faculty who are excited to serve in the following areas at a college which prepares students to serve Christ Jesus in their occupation, relationships, and in the world of ideas.

- Director of Libraries (Librarian Master's required)
 - Sports Science Faculty (Ph.D. & Athletic Training Certification required)
 - Theater Department Chair (MFA required)
 - Business Administration Educator in Memphis (DBA or Ph.D. required)
- Send vita to Daniel C. Fredericks, Provost, 1500 Peachtree St., Jackson, MS 39202. Minorities are encouraged to apply.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Troy Christian High School, a new growing school of 230 students 7-12 (one of the six Dayton Christian campuses), is looking for an experienced, motivated educator who is willing to learn and be disciplined in the areas of intervention and counseling. This could lead to further administrative duties as the school grows. Also needed is a football coach who would start a Varsity program within three years. This position requires coach to teach in one of the three open teacher positions: English, math, science. Also needed is a band and choir teacher. Send résumé to: 700 S. Dorset Rd., Troy, OH 45373. For more info, call (937) 335-2214.

INVEST YOUR SKILLS, vocation, and experience ministering physically and spiritually to the hurting, broken, and lost in the 10/40 Window. HOW? Contact: Mission to Unreached Peoples, toll free at (1-888) 847-6950, or E-mail: mupinfo@mup.org or HTTP://www.mup.org/mupinfo/

NATIONAL CHURCH PLACEMENT SERVICE Churches and Ministers are connecting with CMPN, P.O. Box 1132, Barre, VT 05641; (802) 476-8902.

NONDENOMINATIONAL EVANGELICAL FAITH MISSION to replace deceased director. Experienced administrator/discipler/staff develop/speaker. Self-supported under God. Send résumé. Information/application: North Arkansas Gospel Mission, Hasty, AR 72640; phone: (870) 743-1487-June.

MINISTRY PLACEMENT for pastors & associates or churches. Call (503) 357-7830 or Believer's Dynamics, POB 596, Forest Grove, OR 97116. Since 1977.

CHRISTIAN SCHOOL in scenic Galena seeking administrator and positions in K-12. TSCS, 11084 Hwy. 20 W., Galena, IL 61036; (815) 777-3800.

MAKE A CHANGE! Teach English, business, or computers in China, Russia, Muslim Asia, or C. Europe. Call ESI at: (1-800) 895-7955. All college majors/degrees welcome.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

AN EXPANDING 2,000-member family church with two locations is seeking a full-time **DIRECTOR** and/or **PASTOR OF CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES**. The ideal candidate will be committed to serving Jesus Christ and the church and will possess broad-based 5 years+ leadership experience in children's ministries with a large church. Applicants should possess strong leadership-development skills, program development and management skills. Key areas of responsibility will be the direction of existing Sunday school programs from birth to sixth grade, Colonial's preschool and child-care programs, as well as development of expanded ministries on the new site. Salary commensurate with education, experience, and ability. Send résumé and salary requirements by June 26 to: Director of Children's Ministries Search Committee, Colonial Presbyterian Church, 9500 Wornall Road, Kansas City, MO 64114. Shape a new vision for a new century in the area of children's ministries.

ASSOCIATE PASTOR

Growing, vibrant, evangelical church of 400+ in upscale suburb of NYC seeks pastoral leadership in the areas of assimilation, discipleship, and mobilizing believers for ministry. Candidate must have strong teaching gifts as well as the ability to manage and develop people and ministries. Ideal candidate has graduate-level ministry training and a track record of effective ministry. Ability to lead music and worship a plus. Dynamic congregation with many first-generation believers. Send résumé and cover letter to MBC, 626 Plandome Rd., Manhasset, NY 11030.

ACMC PRESIDENT

ACMC (Advancing Churches in Missions Commitment) is an organization with a vision to increase the passion of the American church for world evangelization. We are looking for a godly servant leader with ten years of progressive management experience and a desire to stimulate local churches to reach across cultures with the gospel. Previous experience in working with and/or through local churches regarding missions is essential. Demonstrated skills in these areas are desired: supervision, strategic/tactical/financial planning, resource development. Fax résumés to Dale Folsom at (316) 265-2052; e-mail DaleFolsom@aol.com or mail to: 50 Springlake Lane, Wichita, KS 67230.

FULL-TIME BUSINESS MANAGER position available for church, school, and daycare center at Christ-centered Grace Brethren Church in south central Pennsylvania. Applicant will have leadership skills and experience in financial, facility management, human resource and MIS activities. Must have personal faith consistent with the church's statement of faith. Send or fax a résumé and salary history to Grace Brethren Church of Lititz, Attn: Barry Brooks, 501 W. Lincoln Ave., Lititz, PA 17543; fax: (717) 626-5683.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

PHILOSOPHY POSITION at Talbot School of Theology, Biola University. Full-time, tenure-track, assistant- or associate-level faculty position in philosophy. Ph.D. required. Open now, with likelihood of beginning in Fall 1999. Competence sought in two of the following three areas: metaphysics, epistemology, and philosophy of religion. Additional area of competence open. To receive application materials, qualified persons committed to the theological position of the school are encouraged to send a letter of interest accompanied by a CV to: Lisa Vasquez, Department Secretary, Talbot Department of Philosophy/Ethics, Biola University, 13800 Biola Ave., LaMirada, CA 90639; lisa_vasquez@peter.biola.edu; fax: (562) 903-4759.

DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES Position available for an experienced person who loves children and is gifted in teaching, administration, and leadership. Major responsibilities would include: developing, implementing, and evaluating programs for children ages 0-5th grade, selecting and enabling teachers and volunteers for all children's ministry programs. We are a 10-year-old seeker-oriented church anticipating a move into a new facility in 1998. Please send résumé to Rob Murphey, Buckhead Community Church, 700 Galleria Parkway, Suite 560, Atlanta, GA 30339; phone: (770) 952-8834; fax: (770) 952-8243.

FACULTY POSITIONS WAYNESBURG COLLEGE

- Computer Science—teaching all levels of programming and/or applications. Master's required; varied computer experience desired; doctorate preferred.
 - Criminal Justice—two positions: program director plus teaching forensic accounting and other courses (depending on expertise). Master's or JD required; experience desired.
 - Education—two positions: department chair and one-year leave replacement; administering and teaching in variety of content. Doctorate preferred; school experience desired.
 - Music, Instrumental—directing band and other ensembles; teaching range of music courses; responsible for music program, including recruiting, programs, part-time faculty; doctorate preferred.
 - Nursing—coordinator of RN to BSN program (requires evenings). MSN minimum; experience required.
 - Sports Medicine—staff position with faculty rank; possibly program director. Teaching and athletic trainer responsibilities. Master's minimum; doctorate preferred.
- See home page at <http://waynesburg.edu>. All positions require commitment to Christian higher education, breadth of teaching skills, plus normal full-time faculty responsibilities. Send CV, copies of transcripts, letter addressing qualifications and philosophy of education, and three references to Richard Stanislaw, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Waynesburg College, Waynesburg, PA 15370 or rstanis@waynesburg.edu.

MISSION PASTOR/DIRECTOR

Energetic, 2,400-member suburban congregation in Seattle area seeks a person with demonstrated ability in promoting, developing, and leading mission efforts. Clear commitment to Christ and biblical mission mandate required. Significant leadership experience with local community and cross-cultural outreach activity important. Send résumé to: Jack Roos, APNC chair, First Presbyterian Church of Bellevue, 1717 Bellevue Way NE, Bellevue, WA 98004.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

PASTOR/DIRECTOR OF STUDENT MINISTRIES

Dynamic evangelical church of over 2,000 members in beautiful North Coast San Diego seeks pastor or director of student ministries to provide overall leadership and staff supervision of multiple youth programs while focusing on senior high. Required: minimum of 2-4 years full-time experience directing a student ministry program of more than 50 participants. For a position description and more information: <http://www.solanapres.org> or Secretary, Youth Pastor/Director Search Committee, Solana Beach Presbyterian Church, 120 Stevens Avenue, Solana Beach, CA 92075; fax: (619) 755-0531.

SENIOR PASTOR OPPORTUNITY

The Evangelical Free Church of Libertyville seeks a senior pastor to lead the church into the next millennium. Applicants should possess vibrant people skills, outstanding preaching/teaching gifts, and strong team leadership abilities. Qualifications shall include master of divinity or higher, minimum ten years of demonstrated pastoral experience, and experience in working with pastoral team in a growing church environment. The EFC of Libertyville is a growing church of 500+ with a current pastoral staff of five. Worship services tend toward a contemporary-blended style. Interested applicants should send their résumé of qualifications to the Evangelical Free Church of Libertyville, 431 W. Austin Ave., Libertyville, IL 60048, Attn: Sr. Pastor Search Committee.

NEW MAJOR GIFTS PROGRAM

The Salvation Army offers a superb opportunity for the right mission-driven development professionals. We are looking for nine such candidates in the Southeastern United States. Candidates will have a record of successful major donor work, be responsible to develop an annual plan, have strong written and verbal skills, and be self-motivated. The focus of these positions is to develop long-term relationships with key individuals, foundations, and corporate donors while representing the mission of the Salvation Army. EOE. Please send a cover letter, résumé, and salary requirements to: Paul Curnow, The Salvation Army, 1424 Northeast Expressway, Atlanta, GA 30329-2088.

CHRISTIAN HERITAGE COLLEGE PRESIDENT

Christian Heritage College, a private, nonprofit, four-year, evangelical Christian liberal arts college is seeking a president. Founded in 1970, the college is located east of San Diego on a 32-acre campus at the base of Shadow Mountain. The mission of Christian Heritage is "to equip Christians to contribute to society and thereby influence the world through knowledge, skills, and godly character within the framework of biblical and scientific creationism, authority, and inerrancy of the Scripture." Leading candidates should have a distinctive Christ-centered belief, strong ministry orientation, a doctoral degree, seven to ten years administrative experience in higher education, competence in fiscal management, successful fund-raising strategies, be committed to integration of faith and learning, and able to envision, inspire, and lead others toward a shared vision for the future of the college. A creationist view of origins and commitment to the doctrinal philosophy of the college is required. Please send a letter of inquiry and vita to: Executive Search Committee, Christian Heritage College, 2100 Greenfield Drive, El Cajon, CA 92019; (619) 441-2200; fax: (619) 440-0209.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

ADVERTISING PLANNER FOR CHRISTIAN MARKET

If you would like to use your communication skills to help churches know about Christian resources available to them, we would like to hear from you. We're looking for two persons with about 10 years experience for positions involving communications, advertising, and promotion. Bachelor's degree also required. Exceptional skills needed, including: strong interpersonal skills, planning skills, ability to work with a graphic designer to develop concepts, copywriting, ability to establish communication goals, and skills in selecting appropriate communication methods/vehicles to achieve those goals. While the methods currently being used are primarily print-oriented, some projects involve video presentations, audio messages and the use of exhibits. If that's a match with your skills, and if your heart yearns to be involved in a position that helps churches carry out their ministries, send your résumé and salary requirements to: Human Resources Dept., MSN 121, Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 127 9th Avenue North, Nashville, TN 37234 or fax to: (615) 251-5017.

DIRECTOR OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION wanted for dynamic, family-oriented Presbyterian church in a suburban New England town. A 450+ member congregation is seeking a full-time DCE to develop and lead the Christian education program for the church community, with emphasis on children and youth. A degree in Christian education, experience, and an ability to communicate well with all ages are key qualifications. Salary and benefits, including manse, commensurate with experience. Interested candidates should send PIF and personal philosophy of Christian education to: DCE Search, First Presbyterian Church of Fairfield, 2475 Easton Turnpike, Fairfield, CT 06432-1194.

POSITION OF PRESIDENT

Rio Grande Bible Institute seeks qualified candidate to oversee the VPs, administrate board policy, give spiritual oversight to staff & students, and other duties relative to position. Ideal candidate has doctorate, is fluent in Spanish & English, committed to RGBI's doctrinal, practice, & mission statements as an evangelical, interdenominational college with Calvinistic & dispensational tradition. Responsible to raise own support. Send résumé and letter to: Pres. Search Committee, RGBI, 4300 S. Bus. 281, Edinburg, TX 78539.

MANAGING EDITOR

Nonprofit interfaith organization seeks managing editor to coordinate book and periodical editing. Requires related degree, 5 yrs. editorial experience, book publishing experience preferred, copy editing, and WP 7.0 skills, knowledge of American religion. Salary \$40,000. Send résumé to HR, The Alban Institute, 7315 Wisconsin Ave., #1250W, Bethesda, MD 20814.

SENIOR PASTOR

Bethany Chapel of Calgary, an independent evangelical citywide church of 1,100 people, with approximately 700 attending the worship and teaching service, is seeking a full-time senior pastor. The successful candidate will be responsible for mobilizing and equipping the church body through regular expository teaching and preaching. The senior pastor will work with an elder-based leadership team and an existing pastoral staff of five. Send résumé to: Pastoral Search Committee, c/o Bethany Chapel, 3333 Richardson Way SW, Calgary, AB T3E 7B6, Canada.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

MINISTRY DIRECTOR OF YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS

New Life Reformed Church, an outreach-oriented congregation, seeks a spirit-led team player who will establish a relational-style ministry and guide and assist adult leaders of jr. high, sr. high, and young adult ministries. Proven skills and solid background in youth ministries or related Christian education preferred. Request information or send résumé to: Jeff Vander Berg, 232 16th St. SE, Sioux Center, IA 52550; phone: (712) 722-3520; fax: (712) 722-3519.

VICE PRESIDENT/DEVELOPMENT & MARKETING for a \$55 million Christian relief-and-development organization in Portland, Oregon. Responsible for management of all fund-raising activities, development of marketing strategies, and establishing relationships with key major donors. If you want to help a good fund-raising team make a difference in the lives of people around the world, send your résumé to: Bas Vanderzalm, President, Northwest Medical Teams, P.O. Box 10, Portland, OR 97207 or basv@nwmmti.org

DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN & FAMILIES MINISTRIES for thriving Baptist General Conference church, Avon, CT. Sunday worship attendance 950. Director responsible for ministry to 492, birth – 5th grade children and their families. Understanding of child developmental stages and family dynamics as they relate to ministry necessary. Master's degree in Christian Education or related comparable field experience required, including supervision of staff members and volunteers. Creativity, excellent leadership and interpersonal skills essential. Send résumé to: Nicholas Parisi, Valley Community Baptist Church, 590 W. Avon Rd., Avon, CT 06001; (860) 673-6826.

ASSOCIATE PASTOR FOR ADULT MINISTRIES sought for dynamic 560+-member Evangelical Covenant church for ministry with small groups, singles, adult education, discipleship, and family life. Responsive, visionary, and enthusiastic pastoral staff and congregation; strong lay leadership. Prefer broad church-based experience with strong leadership, organizational, and people skills. Require master's degree and eligibility for covenant ordination. Reply to: Search Committee, Hillside Covenant Church, 2060 Magnolia Way, Walnut Creek, CA 94596.

27-YEAR-OLD MINISTRY seeking director of development. Fund-raising experience necessary, bondable, college education preferred, good verbal and writing skills, marketing and media experience desirable. Send résumé to: RTCA, 3607 Hillcrest Dr., Belmont, CA 94002.

DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES. Growing urban university of 2,000 students and 270 full-time employees seeks a human resources generalist to manage all aspects of the HR function., including staff recruitment, employee benefits, compensation, policy development, performance appraisal, and staff training and development. Bachelor's degree and five years of progressively responsible human resources experience required. Master's degree and higher education experience desirable. We seek applicants who enthusiastically support North Park's mission of Christian higher education. Position is available August 1, 1998. Submit résumé and cover letter to: Vice President for Administration and Finance, North Park University, 3225 W. Foster Ave., Chicago, IL 60625. North Park is operated by the Evangelical Covenant Church and is an equal opportunity employer.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

PRESIDENT

Greenville College (Greenville, Illinois) invites nominations and expressions of interest for the position of president. Greenville College is a Christian liberal arts institution (affiliated with the Free Methodist Church). People Management International is conducting this search. A detailed description of the college, position, and opportunity can be found on their Web site: www.jobformatters.com (go to current searches and double click on Greenville College-President). Those interested should visit the Web site, download the Opportunity Profile, and respond to Dr. Tommy W. Thomas; fax: (615) 463-2944; e-mail: tw@jobformatters.com.

SENIOR PASTOR

Trinitarian Congregational Church of Wayland, MA, an independent congregational church in the evangelical tradition, is seeking a senior pastor with outstanding preaching skills and the ability to lead a vibrant church with exciting possibilities. TCC is a regional church in the west Boston suburbs, with over 600 active members, a \$700K budget and a history of strong support to home and overseas missions. Candidates must have a graduate degree in theology (master's or higher) and several years senior ministry experience. Send résumé to: Senior Minister Search Committee, TCC, Box 99, Wayland, MA 01778.

SENIOR PASTOR/HEAD OF STAFF

First Presbyterian Church, Norfolk, Virginia 1,400+-member thriving church located in a historic professional area is searching for a senior pastor/head of staff with a passion for God, an enthusiasm for things of the Spirit, and a commitment to empower members in their ministry to one another and to the community. The senior pastor will exhibit strong spiritual leadership and a devotion to the study, teaching, and preaching of the Word of God. The successful candidate will have a minimum of 8 years experience and will have experience in leading a large staff. Send PIFs to: Marie Achtemeier Finch, First Presbyterian Church, 820 Colonial Avenue, Norfolk, VA 23507.

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NEW BOOK: *The Writings of John Wesley: A Man for All Ages*, edited by Frank Mitchell; \$29.95 plus \$3 shipping. Order from: Book Outlet, P.O. Box 341722, Bartlett, TN 38184.

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MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES

ATTENTION: ALL MISSIONARY GROUPS Camp Penuel, Ironton, MO, and Eldred, PA, provides a FREE camping program for inner-city and underprivileged children in America. We are looking for missionary groups who would be interested in helping us build a chapel, new cabins, lodge, nature trail, and recreational facility. Camp Penuel reaches 1,000s of youth, ages 7-12, for Christ. Write: Camp Penuel, Box 367, Ironton, MO 63650, or call: (573) 546-3020.

OUTREACH CENTER MINISTER

If you believe you are called to minister to people in small groups, the *National Conservative Christian Church* will provide you a course of study, coaching, and assistance to begin a cell group, home church, or an outreach center. Write the N.C.C.C. at 4460 Northgate Court, Sarasota, FL 34234, or phone (941) 365-8115.

VISIT PRISON IN AN ENVELOPE. By writing an inmate you can fulfill the Lord's command to remember those in prison. Contact Prison Fellowship Ministries (CT), P.O. Box 17500, Washington, DC 20041; (703) 478-0100, x590; <http://www.pfm.org>

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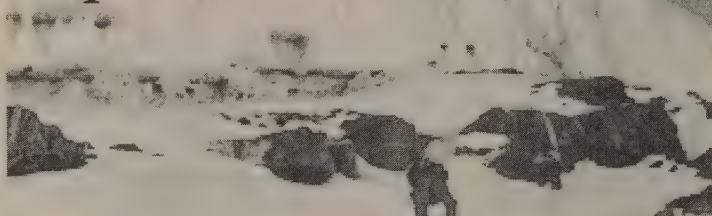
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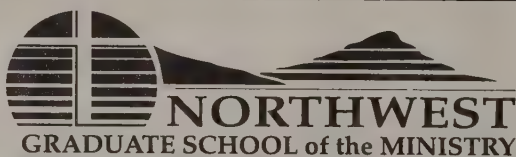
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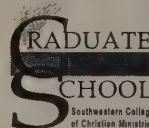
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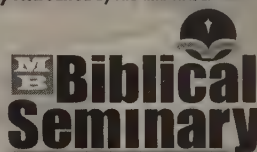


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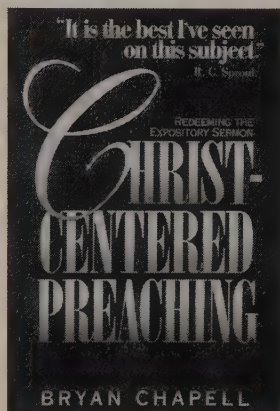
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This summer we celebrate the one-hundredth anniversary of the birth of C. S. Lewis, and in hindsight it becomes startlingly clear that this tweedy, pipe-smoking scholar was not only a clever author of children's tales and a keen apologist, but also a true prophet for our postmodern age. Lewis might seem an unlikely candidate for the role, not being a theologian but an English professor, and what's more, a convert late in life. What was it that made him such a keen observer of cultural and intellectual trends?

For me, the question has intense personal significance. Twenty-five years ago, my friend Tom Phillips read me "The Great Sin," a chapter in Lewis's *Mere Christianity* dealing with pride. The words pierced the heart of this White House hatchet man, and the book became instrumental in my conversion.

The ministry of Prison Fellowship is likewise indebted to Lewis. His essay "The Humanitarian Theory of Punishment" (1954) anticipated the failure of policies seeking to cure or deter crime. Such theories may appear humanitarian, Lewis argued, but they actually reduce the criminal to an object to be manipulated for social goals.

By contrast, a biblical understanding treats the individual as a moral agent, whose actions *deserve* either praise or blame. Punishment is not about pragmatic goals but about justice.

Lewis's *Miracles* (1947) was likewise prophetic, penned before most Christians were aware of the emerging philosophy of naturalism, the belief that there is a naturalistic explanation for everything in the universe. Lewis demonstrated that naturalism is self-destructing: If nature is all there is, then life is nothing but a cosmic accident. Even our minds—and thoughts—are nothing but "accidental by-products of the movement of atoms."

But if all thoughts are the result of atoms knocking about in our brains, there is no reason to regard them as trustworthy or true—including the thoughts of the naturalist. Thus naturalism leads to the conclusion that the philosophy itself is not true.

It also undercuts any objective morality, opening a door to tyranny. In *The Abolition of Man* (1947), Lewis warned that naturalism turns human beings into objects to be controlled, and turns values into "mere natural phenomena"—which can be selected and inculcated into a passive population by powerful Conditioners. He predicted a time when those who want to remold human nature "will be armed with

the powers of an omniscient state and an irresistible scientific technique." Thus "man's conquest of nature" in reality means "the rule of the Conditioners over the conditioned human material."

This prediction was fleshed out in *That Hideous Strength*, a portentous allegory about an institution called N.I.C.E., formed to carry out an ambitious utopian vision to "improve" humanity (by coercion if necessary). The theme is that the loss of an objective morality paves the way to despotism, for then there is no control over the rulers beyond their own impulses. In Lewis's words, "The very idea of freedom presupposes some objective moral law which overarches rulers and ruled alike."

Why was Lewis so uncannily prophetic? The answer may be somewhat discomfiting to modern evangelicals: One reason is precisely that Lewis was *not* an evangelical. He was a professor in the academy, with a specialty in medieval literature, which gave him a mental framework shaped by the whole scope of intellectual history and Christian thought. As a result, he was liberated from the narrow confines of the world-view of his own age—which meant he was able to analyze and critique it.

Lewis once wrote that any new book "has to be tested against the great body of Christian thought down the ages" ("On the Reading of Old Books"). Because he himself was steeped in that "great body of Christian thought," he quickly discerned trends that ran counter to it.

But how many of us are familiar with that panorama of Christian ideas "down the ages"? How many know the work of more than a few contemporary writers? How, then, will we stand against the destructive intellectual trends multiplying in our own day?

The problem is not that modern evangelicals are less intelligent than Lewis. As Mark Noll explains in *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*, the problem is that our sharpest intellects have been channeled into biblical scholarship, exegesis, and hermeneutics. While that is a vital enterprise, we rarely give the same scholarly attention to history, literature, politics, philosophy, economics, or the arts. As a result, we are less aware of culture than we should be, less equipped to critique it, less capable of being a redemptive force in our postmodern society.

Yet, in *That Hideous Strength*, Lewis encourages us not to lose heart: It is never too late. The forces of "Merlin," roused from the tomb, will ultimately be victorious. The best way to celebrate Lewis's one hundredth anniversary is to be at our posts, as he liked to say—with renewed spirits and with probing and informed minds as well.

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God has raised up about 6000 indigenous missions worldwide. Half are in countries that are closed to missionaries from the USA. Altogether they have over 200,000 missionaries on the field, most of whom live on \$50 per month, or less. Thousands have no support at all. Christian Aid has their names and photographs, and will send one to each sponsor who gives \$50 monthly to support a missionary. Many churches support over 100 such missionaries.

Shouldn't your church be supporting some of these missionaries?

Over 500 Bible Institutes

Indigenous missions operate over 500 Bible institutes and missionary training centers. Often their students must go without food, or if they do eat it may be only rice or beans for days at a time. Many Bible institute teachers must work at full time jobs to support themselves and their families, and still teach 30 or 40 hours a week.

Shouldn't your church be helping to provide financial support for indigenous Bible schools?

Transportation needs

Thousands of native missionaries must walk 30 miles a day because they don't have money to buy a bicycle. Hundreds of mission boards with 100 or more missionaries on the field can't get their workers together for conferences, or send leaders to visit them on the field, because they don't have a motor vehicle.

Shouldn't your church be helping to provide bicycles, jeeps and vans for indigenous mission boards and traveling evangelistic teams?

Many needs to meet

Indigenous missions need financial assistance for printing Bibles and literature, Scripture translation, radio and TV broadcasting, care for homeless children, medical clinics, and to provide emergency food and shelter for victims of persecution, typhoons, floods, fires, earthquakes, epidemics, wars and famine caused by drought.

Shouldn't your church be meeting some of these needs among the poorest people on earth?

Christian Aid links U.S. churches with indigenous missionary ministries based in closed countries, and lands of poverty where Christians lack resources. To learn how you can help contact:

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CHRISTIANITY TODAY

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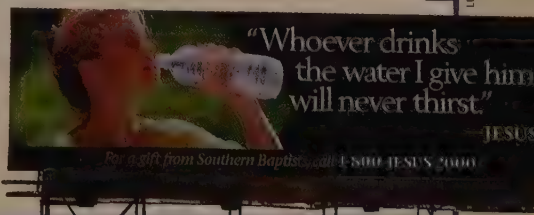
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LIFEWAY CHRISTIAN RESOURCES OF THE SBC



David Neff,
Executive Editor

The Journalist in the Sedan Chair

INSIDE CT

I almost went to China this year, but the State Department changed my plans. Just before October's state dinner honoring Chinese President Jiang Zemin, National Association of Evangelicals president Don Argue received an invitation to be one-third of a delegation of American religious leaders to discuss religious policy with political leaders in China. That was fitting, as China had been the focus of debate on the relationship between U.S. foreign policy and religious persecution overseas, and Argue had been a key activist in raising public awareness of persecution.

Argue in turn asked me to be the delegation's scribe. I enthusiastically accepted, but just weeks before the trip, I was disinvented by the State Department. A professional journalist, they said, would make Chinese leaders less than candid.

Instead of my report, we present in this issue an exclusive interview with Argue about the meaning of his three-week trip across the vast land of China and his reading of top government officials there (see p. 34 ff.).

Other recent travelers contributed to Tim Morgan's cover story (p. 30 ff.). Among them is Carol Thiessen, CT's administrative editor. Carol serves on the board of Norwegian Mission Alliance—USA, the American offspring of a Scandinavian agency, which

supports a polio rehabilitation center in Jiangsu Province. The facility currently serves about 90 of the 900 children seriously affected by a 1989 polio outbreak.

On a previous trip to China, Carol saw the tourist sights. This May she focused on ministry and conducted a rare two-hour, one-on-one interview with Dr. Han Wenzao, president of the China Christian Council.

Bruce Brander has been traveling since he joined the merchant marine at age 18. Since then he has traveled the world as a journalist and photographer for such organizations as the National Geographic Society and World Vision. Having been almost everywhere else on the globe, Brander visited China for the first time this May with Chinese evangelist George Chen. Brander and Chen traveled to remote areas by modes of transport as common as a truck and as exotic as a sedan chair.

Sociologist Tony Carnes, president of the New York-based Research Institute on Values Changes, studies values shifts in China, Russia, and the U.S. Carnes, who is married to a Chinese-American, says he has fallen in love with village life in rural China and loves to sit around talking with villagers while eating watermelon and spitting out the seeds.

Alex Buchan, the Hong Kong-based Asia bureau chief for Compass Direct News Service, also contributed to our cover story. According to CT's news editors, Buchan's commentary has become a must-read for leaders of Christian ministries working in Asia. **CT**

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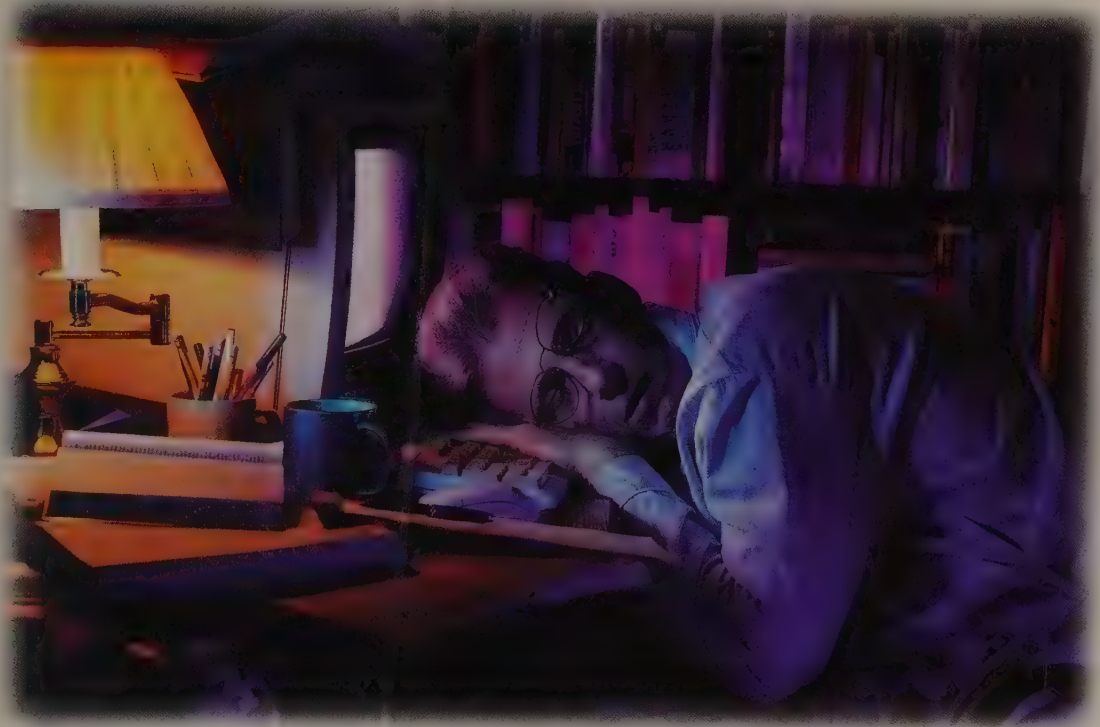
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Mormons and Cultural "Orthodoxy"

There is an important angle missing from your account of the successes of Mormonism, and it points to the abiding need to revive the evangelical mind ["Mormons on the Rise," June 15]. It is true that Mormons have a tough row to hoe in their historical apologetic; that liability is more than compensated for in the power of their philosophical apologetic. One ought to be duly aware of how well Mormon orthodoxy comports to the prevailing cultural "orthodoxy." Evangelicals may smile at a Mormon tradition of stone-peeping, polygamy, and polytheism. However, the materialism in Mormonism and their willingness to conceive of God as a material object makes them very compatible with the materialism of the academy. Mormon belief expresses a very plausible way of holding religion together with current philosophical views of the mind. The universalism, social ethos, and relation of church and state are also, I suggest, very compatible with contemporary liberalism.

Consequently, it may not really be asking a lot for a modern person to become a Mormon. Mormonism has a cultural advantage in holding a modern view of life and potentially satisfying postmodern longings for spirituality. In confronting the success of Mormonism, evangelicals must tackle these fronts—the philosophical and cultural fronts—as well.

John Hartung
Syracuse, N.Y.

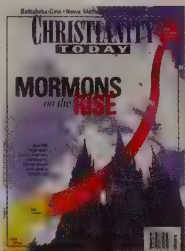
Hooray for the Southern Baptists! I wish the rest of us had had the courage and compassion to go to Salt Lake City for our annual meetings. Maybe some will in the years to come. My thanks to the SBC!

Mike Jaskilka
Eugene, Oreg.

After studying growth statistics in *Operation World*, I have regretfully observed that the Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses are rapidly outpacing the Muslims and Christians around the world. What is causing this? I believe the Christian faith community is not adequately educating our members (like the Mormon indoctrination). Can you imagine how Christianity would effectively grow if our young people were required to serve two years on the mission field (here or

abroad)? The zeal of the Mormons is taking away our thunder! Let's follow our eternal Savior, Jesus Christ, who not only died for our personal sins, but also rose from death to save us from these sins. No other cult leader (Joseph Smith included) can ever hold a candle to the power of Christ. I challenge our churches to train soldiers for Christ.

Dale A. Nyberg
DePere, Wis.



Mormons believe: "what God has said to apostles and prophets in the past is always secondary to what God is saying directly to the apostles and prophets now" (CT, June 15, p. 30). In a way, the Mormons have one up on other Christians. But it is God's style today which is secondary to

yesterday. For yesterday and today and forever, the Word of God is relevant. Jesus would be rolling over in his grave, if he were still in it, by the way Scripture "soundeth" so foolish. (Consistently speaketh thou like this for a few months/years and you will see how foolish this bad habit is.)

Mark R. Henninger
Trexlerstown, Pa.

Not-So-Strange Bedfellows?

In his review of John Shelby Spong's newest book, *Why Christianity Must Change or Die* [Books, June 15], Michael G. Maudlin raises what is perhaps an unintended issue. In the review, he juxtaposes a choice for Bill Hybels's "seeker sensitive" worship style with John Spong's skeptic-sensitive version of Judeo-Christian Faith. Is it merely an accident that these two come up in the same illustration?

It could be argued that since both Spong and Hybels seem to perceive the "felt needs" and present experiences of people to be the determining factor in the church's outreach, then perhaps the two deserve each other's company. Perhaps Schleiermacher is the proud grandfather of both perspectives. Could it not be argued that Hybels's appeal to "felt needs" might eventually lead an individual to Spong's *reductio absurdum* of the old "I theology"?

Pastor Lawrence L. Isbell
Rensselaer County Lutheran Parish
East Schodack, N.Y.

Maudlin's review uses valuable space to imply that since Bill Hybels has his 15,000 and Spong has a shrinking dio-

cese, Hybels must be right. While Spong by any measure is a heretic, the use of numbers and "success" to help refute him is troubling—especially when this review appears in an issue of CT with a cover showing "Mormons on the Rise." Many Mormons, no doubt, are comforted into believing Mormonism is true because it is bringing aid and comfort to many of the unchurched Sallys Maudlin writes about. Numbers and success were on the side of the fourth-century Arian heretics. Yet "success" seems to be the apologia du jour for many American Christians today. "Successful" Christians today may actually help breed the Spongs of tomorrow by their abandonment or relativizing of doctrines now held only by "fundamentalists." American Christianity must change in this regard or die, eventually.

James M. Kushiner
Chicago, Ill.

Theft by Consent

Your editorial ["Gambling with the Enemy"] and feature article ["None Dare Call It Sin," May 18] on gambling address three major concerns facing Christians in responding to the prevalent climate of moral lawlessness in our culture.

1. Many Christians are as likely as our unbelieving neighbors to fall for the deception of gambling as one of many forms of immediate self-gratification or get-rich-quick schemes. While acknowledging the theoretical validity of the tenth commandment (you shall not covet), we are reluctant to challenge the something-for-nothing mentality that pervades the gambling ethos (and many other areas of economic activity) either as a matter of morality or prudence.

2. Most Christians are unable to articulate ideas of public morality in ways that identify obedience to scriptural teachings with the well-being of our neighbors or our communities. Most of us would acknowledge that good laws are intended to promote the public good—whether in protecting public health or promoting honesty in business dealings. Yet we tend to ignore the fact that the gambling industry is based on theft by consent—aided and abetted by governments who seek to profit from the weaknesses of their citizens.

3. Many Christians and Christian churches preach a gospel of salvation and/or personal peace unconnected to the Savior's command to love our neighbors—in tangible as well as spiritual ways. If we are indifferent to the suffering and loss creat-

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ed by the gambling industry and its political sponsors, then we will pass along to our children communities that have been morally, socially, and economically impoverished as a result. Just as important, we will have to answer to God for our own indifference.

These principles can also apply to our attitudes to many of the other social evils which beset our communities. But if we are committed to loving and working with our neighbors and not just preaching at them, communities all over Canada and the United States have shown that Christians can make a constructive difference.

*Geoffrey E. Hale
London, Ont., Canada*

After three years of right-to-life work in the Reno area (the greatest moral issue of our nation's history), I concluded that evangelicals really couldn't care less. The system works for them. Like me, they are middle class and prosperous. Few have ever suffered oppression or hardship. If they get involved, it would take effort and the authorities might come and take their place.

Evangelicals draw their lines of protection too close to their own front door. Abortions happen to other people. It doesn't affect us. Gambling is for other people. We can't see how it will affect us. We'll always deal with it too late—when it is so widespread and hits our front door.

This is symptomatic of our prosperous evangelical culture. Why should CT be so surprised that gambling has taken over communities in the Bible Belt? Why should we be so surprised that this is a surprise to them? They don't even know what's in their own Bibles.

*Pastor Don Nelson
Sparks, Nev.*

Your recent articles on gambling are both relevant and timely. They focused on a very important religious issue of the day; however, as closely as I read these articles and interviews, I did not find a biblical explanation for the case against gambling. It is clear that gambling takes a toll on our families and society; but if we are going to make a moral argument, we need to base our reasoning on the Bible.

*A. Vincent Siciliano
San Diego, Calif.*

The spectacle of Christians who have lived for years below the poverty line,



"When my daughter said she was marrying a small group leader, I really had something else in mind."

being attracted by lucrative jobs in the gambling industry is not so surprising. If wealthier Christians saw it as their ministry to follow the example of the early church by establishing labor-intensive industries to employ their poorer brothers and sisters in the faith, their example would go a long way toward reducing the fatal attraction presented by jobs in casinos.

*Gerald Wright
Cambridge, Ont., Canada*

An Ideal Sinner

I found the late hit on former Colorado coach Bill McCartney by jocular journalist and judge Phyllis E. Alsdurf to be a blend of amusement and amazement ["McCartney on the Rebound," May 18]. I don't recall reading or hearing anywhere that McCartney ever professed perfection or its approximation. My read on McCartney is that he has publicly professed specific identifiable sins, a fact that places him far ahead of the priapic president of the United States—not to mention Alsdurf herself or even me. One is forced to wonder what Alsdurf's ideal penitent alcoholic and adulterer would be. While I would agree that forsaking the glories of football, fabulous *femme fatales*, and \$350,000 a year to spend more time with his wife is not a living end in reformation repentance, it ain't really a bad spiritual preseason.

McCartney strikes me as one of Martin Luther's ideal sinners. And just think, if this old hypocrite can get grown men to stop their drinking and doinking in his current condition, think how God might be able to use him when he gets serious about his faith!

*James Lutzweiler
Jamestown, N.C.*

Christianity today is tragically and realistically portrayed in your cover article on Bill McCartney. A seven-year-old boy bargains with his god for a wallet and is

increasingly convinced this is the best way to stop smoking, drinking, fornication, racism, and so on.

Evangelical leadership shows little interest in teaching McCartney that his "zeal for God is not based on knowledge" (Rom. 10:2). Instead, they join him in the stadium crying out as did the Israelites: "We will obey" (Exod. 24:7).

Is not Scripture painfully clear in revealing to us that we have neither obeyed nor kept our promises? Surely the visible church is being given a veil

of deception because they do not love that Truth, nor do they really love that one and only Promise Keeper who came to die because of our wretched failure.

*Carol K. Tharp
Winnetka, Ill.*

I was at the Detroit Promise Keepers with more than 70,000 men, and I too was very surprised that less than 1 percent were black. The ones we have to fear are the non-churchgoers, whether black or white.

Perhaps if we visited one another's church more, the black preacher would come off his political agenda with habitual cries of discrimination, and the whites would get rid of their racist suspicions in their antiseptic surroundings.

*Paul L. Liberty
Toledo, Ohio*

It is more the *approach to reconciliation* than the *need for reconciliation* that invokes my lack of enthusiasm. We need be sensitized to current and future opportunities to live and work in harmony and share each other's burdens in Christian love. Promise Keepers could lead by suggesting promises we should consider, make, and live so that reconciliation becomes the natural outcome. Hope they fine-tune the subject.

*David C. Horneys
Mt. Prospect, Ill.*

Loving the Colombians

I read the article "Colombia's Bleeding Church" just days after returning from the funeral of my sister's husband, Charles Hood. Charley and Becky, along with their two children have been International Mission Board (SBC) missionaries to Bogotá, Colombia for ten years. Charley was struck down by an assassin's bullet on April 21 [CT, June 15, 1998, p. 19].

While the article was particularly poignant for me in light of the tragic circumstances, it brought to mind the reason

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Charley and all other missionaries are there in the first place: They love the people.

My initial reaction to Charley's death was shock mixed with bitterness and resentment against a nation of people whose violent culture would allow this to happen and a hapless military government that seems paralyzed to change it. But, as my sister gently reminded us, "It was not a Colombian who shot Charley, it was a human being who happened to live in Colombia."

Gary Harvey
Cookeville, Tenn.

Understanding Wolf-Spector

■ I believe there is a critical misunderstanding about the Wolf-Spector Bill on religious persecution (May 18).

Wolf-Spector does not allow someone who merely claims to be a member of a persecuted group to enter the U.S. immediately, as James Robb suggests. In 1996, Congress passed an "expedited removal" law that allows the INS to immediately turn back asylum-seekers if they are not able to make a credible claim of fear on the spot. What Wolf-Spector does is recognize that asylum-seekers are often traumatized by the persecution they have just been through (often at the hands of their government officials), and have difficulty expressing their fear to uniformed government officials as soon as they arrive. The bill does not allow such a person access to the U.S., but merely guarantees that if they belong to a persecuted group (as identified by the State Department), they will be allowed to apply for asylum.

More disturbing is Robb's prediction that this asylum provision will empty many Middle Eastern countries of Christians in a few decades. The implication is that Christians suffering persecution should stay where they are and not flee. Those of us who enjoy religious freedom in this country should not presume to know what is best for our brothers and sisters suffering persecution at the hands of intolerant regimes. With 50 years of experience in refugee assistance and as the only evangelical agency authorized by the State Department to resettle refugees in this country, World Relief believes the decision to flee ought to be made by those suffering persecution. Wolf-Spector gives them the opportunity to at least ask for asylum.

Lonni Jackson
World Relief
Alexandria, Va.

Where Are the Women?

■ I am amazed! Not one of 1998's best books was authored by a woman ["1998

Book Awards, Apr. 27]—a significant, though not very positive, observation. I could conclude that women don't write, or maybe they don't write in a valuable way. But recently I've noticed that a high percentage of CT's articles—and some outstanding ones at that—have been written by women. So maybe women just don't write worthy books. I wonder how many of the 200 nominated books were written by women. I also wonder how many ballots were sent to women. Lastly, I wonder why the book review editor didn't notice that the absence of the female voice was an additional weakness to the weaknesses he already identified in this year's book list.

Scottie May
West Chicago, Ill.

God's Answer to Prayer Life

With regard to the article "The Myth of a Better Prayer Life," by Susan Wise Bauer [Apr. 27]: Why do we always think we are going to find the answers in books written by man, when God has written his own Book, and all the answers are there? I've told people that prayer is hard work for me. It's a struggle. And I've been piously told that it shouldn't be like that. So I was excited to read once that C. S. Lewis felt the same way about prayer. But the wonderful thing is, God created us as very unique creatures, and we need to respond to him in our own ways—through our own personalities—and how it is most meaningful to us. We don't need books. He's given us the ultimate—his own Word.

Nancy Holmstrom
Gladstone, Mich.

■ Bauer stopped one short in her search for a good book on prayer. *Creative Prayer*, by Brigid E. Herman, was written at the turn of the century and recently republished by Paraclete Press. It's the best I've read since *Prayer*, by O. Hallesby. The emphasis is on God, not me, nor about power nor getting what I want, but about deepening my relationship with God.

Bernice Karnop
Great Falls, Mont.

More Agreement Than Exists?

"The Gift of Salvation" [Dec. 8, 1997] was supposed to clarify deficiencies of the original statement [from Evangelicals and Catholics Together] on the issue of justification. Instead, it appears that we have another ambiguous document, requiring subsequent "clarifying" statements from various signers that contradict each other. To illustrate, one needs only to read the article in the April 27 issue of CT that

quoted Jesuit scholar Avery Dulles as saying "The Gift of Salvation" is true to the Council of Trent. In the same issue of CT, Timothy George, J. I. Packer, and Thomas Oden issued an open letter stating that "The Gift of Salvation" confirmed the Reformation doctrine of justification by faith alone. I fail to understand how the statement can do both.

Meaningful analysis and discussion among evangelicals on the issue of justification by faith alone and its importance relative to the message of the gospel is sorely needed. While the "Gift of Salvation" has the appearance of supporting the doctrine of "justification by faith alone," it readily admits that it does not address the necessarily related issues of merit, works, the sacrament of penitence, purgatory, and so on. Additionally, based on the comment noted above from Avery Dulles, I am led to believe that its wording has been carefully crafted such that most readers will be given the impression that there is more agreement than actually exists. Thus, I am convinced that this statement will confuse its readers as to what issues are essential to the gospel. That is a dangerous effect.

Gary G. Nichols
Trussville, Ala.

Although there is reason to be thankful that a segment of Roman Catholics believe the "biblical teaching . . . that salvation or justification is on condition of faith and only faith," it hardly seems reasonable, logical, or wise to speak of ECT when relatively few Catholics adhere to things that are supposed to bring evangelicals and Catholics "together."

Better would it be to speak of and work for ET! This would open the door for "evangelicals" not only in the Roman Catholic and Protestant traditions to be together, but also for evangelicals in the Russian Orthodox and Greek Orthodox churches as well as evangelicals in other church bodies to join hand and heart on the foundation of a basic biblical and evangelical doctrine.

Ralph H. Isensee
Vancouver, Wash.

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SEXUAL ABUSE

Church Nearly Closed After Lawsuit

Redeemer Lutheran church in Duluth, Minnesota, will not have to sell its building to satisfy a civil lawsuit judgment awarded to a former member for sexual abuse committed by a former pastor.

In April 1994, a Duluth jury found Redeemer, its leaders, and former pastor Daniel Reeb liable for sexual abuse that David Samarzia suffered from the ages of 11 to 14 in the late 1960s. The Minnesota Court of Appeals and the Minnesota Supreme Court upheld Samarzia's \$644,000 award.

Samarzia, now 44, says he began drinking and attempted suicide before getting

counseling that helped him understand how he had been victimized. He sued in 1991.



Praying precedes paying: Before the auction, Graeme Wick, a 44-year Redeemer Lutheran member, tacks up a prayer outside the church asking God for strength and understanding.

Reeb, 63, served as pastor of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod congregation from 1961 to 1979. Three other men abused by Reeb filed suit after Samarzia and settled out of court with the church's insurance

company. By then the statutory period for criminal charges had expired. Reeb was fired as pastor of a church in the Bahamas in 1994 after the Samarzia verdict.

An auction of the contents of the church had been set for late May to satisfy the judgment, but Samarzia offered to stop the process and halve the amount owed if the church apologized.

Samarzia let the church keep the contents after an apology.

The church's insurance company paid \$215,000 to Samarzia, who accepted a promise by the 80-member congregation to pay him a reduced judgment of \$204,000. Of that total, an anonymous donor pledged \$100,000 to help keep the church open.

By Willmar Thorkelson.

Market Gobbles Up Veggie Tales

Bob the Tomato and Larry the Cucumber, the computer-animated stars of the Veggie Tales children's video series, have sold 3 million units with titles such as *Josh and the Big Wall* and *Rack, Shack, & Benny* since their 1993 debut.

Bob and Larry have also spawned a merchandising explosion. Their colorful images now appear on hats, neckties, games, puzzles, and stationery.

Two "Veggie Tales" episodes are now selling in general merchandise outlets such as Wal-Mart, Kmart, and Target and have become two of the nation's ten bestselling children's videos. In May, *Where's God When I'm Scared?* climbed ahead of all other children's videos except Sesame Street's *Elmopalooza*. 

URBAN MINISTRY

One-Year Mission Changes Lives

Young graduates from high school and college are giving one year of their time to urban mission through a new program.

The Philadelphia-based Evangelical Association for the Promotion of Education operates Kingdomworks, which is completing its inaugural "Mission Year" program for urban missionaries between the ages of 18 and 29. The organization is led by sociologist Tony Campolo.

Since September, 15 missionaries have served in Philadelphia and 13 in Oakland, California. They live together—usually in teams of five—and work under the tutelage of an established urban church. Missionaries raise \$500 in

monthly support, with the ministry giving an additional \$200.

At least 8 hours a week, they work in church programs, at least 10 hours in evangelistic outreach and visitation, and at least 12 hours in community service under the auspices of an organization they choose based on their interests and abilities. Mission Year workers are teaching computer classes, leading prison Bible studies, painting murals to beautify inner-city neighborhoods, and instructing young people about job skills. They work closely with church members so that the programs and services can continue well after the missionaries leave.

"This is a far better design than a summer program," says

Vince Coles, youth minister at the mostly black, 2,700-member Mount Carmel Baptist Church in West Philadelphia, host to five missionaries. "When someone is here for just the summer, the programs they start usually leave when they leave." The goal of Mission Year, however, is not just to change urban dwellers for a year, but to change young men and women for a lifetime. Mission Year National Director Cindy Lee Hauger says, "Wherever they go, these people will understand urban reality in a new way."

Missionary Betsy Vanderhaagen, 23, had planned to attend Princeton Seminary



Learning experience: Betsy Vanderhaagen teaches third graders at Timothy Academy in North Philadelphia.

after graduating from Calvin College last year. She will follow through with those plans this fall, but a year's missionary experience has reshaped her thinking. "This program has caused me to examine all aspects of my life," Vanderhaagen says. "I've learned to live in community, to love others, to live with less, and to trust God more."

By Randy Frame in Philadelphia.



DAVID SKIDMORE

Communion seekers: ELCA Presiding Bishop H. George Anderson (left) confers with Martin Marty and Episcopal Bishop Herbert Donovan at a meeting in Chicago.

Lutherans, Episcopalians Revive Talks

In a new step toward the "ecumenical opportunity of the century," the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) has released a revised proposal calling for full communion with the Episcopal Church.

Emphasizing unity but not merger, "Called to Common Mission" replaces the Concordat of Agreement (CT, Apr. 7, 1997, p. 55), a document narrowly defeated by the ELCA last year (CT, Oct. 6, 1997, p. 61).

The revised draft affirms

the "historic episcopate," acknowledging the apostolic succession of bishops as a link to the early Christian church.

Unlike the concordat, the new proposal eliminates the mandate that three Episcopal bishops participate in the ordination of Lutheran bishops, but it keeps the requirement that only bishops can ordain pastors.

Currently, a Lutheran bishop can authorize a pastor to perform the installation and consecration. CT

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

House Rejects Prayer Amendment

The Religious Freedom Amendment, sponsored by Rep. Ernest Istook (R.-Okla.), lost 224 to 203 in a House vote on June 4, 61 votes short of the two-thirds majority needed to pass. The proposed measure, supported by 197 Republicans and 27 Democrats, would have allowed religious expression in schools, including organized prayers (CT, Apr. 27, 1998, p. 15).

Opponents say it politicizes religion, allowing majority faiths to rule. "It should have been called the 'Religious Tyranny Amendment,'" says James Dunn, executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee. "We'd have Mormon prayers in Utah, Baptist pray-

ers in Atlanta, Buddhist prayers in Hawaii, and Islamic prayers in south Bronx."

Some critics view the vote as a lobbying tactic by the Christian Coalition to obtain a voting record for their 45 million voter guides to be distributed this fall. Lawmakers who voted against the measure will be listed unfairly as against God and prayer, says Dunn.

Christian Coalition executive director Randy Tate says the vote is a "launching pad" for future legislative efforts to protect religious liberty. "Prayer and the expression of one's faith is part of the solution, not the problem."

By Christy Gardner.

News Briefs

◆ **Priscilla Deters** was sentenced to eleven years and three months in federal prison on May 22 following her conviction on wire- and mail-fraud charges. Deters had been found guilty in a church-fraud scheme that took more than \$6 million from victims, principally members of evangelical Friends and Nazarene churches in 21 states (CT, Apr. 27, 1998, p. 19). Judge Monti Belot pronounced the maximum sentence allowed by law. "There's nothing lower in my opinion than people who use religion to cheat other people," Belot said.

◆ Detroit lawyer and entrepreneur Mike Timmis is the new chair of **Prison Fellowship International**, the world's largest volunteer criminal-justice ministry. Timmis, a 58-year-old Roman Catholic, cofounded the Talon Corporation, a holding company. He will coordinate Prison Fellowship activities in 83 countries. He replaces founder Charles Colson, 66, who remains on the Prison Fellowship International board and will still be chair of the U.S.-based Prison Fellowship Ministries. "I have never met a man with a greater passion to win people to Jesus," Colson says of Timmis.

◆ Last month, the largest U.S. Christian retail chain, **Family Christian Stores**, based in Grand Rapids, Michigan, completed the purchase of the 56-store Joshua's Christian Stores retail chain, based in Fort Worth. Family Christian Stores, which now has 270 stores in 35 states, recorded sales of \$168 million last year.

◆ Sue Misheff, 47, a tenured assistant professor of English at **Malone College** in Canton, Ohio, has agreed to resign because of her conversion to Judaism. Misheff, a former Methodist, began teaching at Malone in 1989. She had signed the school's statement of faith requiring her to "recognize Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior." The college has agreed to a severance package of one year's salary and full benefits.

◆ **Campus Crusade for Christ** is proceeding with the construction of a \$48 million World Center in Orlando, Florida, (CT, Oct. 6, 1997, p. 84) despite the withdrawal of a pledge of \$5 million from an anonymous donor. Spokesperson Jay Berlinsky says Campus Crusade is "confident that our many friends around the world will assist us in the completion" of the new headquarters.

◆ **STOPP International**, founded by Jim Sedlak in 1986 to counter the activities of Planned Parenthood, has become part of **American Life League (ALL)**, a pro-life organization. Sedlak becomes ALL's vice president of public policy and education.

◆ **George Fox University** president Edward Stevens died May 21 at age 57. He had been on medical leave after suffering a stroke caused by a cancerous brain tumor (CT, Dec. 8, 1997, p. 63). During Stevens's 14 years as president, the enrollment of the school in Newberg, Oregon, more than quadrupled to 2,225 students. It became a university in 1996 by merging with Western Evangelical Seminary.

◆ Paul Risser, 59, is the new president of the **International Church of the Foursquare Gospel**. Risser succeeds John Holland, 64, who resigned in July 1997. The denomination, founded by Aimee Semple McPherson in 1927, has more than 2.2 million members in 91 countries. CT



Timmis



Stevens



Risser

Persecution Propaganda?

U.S. team finds that Arab Christians are subject to discrimination, but not life-threatening persecution.

Recent reports from the Israeli government and news media say the Palestinian National Authority (PA) and Muslim extremists are targeting Arab Christians for discrimination and persecution.

Yet a group of Christian leaders who completed an inquiry into religious persecution in the West Bank and Gaza say the charges are false, representing an attempt to sow division among Christians and Muslims who live in PA-controlled areas.

Uri Mor, director of the Israeli Ministry of Religious Affairs in the Department for Christian Communities, is adamant that Muslims are persecuting Christians. "It's a matter of fact," he says. To document the reports of persecution, Israeli television in May ran a special on Muslim persecution of Christians.

Two Christian Zionist organizations in Jerusalem have backed up Mor's assessment. Clarence Wagner, president of Bridges for Peace, says the PA is largely responsible for growing persecution, primarily targeted at Christian converts from Islam.

A recent article in *Middle East Digest*, a publication of the International Christian Embassy-Jerusalem (ICEJ), tells about Muslim converts to Christianity who have

been persecuted for their faith and are frightened to return home under PA rule. The article quotes Yassir Arafat's legal adviser Ziad abu Ziad as saying Muslims



Cultural exchange: Brother Andrew (left) hears a report from Emil Salayta.

who publicly convert and refuse to return to Islam violate their religion and are at risk of execution. Representatives from ICEJ say that the PA, as a Muslim government, has ordered the execution of converts to Christianity. But no such executions are known to have occurred.

AMERICANS INVESTIGATE: In May, a group of Americans, associated with Open Doors with Brother Andrew and Evangelicals for Middle East Understanding (EMEUE), toured the West Bank, Gaza,

and Israel to investigate the charges.

After meetings with more than 15 Palestinian Christian leaders, they found no evidence to substantiate claims of systematic persecution.

"If Christians are being persecuted for their faith, then we wanted to document it and do all we could to stop it," says Donald Wagner, executive director of EMEUE. "What we found instead was an intense desire for harmony among both Christians and Muslims from Galilee to Gaza. There is a handful of very isolated, personal incidents, but no indication of an anti-Christian tide rising."

"There is no persecution," says Jiryus Khouri, mayor of the Christian village Fasula. "But there is real tension between Christians, Muslims, and Jews." Reports distributed recently by the Palestinian Human Rights Monitor and LAW—the Palestinian Society for the Protection of Human Rights and the Environment—reached similar conclusions.

CULTURAL CONDITIONING? Human-rights lawyer Jonathan Kuttub told the team from EMEUE and Open Doors that religion in the Middle East has strong tribal and ethnic components. By law, residents are born into the religion of their parents. Conversion and proselytizing are widely discouraged.

Emil Salayta, a Latin Catholic priest in the West Bank village of Bir Zeit, explains that the family considers it an insult when one of their own converts. "It's family honor," he says. Christians who convert to Islam may be harassed or abused by their Christian family. The Qur'an says converts

New Bill Threatens Freedom of Speech, Religion

The battle for religious freedom in Israel is heating up again—and the stakes are higher. Israeli believers barely had time to sigh in relief over the apparent demise of one "antimissionary" bill (CT, May 18, 1998, p. 22) before another, far more punitive bill was introduced—this time with the initial support of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his cabinet.

The current round began in January 1997 when an antimissionary bill was introduced in the Knesset that would have made publishing, possessing, or distributing "missionary materials" a crime, punishable by up to a year in prison. Although similar bills had been introduced in the past by ultra-Orthodox members of the Knesset (MKs), they were generally considered to have little chance of passing. But this bill was different: it was cosponsored by MK Nissim Zivli of the Left-leaning Labor party and sailed through its first Knesset reading with a comfortable bipartisan majority.

Israeli believers breathed a sigh of relief when Zivli withdrew his support for the bill in response to continued protests from around the world. But the celebrations were premature: within three weeks, a new antimissionary bill was introduced by MK Raphael Pinchasi of the Orthodox Shas party. To the dismay of the bill's opponents, the entire cabinet—including Netanyahu—voted for the bill, which provides for a maximum three-year prison term or \$13,800 fine for offenders, in its first reading.

Reaction has been swift, both in Israel and abroad. Chuck Kopp, president of the United Council of Churches in Israel, called Netanyahu's vote "absolutely contrary to his written commitment to Christian leaders that he would oppose such legislation." During the controversy over the earlier bill, Netanyahu stressed that it did not have the support of his government, and he would work against any such legislation.

By S. Aaron Osborne in Jerusalem.

should be executed, Salayta points out, but that is not happening. "There is no organized religious persecution in this country," he says. "I was shocked to hear about the PA's [reported] persecution of Christians. It is not a fact."

The investigation by LAW, a group often critical of the PA, uncovered "no evidence of systematic persecution, or even of a general hostility toward Christians on the part of the Palestinian Authority." LAW found a group of "marginalized, troubled people, with various pre-existing problems within their various communities, with no evidence that their problems with local security services were based solely upon their faith, or that they suffered from an overall policy of persecution for their faith."

Khader Shkenat, director of the Palestinian Society for the Protection of Human Rights, says his own research led him to similar conclusions. Christians may suffer mistreatment for nonreligious reasons. Although the PA has committed human-rights violations, LAW could find no overt campaign by the PA to abuse Christians or Christian converts.

The LAW report concludes: "Claims of persecutions, couched as they are in the terminology of human rights, have gained a currency in Israel and abroad that outweighs the evidence that supports them."

COOPERATION DESPITE TENSION:

Regardless of actual cases of harassment and abuse, Palestinian Christians are eager to share examples of Muslim-Christian cooperation. Elias Chacour, a Melkite Catholic priest, says his Prophet Elias School in Galilee, where nearly 3,000 Muslims, Christians, and Jews learn together, demonstrates that peaceful cooperation can be a reality.

In Gaza, Manuel Musallam, a Latin priest, says that both Christian and Muslim Palestinians are on the same side in the struggle for "our existence in the land."

In one area of Gaza, an Orthodox church and mosque share the same wall. "We are like brothers," Maher Ayad, a Baptist pastor in Gaza, says of Christians and Muslims. "We live in the same land."

Palestinian Christian Claudette Habesch agrees. "We are one people," she says. "We share joys. We share suffering."

Many Arab Christians in the West Bank strongly assert that their main concern at present is the lack of progress in the peace talks with Israel and the day-to-day hardships they experience in having poor access to quality employment, education, and health care.

By Peri Stone in Jerusalem.

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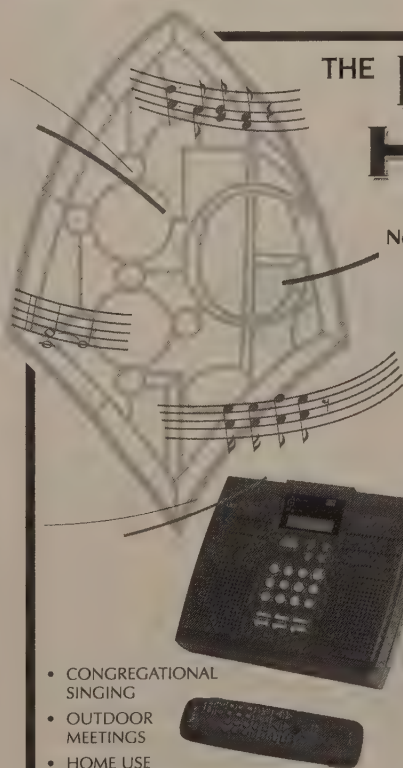
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Increasing evidence that faith and prayer help patients heal is encouraging a once unimaginable partnership between medical science and religion.

As the nation flirts with alternative cures—from herbs to tai chi—doctors, scientists, and clergy are exploring how religion and spirituality facilitate physical health and emotional well-being. Influential people and institutions are studying connections between the two in a trend dating back more than a decade. What is changing, the experts say, is that clinical findings are finally being shared with family physicians and local pastors.

"For a long time, we've been exploring and researching the relationship between belief and healing as a complement, not an alternative, to traditional medicine," says Herbert Benson, director of the Spirituality and Healing in Medicine course. The course, offered at a regional three-day conference sponsored by Harvard Medical School's Department of Continuing Education, recently attracted more than 600 doctors, nurses, psychologists, and social workers to the Institute of Religion at Houston's Texas Medical Center. They came for training in how spirituality shapes general health and the ability to recover from serious illness.

In this, the fourth year of such regional seminars, it is clear there is a growing emphasis on listening to—and understanding—a patient's faith as a significant factor in a person's healing. As physicians have discovered the healing power of prayer (CT, Jan. 6, 1997, p. 20), more than thirty of the nation's top medical schools now offer teaching programs on the subject, compared to only three in 1993.

TREATING THE WHOLE PERSON: That factor underscores a major shift within academic medicine to train doctors in the treatment of "the whole person—body, mind, and spirit," says David Larson, president of the National Institute for Healthcare Research.

Working with the John Templeton Foundation, the institute last summer announced that eight medical schools had been granted funds to study how social and religious factors influence mental and physical health. The intersection of faith and medicine is one of the key concerns of the foundation, founded in 1997.

"People's faith has a very strong influence over their well-being, their willingness to fight disease, and their ability to get well," says pediatric surgeon John Templeton, Jr., the foundation's president and son of its founder. He emphasizes that, until recently, the medical community too often overlooked faith's role in health.

"Most physicians have been trained primarily in empirical science, chemical formulas, and surgical technique," Templeton says. "In the process, we have created a great divide. We separated the mind from the body. As a result, in some cases, we have lost touch with our patients."

New clinical studies support Templeton's and Larson's contentions. Advocates say they provide more than anecdotal evidence that faith plays a major role in physical health.

Religious leaders insist medicine is finally returning to faith, once its partner in healing. They point to the biblical tradition in which Jesus and his apostles laid hands on the infirm and to the church's tradition of healing by faith.

GETTING THE MESSAGE: The nation's medical schools and its physicians may finally be listening. Two recent surveys of health professionals found 99 percent of family physicians and 94 percent of executives with health maintenance organizations believe that spiritual practices including prayer and meditation accelerate healing.

More than half the doctors surveyed reported they now weave relaxation and meditation—or what scholars call mind/body techniques—into a balanced program for their patients.

While it remains unclear whether all the discussion will translate into ongoing change in general medical practice, the Harvard-sponsored conferences are but one facet of a growing movement to bridge the gap between the pew and the operating room. Some techniques are questionable, but many leading advocates come from traditional medical backgrounds.

Benson believes the results have far-reaching implications, because incorporating belief and spirituality into modern medicine "has the potential to reduce the cost of health care for individuals and society."

By Cecile S. Holmes in Houston.

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NORTHERN IRELAND

Vote for Peace No Panacea

Despite the overwhelming vote in favor of the peace agreement in Northern Ireland on May 22, many problems remain. Religious leaders are concerned about issues such as the decommissioning of arms, the release of paramilitary prisoners, and the marching season.

All the main churches in northern and southern Ireland supported the peace agreement. Overall, 94 percent of the voters in the south approved the plan along with 71 percent in the north.

Belfast pastors Ken Newell of Fitzroy Presbyterian Church and Charles Kenny of Saint Ann's Anglican Cathedral organized 150 clergy in supporting the referendum. "The

agreement offers an opportunity for a new beginning for our society," the clergy said.

"It's a resurrection day for the community after 30 years of suffering and crucifixion," Newell said of the vote's outcome.

But Newell and other leaders warn that the path ahead will not be easy even though there is a desire for healing. "It's difficult after being divided for 300 years to make decisions on a cross-community basis," he says.

Catholic Tom Kelly, a former Irish Republican Army terrorist, hopes to help in the rebuilding process by holding meetings with Protestant Jim Tate, a former Ulster Volunteer Force paramilitary. "There's a



Landmark vote: Sinn Féin leader Gerry Adams goes to cast his ballot in Belfast.

recognition even in the major paramilitary organizations that nobody was going to win," Kelly says.

Still, David Porter, director of Evangelical Contribution on Northern Ireland, says voting on the agreement is not the same as the will to make peace. "You are not going to move from suspicion to trust in one vote," Porter says. "There is a lot of potential for breakdown." Among the most potentially divisive issues is the marching

season, which normally starts in mid-June, ending in July. These historic Protestant parades have triggered violence in the past, especially when Protestant groups marched through Catholic areas.

"If trust can't be built, then the political structures in the agreement won't work," Porter says. "I see the future as a very long, difficult road to find a way for people to live together."

By Mary Cagney.

INDONESIA

Riots Traumatize Chinese Christians

Terrified by May riots in the capital, Jakarta, that left nearly 2,000 dead and more than 4,000 shops and homes looted or burned, Indonesia's 3 million ethnic Chinese Christians remain traumatized and ready to flee if the situation worsens.

Iman Santoso, leader of a national prayer network, warns that "Chinese, including Christians, feel angry,

violated, and betrayed by the recent events, but the church is uniting through the suffering, and we must get ready for more persecutions ahead."

Protesters calling for the resignation of President Suharto (who stepped down May 21) began to blame the economic woes of the country on the Chinese, who form only 3 percent of

Indonesia's 200 million people but are disproportionately successful. "We were made the scapegoats," says Christian and Missionary Alliance pastor Hardi Farianto, who saw 10 percent of his 300-member congregation flee.

The rioters were thorough. "They took everything, right down to our knives, forks, and spoons," says one Chinese Christian.

They were also cruel. The human-rights commission has documented more than 100 cases of rape and sexual assault of Chinese females ranging from ages 10 to 55 during the height of the riots May 13-15 in Jakarta. Some women who had been repeatedly gang-raped were thrown into burning buildings that had been set afire by gasoline. Other women, humiliated by the attacks in front of their neighbors, committed suicide afterwards.

In the city of Bandung, where no disturbances took

place, Christians marched around the city "erecting a protective wall of prayer," according to local pastor Bambang Widjaja.

Indonesia's 20 million Christians are apprehensive about the future because they are a minority in an overwhelmingly Muslim nation.

Indonesia's new president, B. J. Habibie, and opposition reformist hero Amien Rais have made strongly anti-Christian statements in the past. Christianto Wibisono, a Chinese businessman and lay Christian whose daughter's house burned in the riots, says, "Christians must lobby for principles of nondiscrimination, build alliances with moderate Muslims, and come together in prayer like never before." Otherwise, according to Sularso Sopater, general secretary of the Indonesian Council of Churches, "We will Balkanize like Bosnia."

By Alex Buchan

with Compass Direct in Jakarta.



Looting aftermath: A Chinese Christian in Jakarta weeps over the destruction.

Clinton Names Seiple to New Post

In a White House gathering June 18 of more than 50 religious leaders, President Clinton named former World Vision president Robert A. Seiple to the new post of senior adviser for international religious freedom.

Seiple, who at 55 stepped down last month after 11 years as head of the world's largest privately funded Christian international relief-and-development organization (CT, June 15, 1998, p. 49), will advise the Secretary of State on ways to integrate and implement policies that promote religious freedom into U.S. foreign policy.

Calling the appointment "a victory of great magnitude" for evangelicals, former Nation-

al Association of Evangelicals president Don Argue says it is "a great statement on advocacy for our brothers and sisters in

Christ who are persecuted for their faith."

A member of the State Department's Advisory Committee on Religious Freedom Abroad that proposed the new position, Argue briefed the President on his recent diplomatic trip to

China (see p. 34).

Clinton says the position is designed to "make sure that religious liberty concerns get high and close attention in our foreign policy."

The appointment of Seiple "brings to the attention of world governments that the U.S. is serious about freedom of conscience," says Argue, who attended the ceremony. CT



PERU

Evangelical Released from Prison

Wuille Ruiz Figueroa's long wait for freedom ended June 6 when Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori granted him a full pardon. Ruiz, an evangelical Christian, served more than five years in Lima's maximum security Castro Castro prison (CT, Feb. 9, 1998, p. 94).

Ruiz, a Methodist and law-school graduate, had been arrested in February 1993 for possessing subversive propaganda, an accusation he firmly denied. Six months later, a "faceless" judge found him guilty and sentenced him to 20 years.

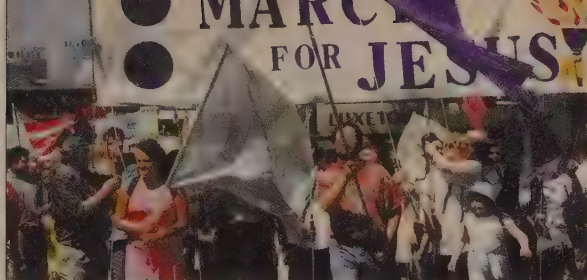
His first action as a free man involved visiting the graves of his mother and mother-in-law, both of whom died during his imprisonment. Ruiz also took a long walk with his daughter, Esteli, who was an infant at the time of his arrest.

Open Doors, a ministry that provides Bibles, training, and encouragement to persecuted Christians, launched several prayer and awareness campaigns for Ruiz, who organized a church inside his cellblock.

Eleven other Christians also received pardons on June 6.

Many Peruvian Christians have become outspoken critics of the Fujimori government's pursuit of terrorists at the expense of constitutionally guaranteed freedoms. According to some estimates, since 1992 Peru's courts have sent more than 4,000 men and women to prison for terrorist crimes. Experts estimate that as many as a quarter of those in prison are innocent of the crimes of which they are accused. About 90 of these prisoners are evangelical Christians.

By Deann Alford.



March for Jesus: Christians take to the street in Greenwich, one of five London marches during the annual event May 30. In all, 10 million Christians around the world marched.

ALBANIA

First Protestant Church Dedicated

The first Protestant church building constructed in Tirana, Albania's capital, is open for services after a joint effort by University Presbyterian Church (UPC) of Seattle, the ICHTHUS congregations of London, and a Swedish mission group.

John Quanrud, the son of a UPC couple, began thinking about Albania while a Bible school student in Sweden in 1981. The fact that Albania's government in 1967 declared the nation officially atheist fascinated Quanrud, and he vowed to do something about it. In 1987, Arthur Beals, UPC's pastor of urban and global mission, offered Quanrud the church's support.

The breakup of Communist rule allowed Quanrud and his wife, Lynne, to move to Albania in 1991. The Quanruds, Beals (who has traveled to

Albania 27 times since 1991), and a handful of Christians began to work in the country. The results include establishing not only Emanuel Church, but the Albanian Bible Institute; an educational project, library, and resource center for Christians; and a missionary school for children.

Emanuel Church is part of a three-level building that will also function as a bakery, providing revenue in the midst of a depressed economy. Albania still has no constitution, little civil order, and a staggering level of unemployment, estimated at upwards of 70 percent. Workers building the foundation of Emanuel Church found themselves ducking ricocheting bullets. There are 8,000 Protestants in the nation of 3.5 million.

By Mike Beeson in Tirana.

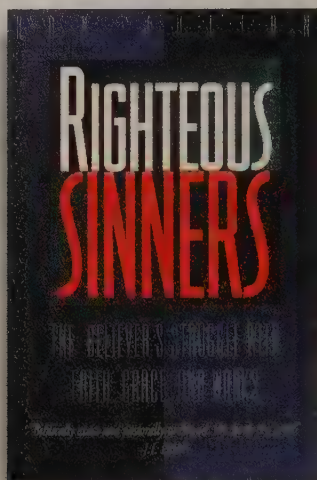
News Briefs

◆ The American Center for Law and Justice has opened a **European Center for Law and Justice**. ECLJ has an office in London and expects to open a branch in Strasbourg, France, in the fall. The European office will have a staff of three people, led by John Warwick Montgomery.

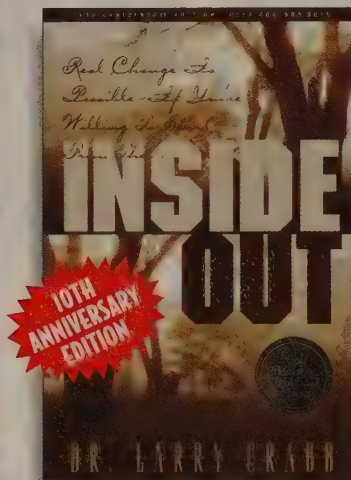
◆ Robert Sayer, 47, is the new U.S. director of **Arab World Ministries** of Upper Darby, Pennsylvania. Sayer replaces Bill Saal, who died of a heart attack in July 1997 at age 49. Founded in 1881 in England, Arab World Ministries has 369 missionaries in 22 countries.

◆ **Christian Solidarity International USA** has ended its 10-year relationship with the Swiss-based Christian Solidarity International and will continue its work as Christian Freedom International. The independent organization will place more of an emphasis on the investigation and disclosure of religious persecution. CT

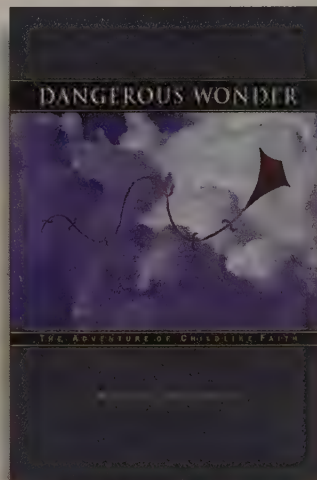
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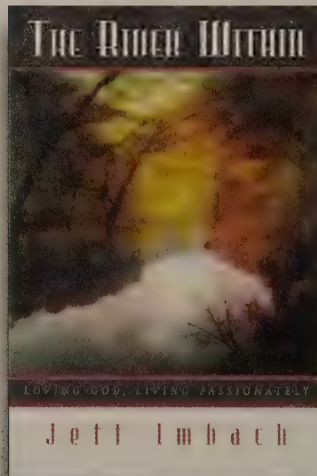
Righteous Sinners examines what genuine faith in Christ looks like and discusses the conflicting teaching that abounds on this issue to help you come to a clearer understanding of what it means to be a "righteous sinner." \$12



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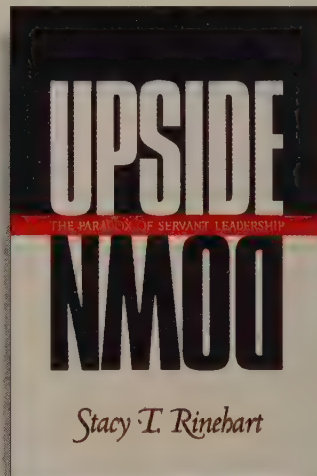
This book bypasses the rules surrounding faith that we've come to accept and examines childlike qualities that should be the characteristics of faith—things like wonder, curiosity, and passion. \$17



 Do you feel burned out or bored when it comes to your Christian walk? *The River Within* will help you regain the passion and excitement of following God. \$15



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Patterson's Election Seals Conservative Control

Two decades ago, conservative activist Paige Patterson began laying the groundwork to gain control of Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) agencies and institutions.

The strategy of Patterson and retired Houston judge Paul Pressler to reshape the 15.9 million-member denomination through presidential appointments has been wildly successful.

Patterson, who last month became the first seminary president to lead the SBC since 1940, told CT the methodology used to wrestle the denomination back may not have been wisest. Nevertheless, he called the battle "an essential and necessary exercise for self-definition." He has no plans to offer an olive branch to those not in his camp.

"Anybody who wants to believe that the Bible is true and is deeply concerned about reaching the world for Christ is going to be increasingly happy in the Southern Baptist Convention," Patterson told CT. "Those with serious questions about the validity and veracity of certain portions of the Word and who do not have a deep commitment to evangelism and missions will be less comfortable with the Southern Baptist Convention of the twenty-first century."

The pursuit of doctrinal uniformity by Southern Baptist leaders has come at a price. Deep fractures within the denomination are still evident.

"The controversy that has been settled at the national level has moved to the state conventions and local congregations," says Bill Leonard, dean of Wake Forest Divinity School. "There are diverse responses at the state level. It's not a slam dunk for either side."

Bitterly fought battles throughout the 1980s spurred disenfranchised Southern Baptists to form a separate yearly Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF) gathering in the 1990s, complete with their own missionaries and chaplains.

Meanwhile, six SBC seminaries, two mission boards, and the presidency are in the hands of what Southern Seminary president R. Albert Mohler, Jr., calls those who are "pure in doctrine."

Patterson, 55, had no opposition in

running for the presidency. In fact, at last month's annual SBC convention in Salt Lake City, registration secretary Lee Porter acclaimed Patterson president without even a show of hands.

Patterson, president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, North Carolina, since 1992, earlier



In Mormon country: Roberts (left) and Patterson talk at the Salt Palace.

served as president of Criswell College and as associate pastor of First Baptist Church in Dallas. Southeastern has grown to 1,705 students from 748 students in his six years there.

Unified, Patterson says, Southern Baptists should now focus on soul winning. But several speakers at the meeting warned the faithful to be vigilant. "The battle for the soul of our denomination, our colleges and seminaries, our churches, even for the Bible itself, will never be over," advised James G. Merritt, chair of the SBC executive committee. "There may be a cease-fire, but . . . we can never let our guard down."

BATTLEGROUND SHIFTS: The 8,586 SBC messengers represented the lowest convention turnout in 47 years, both because of the geographic isolation from the heart of the denomination's base and the lack of major issues at this year's meeting. Much of the business finished earlier than anticipated at the three-day gathering. The now comparatively calm convention will become a two-day annual event next year.

While moderate Southern Baptists largely ignore the national meeting, they are more active at the state level. Moderates are in control of the Texas and Virginia conventions, and conservatives have formed

separate affiliations in those two states. In November, the Texas Baptist Convention is expected to give final passage to a bylaws change that will make it more autonomous and will allow official links with the CBF and the Baptist World Alliance. Baylor University in Waco, Texas, has become a center for moderate Baptists.

MESSAGE TO MORMONS: Weeklong witnessing efforts resulted in more than 1,700 regional residents—most of them without a religious affiliation—making salvation decisions. Baptists staged an aggressive billboard, television, newspaper, and door-to-door witnessing campaign (CT, June 15, 1998, p. 24).

Anticipated fireworks between Latter-day Saints (LDS) residents and SBC visitors did not materialize. In fact, SBC leaders, including Patterson and North American Mission Board Interfaith Witness Division director R. Philip Roberts—who has written two new books on the dangers of Mormonism—had a friendly meeting with LDS leaders before the convention. They affirmed likemindedness on issues such as religious liberty, abortion, and pornography.

"But we are light years apart doctrinally," Patterson said. "I hope a day comes when Mormon friends would say Jesus is the only way to be saved, and by grace alone."

FAMILY VALUES: Messengers approved a statement lauding marriage as "the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime." It is the first amendment to the Baptist Faith and Message, the closest the SBC comes to a creed, in 35 years.

The most controversial section of the statement involved a phrase declaring, "A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ."

The two women—both of them wives of high-profile seminary presidents—on the seven-member panel that devised the statement cited Colossians 3 and 1 Peter 3 as reasons why wives should be submissive.

"As a woman standing under the authority of Scripture, even when it comes to submitting to my husband when I know he's wrong, I just have to do it and then he stands accountable at the judgment," Dorothy Patterson said.

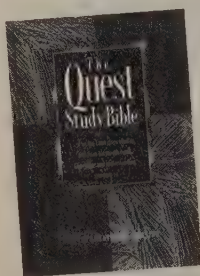
"Submit may be a politically incorrect word," Mary Mohler said. "But it is a biblically correct word, and that's what counts."

By John W. Kennedy in Salt Lake City.

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A global experience: Professors at the conference heard that Christianity is not a modern Western phenomenon.

Scholars Uncovering Church's Hidden History

Church history as taught in American seminaries and church colleges often portrays Christianity as a largely Western religion, which did not become a global faith until the modern missionary movement. "Thus, it appears that it took nineteen hundred years for the Great Commission to be realized," says New York Theological Seminary professor Dale Irvin.

But recently, church scholars and missiologists have more fully realized that the history of the modern missionary movement has largely been told from the perspective of the Western sending churches, which was never the whole story.

In April, 40 scholars and church leaders met at Fuller Theological Seminary in part to recover the hidden histories of Christianity worldwide at the "Christian History in Global Perspective" consultation.

MODERN-DAY PARALLELS: Andrew Walls, former missionary to Sierra Leone and professor emeritus at the University of Edinburgh, says Christianity in its early centuries spread into Europe, Asia, and Africa. Even as a new faith, Christianity had a global reach.

Today, at the brink of a new millennium, Christianity's identity as a Western religion is being challenged and changed as never before. Due to the growth of Christians in the developing world, the church's demographic center of gravity has shifted from the north and west to the south and east: Latin America, Africa, and Asia (CT, May 19, 1997, p. 39). This shift happened quickly, and the church

in the West has hardly begun to grasp this reality, Walls says.

One implication of this reversal is the growing need for new historical perspectives on church growth and missions. Younger churches outside the West are sparking greater interest in a non-Western view of mission history.

Philip Yuen-Sang Leung, historian from the Chinese University of Hong Kong, says that China missions histories "are dominated by missionary heroes, martyrs, the mainline denominations, and the home missions based in Europe and America.

"The role of the Chinese converts and the domestic sociocultural forces in China have not been taken significantly in the history-writing process." He seeks to develop a mission history told from the standpoint of the receiving churches rather than the sending churches.

But Fuller professor Wilbert Shenk believes that two simultaneous and complementary movements are needed. The first will trace the development of a local church and its relationships, both local and global. The second movement will develop a synthesis of many "locals" into global relationship.

Irvin and Pittsburgh Theological Seminary professor Scott Sunquist are working on the kind of local-global synthesis prescribed by Shenk. Irvin and Sunquist, both evangelicals teaching in mainline Protestant seminaries, have been commissioned by Orbis Books, a Catholic publisher, to write a two-volume history of world Christianity. The most important need now is

for textbooks that can be used in places such as Beijing and Bogotá that tell the history of Christianity as a world movement, Sunquist says.

EVANGELICAL GROWTH: The global spread of evangelicalism has become another focus of scholarship. Of the nearly 1.8 billion Christians worldwide, less than half—most of them in non-Western societies—are evangelical.

According to Regent College historian Don Lewis, most evangelicals in the West are unaware that the rapid growth of evangelicalism is in the Two-Thirds World or that it is largely nonwhite, Pentecostal, and non-English-speaking.

To understand this new reality better, Lewis and a corps of evangelical scholars are planning two international gatherings, one at Oxford University in 1999 and another in South Africa in 2001 as part of the "International Project on Evangelicalism and Globalization." The project will examine the past 300 years and eventually produce a textbook on world evangelicalism.

One challenge of developing global church history is garnering the resources for historical research on the local, national, and regional levels among the younger churches outside the West. Training nationals to gather and preserve source materials is critically important.

Sunquist, who formerly taught at Trinity Theological College in Singapore, reported on an experimental program in which Southeast Asian Christians were taught how to write their own local or national histories.

The experiment revealed that Asian Christians do not know much about Christianity outside their own countries. "Such a focus on the history of Christianity within the local political borders denies the ecumenical and transcultural nature of the gospel," Sunquist says. "This narrow focus also ignores the reality that ethnic groups and historical movements cross boundaries."

This effort to rewrite church history in global perspective will focus less on denominations, yet draw together the separate, sometimes intertwined, stories of Eastern Orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism, and Protestantism, along with the indigenous churches. Modern church history, told in global perspective, will also need to give an account of the incredible rise and spread of world Pentecostalism, whose "significance for world Christianity may well be as far-reaching as the Protestant Reformation," says Lewis.

By Richard A. Kauffman in Pasadena.

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Risvolti
Timeless affetti

Journal of Management Studies, 19(1), 67-80.



Investigators charged that Harmon had been defrauding investors and health-plan members since the mid-1980s, taking in millions and shuffling the money among an ever-expanding network of shell companies. When state investigators began looking into his business practices, they quickly realized there was more involved than they could handle and went to federal officials. Ultimately, a multiagency task force was set

up, involving the FBI, the Justice and Labor Departments, the IRS, and state insurance and investment investigators. The probe received its own code name: Operation Island Scam.

LIFE SAVINGS LOST: Harmon was arrested in March 1997 and pleaded guilty to conspiracy and tax fraud last October. At the sentencing hearing in May, victims denounced Harmon and the damage his thefts had done to their retirement hopes. Other victims had already said their piece, including Esther Hardinger of Coldwater, Kansas.

A retired schoolteacher, Hardinger invested with Harmon after her husband's death. She put in her entire savings of \$40,663. "Because of him, I lost my financial security," she says.

Hardinger's sister, Lois Hutson of



Seeking justice: Hutson, who lost \$94,252 to Harmon, prepares to leave the Wichita courthouse.

Wichita, Kansas, also had been victimized after her husband's death in 1992.

Based on trusting an investor within her denomination, Hutson turned over nearly \$100,000 to Harmon. "I can only hope to get back a tiny percentage," she says.

"The most severe damage flowing from all of this is not the financial devastation, but the damage to the sense of trust in fellow humans that so many of the victims have experienced," says Judge William L. Dwyer. "That's something that is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to repair."

Prosecutor Schroeder says the case is not over. Harmon's son Steve and son-in-law Terrill Beebe both worked in the business, and both were named as coconspirators and could be indicted. Other U.S. attorneys have pledged to file negligence suits against insurance companies that did business with Harmon in an effort to recoup some of the victims' losses.

By Chuck Fager.

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Megachurch Pastor Resigns, but Denies Sexual Misdeeds

The dynamic builder of a 6,500-member congregation bent on winning Seattle's upscale Eastside suburbs for Christ has resigned amid allegations of sexual misconduct. Bob Moorehead, senior pastor of Overlake Christian Church since 1970, steadfastly maintains his innocence, but stepped down June 15 because his credibility in the community had been "seriously damaged."

Overlake's board of elders decided to dismiss the allegations of 17 accusers, based upon "the biblical process" for handling accusations against an elder. Moorehead, 61, was one of 14 elders governing the nondenominational evangelical church, which in November moved into a new \$37.5 million facility in Redmond, Washington.

PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR HIRED: The events that led to Moorehead's resignation began in July 1996 with his arrest on a charge of indecent exposure in a public restroom near his vacation home in Daytona Beach, Florida. Under controversial circumstances, charges were dropped. But news coverage of the story prompted four men to make accusations that Moorehead had molested them during adult baptism and wedding ceremonies. A private investigator hired by the elders interviewed 17 men who gave similar accounts of events that occurred as long as 20 years ago. The statute of limitations has expired in all those cases.

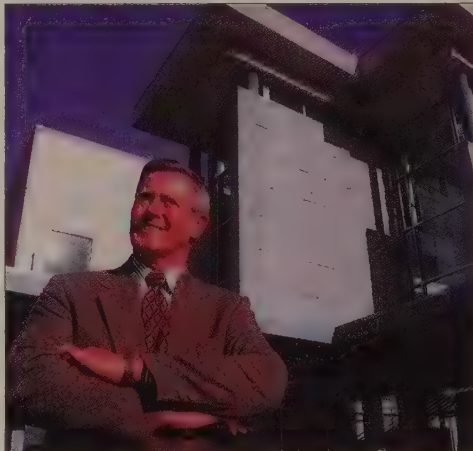
The overseers of the largest church in Washington State interpret 1 Timothy 5:19 to require another witness, besides the accuser, in order to consider an accusation against an elder. The elders conceded, however, that Moorehead was not "above reproach" as required by 1 Timothy 3:2 and consequently needed to resign. They presented a verbal summary of their decision to the congregation on May 27, based on information from the private investigator's report and their own interviews with the accusers.

"This is not like a secular case, where conviction can be based on a preponderance of evidence, or evidence that's beyond a reasonable doubt," elder Duane Atkins told a hushed Wednesday-night gathering of more than 2,500. "Ours is a

biblical investigation."

The congregation erupted in a standing ovation when elder Gary Scott declared that the leaders found "no basis for church discipline" against Moorehead. Most church members interpreted that to mean that their pastor had been exonerated.

OTHER PASTORS SPEAK: Two days later, however, four area pastors who originally had been asked to help oversee the investigation, held a press conference



Grand opening: Last November, Bob Moorehead first preached in Overlake Christian Church's 241,000-square-foot complex. His accusers believe the elders' actions are akin to a coverup.

claiming that Overlake elders misinterpreted key biblical passages and failed to settle the question of Moorehead's guilt or innocence by not releasing the investigator's report as originally expected. The pastors lamented the "firestorm" of division that the decision had provoked and called for the elders to resolve the matter for the sake of church unity.

"My English language and my biblical understanding don't allow me to accept the position they came up with," Jerry Mitchell, pastor of Crossroads Baptist Church in Bellevue, Washington, told CT after the press conference. "If the man is not innocent, which they have said, then in my estimation he is guilty. They say, 'No, he's not guilty'; therefore, in my estimation he's innocent. Where in the English language and where in the Bible is the in-between stage?"

Overlake's elders and staff declined interview requests from CT, saying the

May 27 verbal report "stands on its own."

Phil Ling, pastor of the largest of Overlake's eight daughter churches, Northshore Christian Church, agrees that the issue is unresolved. "If you set yourself up with *We're not going to deal with the world; we're going to use a biblical process to deal with this issue*, then the eldership is the judge and the jury, and they have to come to a verdict; and I haven't read any verdict," Ling says.

Critics of Overlake's interpretation of Scripture point out that cases of abuse are rarely witnessed by a third party and insist that the requirement for more than one witness is not confined to each individual case.

Seventeen cases add up to "a preponderance of evidence that can't be ignored," says Jan David Hettinga of Northshore Baptist Church in Bothell, Washington. Hettinga, one of the four pastors publicly challenging the decision, says the group is now "in dialogue" with Overlake about the possibility of re-examining the biblical premise for the decision.

SATANIC SCHEME? Communications from Overlake elders to their congregation in the months leading up to the resignation evoked images of spiritual warfare and included numerous references to "persecution" and an "orchestrated" attack on the church being carried out by the news media and the alleged victims.

Overlake's elders say their decision took into account Moorehead's 41 years of ministry without "a chink in his armor."

Known for his aggressive evangelism and powerful expository preaching, Moorehead had a daily radio program and wrote a dozen books.

But focus on Moorehead's fate, critics say, has ignored the accusers, who need either discipline or ministry, depending upon who is telling the truth. Moorehead has called on those who brought the "horrible, perverted" charges against him to repent.

"I would have a particularly challenging time with this congregation, because they are fishing in Scripture in a way that is not going to be very healing for them," says Kibbie Ruth, senior consultant for the San Mateo, California-based Kyros Ministry, formerly known as the Pastoral Center for Abuse Prevention. "It makes them an unsafe congregation for anyone else who has been wounded by one person in a one-on-one situation."

By Art Moore in Seattle.

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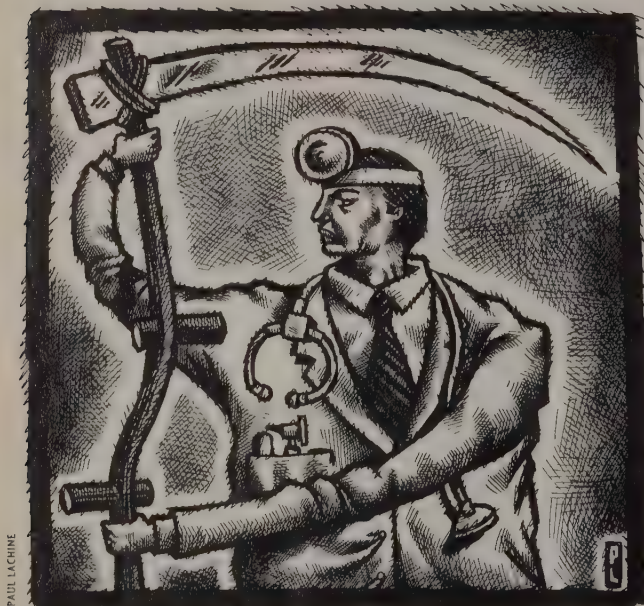
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Lies We've Heard Before

The same flawed arguments that legalized abortion are now used to support physician-assisted suicide.



One of the most important stories of recent months was Dr. Diane Meier's change of heart about physician-assisted suicide (PAS). Meier, a New York physician and professor of geriatrics, is a specialist in "palliative care"—pain relief—for dying patients. For some years, she was an influential advocate of the legalization of PAS. But this past spring, Meier publicly reversed course. In a column in the April 24 *New York Times*, Meier made public the reasons for her change of mind. Her insights suggest broader connections for those committed to the sanctity of human life.

First, according to Meier, PAS advocates assume patients are mentally alert and competent to make a rational choice to end their lives. Meier now argues that these patients rarely are able to exercise such judgment. Normally they are confused, anxious, depressed, or simply incapable of thinking clearly—hardly a propitious context for making an important, life-or-death decision.

Second, those in favor of PAS normally would restrict its use to situations in which patients are within six months of death. Meier argues that it is nearly impossible to predict when patients are going to die until the last few days of their lives.

Third, PAS advocates claim that patients can be protected from coerced decisions to end their lives through the

use of a doctor's signed certification. Meier now claims that noncoercion is impossible for a doctor to certify. Especially given the enormous financial pressures that medical bills impose, the availability of PAS is itself coercive. Dying patients know that merely by signing a document they would reduce the financial pressure on their families. No one needs to say a word about it.

Why this sounds all too familiar

Advocates of PAS have succeeded in only one state: Oregon. The regulations Meier discussed in her article are drawn from the Oregon law. Already at least two assisted suicides have been performed there, though public officials are keeping such a tight lid on information that no one can know for sure how many assisted suicides have occurred or will occur. But the explicit goal of PAS advocates is to go national, making the Oregon experiment the American way of life.

According to David P. Gushee, director of the Center for Christian Leadership at Union University, it is deeply disturbing to compare early returns from the Oregon PAS experiment with an experiment in medicalized killing with which we are all familiar: abortion. Gushee, who is also vice president of Evangelicals for Social Action, notes that initial advocates of full legalization of abortion operated from a model strikingly similar to the medical and regulatory milieu envisioned by supporters of PAS and currently operating in Oregon. Women facing unwanted pregnancies would undertake a rational conversation with their physicians, who would guide them through their medical options to the best choice for them.

In fact, what emerged was a pattern in which emotional, confused, and frightened women turned to impersonal specialized abortion clinics staffed by marginally competent doctors whose full-time medical chore day by day is the termination of pregnancy. This fundamental corruption of the doctor-patient relationship, observes Gushee, is repeating itself with the Oregon PAS experiment. Both of the two known PAS victims in Oregon were refused PAS by their own physicians, only to receive referrals to death doctors from the Oregon branches of Compassion in Dying and the Hemlock Society. One can imagine a new industry of such physicians if PAS goes national, says Gushee, just like with abortion providers.

Likewise, advocates of full legalization of abortion assumed that this option would be selected by a small number of women under specialized circumstances. Abortion would be "safe, legal, and rare." This assumption parallels that of PAS advocates who intend to restrict

that procedure to "the last six months of life" for certifiably terminally ill patients.

However, it is fully to be expected that just as abortion came to be the option of first rather than last resort for so many, so will PAS grow into a widely used procedure that far exceeds its originally envisioned boundaries, especially given the nebulous definitions of those boundaries.

PAS advocates are concerned to protect patient autonomy and noncoercion. Interestingly enough, Gushee notes, so were advocates of abortion; indeed, autonomy, noncoercion, and self-determination are the watchwords of the

pro-choice movement. But such autonomy for women facing crisis pregnancies has turned out to be quite elusive. Many women end up at abortion clinics due to pressure from their fathers, husbands, boyfriends, and sexual partners. Just so, we can fully expect that patient autonomy in the area of assisted-suicide will erode under psychological, financial, and social pressures.

Fortunately, PAS has not won universal support. Dr. Meier's reversal is a hopeful sign. Perhaps we have learned a few things in the 25 years between *Roe v. Wade* and the Oregon PAS experiment. **CT**

Discerning the Healing Spirits

A pastor went to a massage therapist for back treatment. Once on the masseuse's table he noticed crystals used by New Age channelers on the floor. What was he to do? Tell the therapist to remove the crystals? Rebuke the therapist? Get up and leave?

At first this pastor was fearful of subjecting himself to spiritual forces. Then he remembered that in Christ "all things in heaven and on earth were created . . . whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him" (Col. 1:16, NRSV). This pastor decided the "all things" included these crystals. So he prayed that Christ would exercise his lordship over them and any evil spirits in the room.

Illness makes people receptive to all kinds of nostrums and remedies, particularly chronic health problems that don't yield easily to conventional treatment. A whole industry is emerging that provides alternative medical treatments, including acupuncture, biofeedback, homeopathy, massage therapy, and therapeutic touch (TT; see "Winding Paths Meet," p. 16). A third of all Americans have tried some form of alternative medicine or therapy.

Even health-insurance companies are starting to see the benefit of alternative forms of treatment. Alternative medicine tends to treat people holistically, inviting the patients to participate in their healing. There is not always a pill or injection for everything that ails us. Sometimes lifestyle changes are needed, such as diet and stress management. The best approaches blend conventional and alternative medicines: conventional medicine for trauma or major illnesses, alternative treatments for chronic conditions such as pain, headaches, fatigue, or recurring back pains. Yet, as the pastor's experience illustrates, Christians must be on their guard: alternative treatments sometimes come packaged in world-views more akin to New Age philosophies and plain old paganism than to orthodox Christian faith.

Of course, bona fide methods have to be sorted out from the bogus. This past April the influential *Journal of the American Medical Association* published an article that debunked the claims of therapeutic touch. TT is practiced by more than 43,000 medical professionals in more than 80 hospitals nationwide. Behind TT is the theory that each person emits an "energy field." Practitioners claim that by manipulating this human energy field, they can heal numerous conditions, from Alzheimer's to ulcers, without actually touching their patients (CT, Feb. 5, 1996, p. 96).

What was most surprising about the JAMA article

debunking TT was that the supporting research was done for an elementary-school science project by nine-year-old Emily Rosa. Emily set up a simple experiment using a cardboard screen with two holes cut in it for TT practitioners to put their hands through. When Emily would place her hand over a practitioner's hand without touching it, the "healer" was asked to say which hand Emily's hand was near. In the 280 tests involving 21 different TT practitioners, the correct response was given only 44 percent of the time—a worse outcome than mere coin-flipping might produce. Predictably, TT advocates have contested Emily's findings, but it appears that TT may stand for "tall tale," not therapeutic touch.

While being on guard against evil spirits connected to some instances of alternative medicine, Christians should not be locked into an Enlightenment perspective that maintains healing can come only through modern medicine. Emily's work contrasts with a host of studies in recent years that have demonstrated a positive correlation between healing and faith, prayer, and association with a supportive, religious community. There is now clear empirical evidence that "religious involvement helps people *prevent* illness, *recover* from illness, and—most remarkably—*live longer*" (Dr.

Dale A. Mathews, *The Faith Factor: Proof of the Healing Power of Prayer*). Some of this benefit can be attributed to people of faith living more healthfully—not smoking or drinking, for example. But not all. Sound scientific studies show there is curative power in prayer and regular participation in a supportive religious community.

As Dr. Mathews says, "The faith factor is not a panacea—the mortality rate for human beings still remains 100 percent." Why and when some people experience healing or remission is still a mystery to researchers. The faith factor allows for this mystery—for a God who gives and takes life and health in his own good timing. **CT**

Alternative medicine sometimes comes packaged in world-views more akin to New Age philosophies and plain old paganism than to orthodox Christian faith.

A Tale of CHINA'S Two CHURCHES

*Eyewitness reports
of repression and revival.*

BY TIMOTHY C. MORGAN

During China's brutal Cultural Revolution in 1968, Peter Xu Yongze, newly called to Christian ministry, surveyed the bleak future facing Christianity in China and was overcome with grief.

Climbing a mountain near his village in the rugged Henan Province, Xu stopped and prayed, "Dear Lord, please revive your church!"

During the intervening 30 years, Xu evangelized, planted new house churches, and trained local church leaders, eventually creating what some call the Born Again Movement (BAM), which has an estimated 3 million followers independent of the official registered church in China. Spin-offs from BAM, one of the fastest-growing religious groups in China, have an esti-

mated 20 million followers, nearly twice the size of the registered church, which was re-established in 1979.

HERETIC OR HERO? This year, however, Xu will not be celebrating the thirtieth anniversary of his mountaintop plea. Last December he was sentenced to serve three years in a "re-education-through-labor" camp in Henan. Chinese authorities arrested Xu, now 58, on charges of being a leader of a banned religious cult, disrupting public order, and spreading religious heresy about the imminent end of the world.

After Xu's arrest, the official Chinese news agency compared him to David Koresh, the Branch Davidian leader who in 1994 died in a fiery apocalypse in Waco, Texas, as the FBI attempted to arrest him. Both registered-church and house-church

CHINESE PHOTOGRAPHER CONSORTIUM

Passionate piety: At her husband's pathside grave in remote northwest China, a Christian woman offers a prayer of remembrance. In rural areas of China, Christianity through house-church networks has been growing rapidly.



leaders, including Samuel Lamb and Allen Yuan, have criticized Xu and his movement for alleged doctrinal aberrations, such as the expectation that new converts weep for three days to bring about forgiveness for their sins.

Yet, other Christian leaders have defended Xu, saying that his harsh sentence exposes how the Chinese government has not changed in its essentially hostile attitude toward religion as a superstition.

While evangelicals have noted that Xu's movement is emotional and highly expressive, Brent Fulton, managing director of the Institute for Chinese Studies based at Wheaton (Ill.) College, says Xu is no heretic and his theology is sound. "Xu is caring, very sincere. He is smart in a strategic sense. He knows how to organize a huge band of evangelists. Most of his followers have a junior-high education."

Pastors in BAM believe "jail is their seminary," says Jonathan Chao, president of China Ministries International, a leading house-church advocacy group that recently relocated from Hong Kong to Taiwan. "Jail is like a battery that charges the believer and movement." Xu had been imprisoned twice before, including in 1988 when he attempted to meet Billy Graham during the evangelist's trip to China.

According to sources in China close to the Xu family, "They say our church is a heresy. This is a very bad word to use about us. *Xie-jiao* [heresy/evil religion] is like when a person kills somebody or a group always killing.

"People say that we say that you can only be saved if you cry for three days or even three days and nights. This is not true. We are saved by Jesus' grace."

SERIAL HOSTAGE-TAKING: For Paul Marshall, author of *Their Blood Cries Out* (Word, 1997), Xu's arrest and imprisonment is another odious example of China's "serial hostage-taking," in which emerging Chinese Christian leaders are locked away as they reach their most productive phase. Years later, they may be released or exiled. Recently, China freed an aging Catholic leader from prison, only to put him immediately under house arrest. "I've met with people from 17 provinces in the last 12 months," Marshall says. "They said they are suffering the worst crack-down since the 1980s." Xu is one of hundreds or perhaps thousands of religious leaders who have been arrested or jailed in China during the 1990s. As recently as May 31, officials reportedly detained Roman Catholic Bishop Zhang Weizhu, one of the millions of underground

Catholics who recognize Vatican authority. (China requires all Catholics to join a government-controlled association.)

The imprisonment of Xu comes at a time when American religious and political leaders are focusing on religious persecution as never before. Congress, which is targeting China's abuse of human rights, has passed legislation prohibiting imports of Chinese products made by slaves or prisoners and banned from visiting America those Chinese officials responsible for religious persecution or forced abortions.

Conservatives have renewed efforts to oppose most-favored-nation trade status for China because of human-rights abuses (CT, June 16, 1997, p. 54). This fall more than 100,000 congregations are expected to participate in the third International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church.

The most critical debate among church and ministry leaders is how best to bring about greater religious freedom in China. Traditionally, missions leaders have focused on evangelism and relief work, not human rights, for fear that public criticism could jeopardize their ability to work in the country.

But as abuses of religious freedom have persisted, missions and church leaders have been forced by circumstances to re-evaluate their methods and strategies.

Meanwhile, outspoken religious-freedom advocates have steadily increased the political pressure in Washington to put religious freedom near the top of America's foreign-policy agenda.

Last month more than 200 American religious leaders, representing Protestants, Roman Catholics, Orthodox, Muslims, Jews, Buddhists, and Scientologists, signed a letter urging President Clinton to persuade the Chinese government to release all religious prisoners, to revoke mandatory church registration, and to relax restrictions on Buddhists in Tibet.

Rabbi Yechiel Eckstein, founder of the Center for Jewish and Christian Values, initiated the letter to Clinton, whose historic nine-day trip to China was scheduled to wrap up July 3. Last year Eckstein presented to Chinese authorities a petition with 12,000 signatures calling for Xu's release. But Eckstein does not want to be counted among the growing number of China-bashers.

"One of the things I've learned in my dealings with the Chinese is they want to see that Americans are not using them or bashing them," he says. "China-bashers don't acknowledge the changes that have taken place." He advocates greater relig-

ious freedom in China's policy, using what he calls "prodding engagement."

Although China's constitution enshrines freedom of belief, there is no corresponding constitutional protection for freedom of worship or freedom from state control. Through the Chinese government's Religious Affairs Bureau (RAB), the Public Security Bureau, and the Communist party's United Front Work Department, every aspect of religious expression is managed.

"Those Chinese who seek to express openly dissenting political and religious views still live in an environment filled with repression," the U.S. State Department reported in January.

The Chinese government places boundaries on religion at every key point:

- Worship places must be registered, which normally entails joining one of five officially recognized religious associations (Protestant, Catholic, Buddhist, Muslim, or Taoist).

- Publication of Bibles, religious books, magazines, and other materials must be state approved.

- Admission to seminaries or other religious training for registered-church pastors or lay leaders requires permission of local authorities.

- Individual believers may be required to provide identification on receipts when purchasing Bibles at a registered church.

- Communist party members are prohibited from expressing religious beliefs. As a result, only atheists are allowed to head government offices that regulate religion.

- Government officials determine which religious beliefs are heretical, and therefore illegal, for anyone to espouse.

- No religious group outside China is permitted to have control over any Chinese religious body or religious affairs, or to establish an independent operation.

Chinese who stray outside permitted religious activities have frequently been detained without being charged or having legal counsel. The U.S. State Department declares, "The judicial system continues to deny defendants basic legal safeguards and due process because authorities attach higher priority to maintaining public order and suppressing political opposition than to implementing and enforcing legal norms."

Amnesty International, in its 1997 human-rights report, estimates that China's prisons detained 200,000 people without charge or trial. In the main Chinese prison in Lhasa, the capital of Tibet, one out of six prisoners is a Buddhist monk or nun

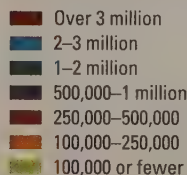
HOW MANY CHRISTIANS IN CHINA?

Unofficially, Chinese leaders estimate there may be up to 100 million Christians in China. But officially, leaders say there are fewer than 15 million baptized Christians and regular churchgoers.



SOURCE: AMITY NEWS SERVICE, OPERATION WORLD.

CHINESE CHRISTIANS BY PROVINCE:



Chinese traditional or Folk religion: 27% (324 million)
 Protestant: 5.1% (61.2 million)
 Buddhist: 3% (36 million)
 Muslim: 2.4% (28.8 million)
 Animist: 2.4% (28.8 million)
 Catholic: 1% (10.2 million)

who had most often been accused of "endangering public security."

A GOLDEN PERIOD? Although the Communist United Front Work Department establishes China's overall policies toward religion, no individual has greater influence over day-to-day government oversight of religious activities in China than Ye Xiaowen, the ambitious and energetic director of the RAB, which has officials in every province and major city.

During Ye's first American appearance one year ago, he met with leaders from the Christian Leadership Exchange of Califor-

nia, an influential group composed mostly of overseas Chinese Christian leaders.

Ye, 45, plays the role of an intimidating police officer well. "The ancient Greeks have a saying: The most difficult thing is to know yourself. I am a tiger, having the willingness to have the boldness and braveness characteristic of a tiger." The RAB and other Chinese leaders have not been reluctant to demonstrate the power of the state in limiting religious practice. In May 1997, according to Amnesty International, about 5,000 Chinese troops were deployed to the village of Donglu,

Hebei Province, to bar Catholics from making an annual pilgrimage.

Ye was influential in developing the Chinese government's conviction that Christianity played a critical role in the collapse of communism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

Although one American evangelical leader who is knowledgeable about Ye says he is a "hardcore materialist," Ye's main philosophy seems to be pragmatism within the context of the directives of the top leadership.

Ye, like China's President Jiang Zemin,

represents a new attitude that is not personally hostile to religion but expects religious leaders to buttress state and party control. Some of China's leaders, including Ye, a sociologist by training, have closely studied American culture. Ye finds one secret to American success in Max Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, first published in 1904. Weber, also a sociologist, compared the West and China, concluding that a missing element in Chinese culture had been, up to that time, a strong antimagical religion like Christianity, with its emphases on a transcendent God, transcendent laws, and spiritual calling above all human favoritisms and local superstitions.

China's leadership still has difficulty comprehending basic Christian concepts, says Richard Cizik, policy analyst for the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE): "They don't understand the power of faith to change people's lives, the Christian teaching of the soul, or the Christian teaching of the conscience. They view [religion] through a political lens." Cizik and other evangelicals have attempted to counter the belief among China's leaders that Chinese Christians pose a threat to the state by arguing that good

Christians are good citizens and good workers.

In 1994, as new regulations governing religion in China were being implemented, Ye became RAB director and quickly positioned himself and the RAB as protectors of the religious status quo. In suppressing house churches, the RAB most often labels them as secret cults with an antisocial agenda. In addition, Ye says the RAB protects registered churches from corrupt local officials who may harass faithful believers.

While in Washington, Ye declared that religious believers in China had entered "a golden period." Last October, an official Chinese government white paper, which focused on all religious activity in China, listed 100 million religious believers, 85,000 worship sites, 300,000 clergy or priests, and 74 schools for clergy training, far more than in 1949 when Communists took control. The report also noted:

- Since 1980, more than 600 Protestant churches have been reopened or rebuilt annually.
- More than 18 million Bibles have been printed.
- The official number of baptized



Peter Xu

Christians in registered churches has risen to 10 to 15 million in 1997, from fewer than 1 million in 1949.

The document defends the Chinese government's regulation of religious activity, saying, "No one in China is punished because of his or her religious belief. But no country that practices the rule of law in the world today would tolerate illegal and criminal activities being carried out under the banner of religion."

However, the report does not detail the ideological work of the Communist United Front Work Department. In a September 1996 article in its journal, the United Front detailed how 400 religious leaders had been "trained politically on how to get the religious organizations to cooperate with the [Communist] party." In 1992, Tong Zhan, a former United Front leader, published an inside view on how the United Front works behind the scenes in the appointment of key religious leaders. He said the United Front follows a "divide and rule" strategy to keep religious groups in check.

Even by official accounts, Christianity among the Chinese is experiencing the

CHINA MISSION:

More Than 'Ping-Pong Diplomacy'

Former NAE president Don Argue calls for engagement, not isolation.

A member of the State Department's Advisory Committee on Religious Freedom Abroad, Don Argue helped marshal evangelical leaders to the frontlines in the international campaign on behalf of persecuted Christians.

In February, Argue, then president of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) and now president of Northwest College, Seattle; Catholic Archbishop McCarrick; and Rabbi Schneider traveled to China for three weeks of meetings with top leaders in China's government and Communist party (CT, Apr. 6, 1998, p. 26). While security concerns prevented Argue from meeting with members of China's house churches, staff with the delegation met one-on-one with house-church members to hear their views.

David Neff, CT executive editor, conducted the first in-depth interview of Argue following the delegation's return from China.

You have said your trip to China was not a fact-finding mission, because persecution is already well documented. But did you find out anything that surprised you? Did your perceptions change?

As far as we know, our trip was the first time the government officials at that level have been willing to sit down and talk about religious persecution and religious-freedom issues in China. I was surprised by that.

During your meetings, did you sense any resistance from Chinese officials?

The resistance from Chinese officials was the feeling that we'd come there to inspect, and they made it very clear on the first day, "We're here to talk about the issues."

We got to ask whatever we wanted to ask within certain constraints that they imposed on us. On one occasion with

kind of stunning revival and explosive growth that would test the structure of any religious organization. In Guizhou Province in the rural southwest, there are more than 360,000 Christians. About half of them await baptism, and many baptized believers go more than one year without celebrating Communion.

"The Chinese church today is the most charismatic church in the world. They rely totally on the Holy Spirit," says David Wang, international director of Asia Outreach. "With all the persecution and harassment and suffering, the church is still exploding. Growing is too tame a word."

HAZARDOUS PILGRIMAGE: In February, a delegation of three American religious leaders, at the invitation of President Jiang, made an unprecedented pilgrimage throughout China.

During their three-week tour, then-president of the National Association of Evangelicals Don Argue, Roman Catholic archbishop of Newark Theodore McCarrick, and Appeal of Conscience Foundation president Rabbi Arthur Schneier met with China's president, held discussions with about 60 other top leaders, and traveled to Tibet to visit Buddhist leaders (CT, April 6, 1998, p. 26).

Although the threesome described the trip's mission as focused on deepening dialogue with China's leaders, they frequently brought up issues of human rights and religious freedom.

In a lengthy interview with CHRISTIANITY TODAY (see below), Argue says that they inquired about the cases of 30 persecuted believers. He said Chinese authorities have responded with details about some, but not all, of the individuals.

From the beginning, American political and religious leaders sharply questioned the wisdom of the effort, saying that China would manipulate domestic media coverage to its own advantage. While the delegation was in China, the front page of the *People's Daily* published photos of President Jiang and Argue, but quoted only Jiang.

American critics of the delegation's visit cut across a wide spectrum, including Gary Bauer of the Family Research Council, Nina Shea of Freedom House, and Joan Brown Campbell of the National Council of Churches.

During the delegation's visit, Shea charged, "Beijing manipulated the

group's visit throughout, even detaining priests and the families of Christian prisoners so that the group could not meet with them."

But after the visit, one Chinese official in Beijing said, "These people were very well briefed, and actually disputed some of our versions of events, and expressed strong discontent with our religious policy. This we were not used to."

When the delegation returned, they held a press conference in New York City, where they issued a 12-page report. Their findings included:

- Official government statistics significantly undercount Christians.
- Chinese leaders view religion as a potentially destabilizing force in society, particularly among China's large peasant population.
- "Joint ventures in understanding" between the United States and China on religious belief and practice should be undertaken as soon as possible.

Cizik, who traveled with the American delegation, told CT that China's leaders are

Back to the Bible: Evangelical representative Don Argue (far left) presents a Chinese-language Bible to China's President Jiang Zemin (third from left).

the vice chair of Jiangsu Province, after we had raised the question of religious freedom, he said abruptly, "It's time for dinner." And we all knew it was going to be time for dinner.

It was a subtle contest of wills to ascertain who was going to control a meeting. You are given high-level access if you are forthcoming with favorable comments about China. But we didn't give them what they wanted in order to get the access.

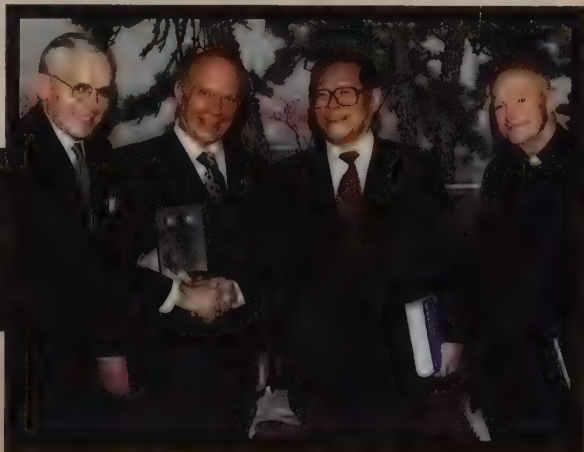
Why has the National Association of Evangelicals resisted efforts for the U.S. government to end most-favored-nation (MFN) trade status for China?

Part of the church says that the way to get to China is on MFN. But we did not feel that we should just proceed without checking with the people who are in ministry in China.

Across the board their message was unanimous: "Don't politicize MFN." The moment you make that a bargaining chip on religious persecution, you've politicized it, and that is the last thing we want to have done.

So we followed the logic of the people who are doing the most effective ministry in China. We took a neutral position.

When the church in China says, "Don't touch it," and those on this side of the water who are having very effective ministry in China say, "Don't touch it," I don't understand why some



people would rather blatantly say we should use MFN as a bargaining tool.

What was accomplished in your meeting with the president of China?

The attention of the Chinese government has been focused. If they're going to continue in dialogue with American leaders, they have to address human-rights issues. That, to me, was a very important part of what we were doing.

President Jiang Zemin clearly stated that these issues are on the agenda for Sino-American talks.

The wheels in China move very slowly. We look at something and say, "What do we do to fix it?" The Chinese look at a situation and say, "What relationships do we need to develop to deal with this situation?"

So we were building bridges, explaining the importance of separation of church and state, a concept that is foreign to them,

"being forced to acknowledge by the faith of their own people that religion isn't a Western phenomenon only. It's a church that is growing. And, to some degree, [it] poses a threat to the power of the state."

A BIGGER CAGE? Even as the Chinese government has moved to marginalize underground churches, it has given the registered church more room to breathe. But its critics still view the registered church as a caged bird.

With the retirement of Bishop Ting in 1997, the China Christian Council (CCC) is now under the leadership of Han Wenzao, a lay church leader. The CCC and the Three Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM), which promotes the doctrinal ideals of self-propagation, self-government, and self-support, form the central nervous system of the registered church.

During an in-depth interview with CT at Nanjing Seminary, Han struck a conciliatory note toward the house-church movement. But he did not repeat Ting's call in 1994 for the Chinese government to recognize house churches.

Han says many unregistered churches have become registered in Jiangsu Province. "We have two problems with registration. Government officials are reluctant to get more churches to be registered. On

the other side, some congregations, I'm sorry to say, are influenced by outsiders who advise them not to get registered."

Han says the relationship between house and registered churches is not black and white. Some believers, especially in urban areas, may attend services at both kinds of churches. In addition, some registered churches allow house-church leaders to use their facilities.

In calling for greater cooperation and Christian unity, Han says, "We also have to confess that we have done some things wrong to our brothers and sisters. A divisive church cannot be very strong for our Lord, especially in China. Yet we fight each other."

Some house-church leaders have shown a willingness to register with the local government, but they resist joining the TSPM, which falls under government and Communist party control.

But Han says, "The Three Self does not have a political nature. It's just a people's organization to show our fellow Christians that we Christians are fellow Chinese Christians."

Han disputes the allegations that freedom is nonexistent for the registered church. "We have enjoyed a reasonable amount of religious freedom," he says,

"because the context is very different around China."

"We can do much. Within the framework, we can move around much. So my observation is that we have enjoyed a reasonable amount of freedom within the churches."

Although Han is striking a conciliatory note in comments about house churches, he has not minced words when condemning the International Mission Board (IMB) of the Southern Baptist Convention for "covert missionary" activities within China (CT, Jan. 12, 1998, p. 64).

Last year, Han broke off relations between the CCC and IMB because he alleged that Southern Baptists were pursuing an illegal "two-track" strategy of working openly with registered churches, but covertly as well through setting up businesses for missionaries to use as a front for evangelistic outreach. There have been estimates that as many as 200 IMB missions personnel in China are involved in such work.

Werner Burklin, whose German mis-

Meager resources: Despite many limitations, including a severe shortage of Bibles, Christian women in China's far western Yunnan Province take an active role in village worship services.

dealing with the practice of faith and the fact that Christians are good citizens. Christians pay their bills, they show up for work on Monday morning, they put in an honest day's work, they have good families, and they will be productive people in China. Christians are not to be feared; they're to be encouraged.

In our main meeting with President Jiang, the subjects discussed included the value of religion to society, the positive role of religion in the United States, and the genuine concern of American religious believers about the status of religion in China. Questions were raised about human rights, abuses, and torture, and how the proper agencies can improve conditions.

We also stressed the need for China's religious believers, particularly Christians, to relate more fully with international church bodies. We explored the possibility of expanded exchanges of religious leaders, scholars, and others. We discussed the possibility of opening dialogue with the Holy See.

President Jiang observed that the reality of religious practice has not always fulfilled the founders' ideals. Foreign powers had bullied China during the nineteenth century, he noted, and many improper acts were carried out in the name of religion. Nevertheless, working from the "basis of a clear understanding of history," Mr. Jiang said, "Differences can be gradually narrowed, and common ground can be broadened."

The meeting, in fact, the whole mission, was unprecedented. Never before have three American religious leaders been invited to discuss religious issues at China's highest level.

At one point, President Jiang changed the subject and looked at me. He said, "Dr. Argue, some don't think I know much about religion. I know about your coreligionists."

He said, "I was a youth in a Shanghai hospital. I watched an older single lady in one of your hospitals work with the patients and take care of the patients," including him. He emphasized she was old and single. He said, "She never cared for herself. But from early, early morning till late at night until she was extremely tired, she gave of herself to us."

He said, "I know who you are." And then he went back to his dialogue. One plants. Another waters. And God gives the increase.

Second, he stopped in the discussion and turned and looked at me again and said, "You know, I've been having trouble understanding the Bible." It's interesting that he would admit in that forum that he was reading the Bible.

Before I left the hotel, I felt prompted to go back up to my room and get a Bible. That was a little risky. But I was obedient to the inner prompting, and I had a Bible with me (of course, it was one printed in China), and I felt this was the opportunity.

So after our formal discussions, I said, "Mr. President, you said you were having trouble reading the Bible."

He said, "Yes."

I said, "May I give you a Bible?"

He said, "Please."

I said, "Let me recommend that you read the Book of John."

A high-level U.S. embassy official was in the meeting. I

sionary parents raised him in China until they were forced out in 1949, has worked with registered churches since 1981. He has also had contact with house-church members. Burklin says, "To the local Christians, it really doesn't make too much of a difference with whom they are registered. They would like to see the church expand." Burklin believes if the Communist state collapses, Chinese Christians will lose an important unifying force.

Burklin observes Chinese Christians across the board have taken responsibility for outreach and missions, unlike their dependency on foreigners prior to the 1949 revolution. "Chinese Christians are strengthening the social arm of the church to win the hearts of the people. I know of

churches that even take offerings for [state] schools."

LIMITS OF COOPERATION: In spite of the ongoing dramas of religious repression in China, Christian ministries worldwide have regained a strong presence throughout the country, in relief work, adoption, pro-life advocacy, church support, Bible publishing, and leadership training.

Increasingly, American-based ministries are openly attempting to establish relationships with house-church and registered-church leaders. The *1998 Missions Handbook*, published by the California-based Mission Advanced Research and Communications Center, reports that 155 Americans from more than 40 Protestant agencies work inside China. In

addition, more than 660 Chinese citizens who are active in Christian ministry receive support from American missions organizations in the form of training, materials, or money for building improvements or construction.

Much of the support comes from the estimated 7,000 Christian churches for overseas Chinese, many of whom fled following the Communist revolution.

George Chen is a significant example of how Americans and Chinese are rewriting the ministry playbook. Born in Shanghai 64 years ago, Chen gave up university studies in economics for Bible school and began working as a missionary at age 18. "God called me to spread the gospel to the poor of the villages," Chen explains. "The cities have made progress. But in the villages, it's the same as ever. The people are very poor."

After the 1949 Communist revolution, Chen's work grew increasingly hazardous. He was jailed for religious activities in the 1950s. In 1960, he was sentenced to hard labor at a prison in Anhui Province in eastern China.

With a wife and son still in Shanghai, he saw little prospect for survival. "They tried to make things really bad for me by putting me to work in the cesspool,"



turned and shook his hand and said, "Thank you for your good work. This is a result of your good work." The official said, "Oh no. This is the Lord's doing." And then he became very serious and said, "God is at work in China."

What specific measures did you take on behalf of imprisoned religious leaders?

I saw the sovereign hand of God in this trip again and again, orchestrated in ways that showed a divine plan at work. We presented a list of 30 names of specific people. We were expecting to have some results back. Some of these are people in prison. Some are people who have been persecuted enough to be on the list. Arriving at that list was not easy. How do you isolate just 30 people? They have answered 8 so far. But they are inadequate in their details and scope. We're not satisfied.

What about discussions concerning the house-church movement? Did you meet with any of them?

We had multiple contacts with unregistered people. We did not want to put anybody in the church—registered or unregis-

tered—in harm's way. There are those in the United States ready to skin us and send us up a flagpole because we did not spend our entire time with the unregistered church. But that was not the purpose, and the criticism was part

of the risk of what we were doing. While the underground church does not want persecution, they are not afraid. It is a way of life for them.

Are house-church members penalized for their Christian activities?

We had a unique situation where we were given a certificate with the stamp of the village committee, telling about the restrictions put on a particular group of Christians. We were able to hand that to one of the officials.

It said, "If you don't stop going to the Christian church, your work team will not be included in the distribution." Which I took to mean distribution of funds. "Your electricity will be cut off, and your kids will not be able to go to school."

We presented a document in English in one meeting. And a woman official, said, "Oh yes, I've been given a copy of that in English. We're looking into it."

Then we asked about it in another meeting, and there was confusion. They said, "We've seen it in English, but we're not really sure if it's authentic. We'd like to see it in Chinese." So we

Chen recalls. "I spent my days deep in human waste, turning it with a shovel to make compost. They thought I'd be miserable, but actually I was happy. It smelled so bad that no one would come near me, so I could pray and sing aloud all day."

Yet physical adversity was only part of the hardship at the camp. "The brainwashing was the worst," Chen says. "If God had not been with me, I'd have collapsed under it. People who were physically stronger than I did."

In 1978, as official attitudes toward religion changed, Chen was finally released. He discovered that the churches he planted had grown to 5,000 from the original 300 members.

Now a U.S. citizen, Chen travels for nine months each year throughout China organizing churches, preaching, training leaders, and raising funds.

Because Chen works mostly in rural areas, he has been able to enlist the cooperation of local government leaders as well as house-church leaders in his ministry efforts.

In May, a journey brought Chen deep into the rugged wilderness of Yunnan Province to show the needs of Lisu tribal people to Ralph Plumb, president of International Aid, a relief and mission-support agency of Spring Lake, Michigan.

Wedged between Tibet and the countries of Southeast Asia, Yunnan remains one of the least-known areas of China.

The Lisu were converted from demon worship early in the century by missionaries. In the early years of Communist rule, the tribal people were forbidden to worship. Their Bibles were confiscated, and some of the people were imprisoned or killed. Many fled across the mountains to nearby Myanmar (Burma). Yet most remained faithful. The year that brought Chen's release also brought them freedom to worship openly again.

With special permits to enter the territory normally closed to foreigners, Chen and Plumb traveled in trucks provided by the provincial government to the remote village of Kang Po near the upper Mekong River.

Mountain people waited to lead them up a steep foot trail into misty green valleys. They passed log and plank houses clinging to slopes. Meager crops of corn, rye, and wheat smear mountainsides so steep that farmers lie on their sides when they plant and harvest to keep from tumbling downward.

"I've never seen people in China poorer than the Lisu," Chen says. "They have not enough food."

Yet the welcome at a village named Wahsaluke was lavish. Many of the 900 residents lined both sides of the trail applauding the visitors and shaking their hands. They provided basins of spring water for washing and feasts of freshly killed chicken, eggs, fried ferns, corn cakes, rye pancakes, and honey.

"The Lisu people love very much," Chen explains. "Really, they follow the teaching of the gospel."

Plumb saw the log frame of a new school his agency financed through Chen. The visitors worshiped with villagers in a dark and primitive log-and-plank church building so rotted that local officials fear it might collapse.

Both Chen and government authorities encouraged International Aid to finance a new church structure. Chen had also arranged a cash gift to buy 100 goats loaned to families for breeding then returned for reloaning. "But the greatest need of all," Chen emphasizes, "is for trained church leaders. Christian-

Leadership shortage: A Catholic priest in one of China's southern provinces hears a peasant's confession. Both Catholic and Protestant churches are experiencing a severe shortage of trained clergy.

presented a copy of the original Chinese certificate. At least four times we presented it but did not get an adequate reply.

What messages do you want to convey after this historic trip to China?

We often talked about the Ping-Pong diplomacy that took place in the seventies: the result of a full, open relationship with China. This was certainly much more significant than Ping-Pong diplomacy. This was diplomacy at the highest level, where the case was made for America's concern with religious freedom.

Americans do not understand that at any time the Chinese government can come in and require a church to register. That is foreign to Americans. If China's leaders are going to understand the American Congress, they've got to understand the meaning of religious liberty.

Second, I feel it was the opening of the door for the beginning of continuing and further dialogue. Once I was specifically addressed: "Until you die, any time you come into these offices, you will be our guest." We now have a degree of stewardship and responsibility—as God leads—to provide for further dialogue and further opportunity for continued development and diplomacy along this line.

Also, in the case of the 30 people, it was very clearly articulated, these are only 30 out of a large body of individuals. We want to hear an answer. We want action on these.

Was one of your goals to understand more deeply the push and pull over religious issues within Chinese society?

That's right. The religion issue has to be understood in light of a changing China. China couldn't feed their population when they had the collective farms. The basic profile of the Chinese psyche is that they are not collective-farm people.

They are entrepreneurs, the business people of the Far East. They're hard workers. They're creative. They're bright. The Chinese government gave farmers the opportunity to develop some of their own land and sell the excess. It worked so well that most collective farms are history in China today.

Has the evangelical movement appropriately engaged itself on the issue of religious persecution?

We have a tendency to polarize and to make it black and white. And I'm very concerned about the whole move of American evangelicals speaking out against religious persecution be focused on the facts and not undocumented stories. NAE provided the catalyst document in our statement of conscience [www.nae.net]. It's the benchmark, but so many have gone beyond that statement.

I'm also concerned about how much of the public's concern is being used now to raise money to perpetuate ministries.

Tremendous things are happening on this issue. The silence about religious persecution worldwide is being broken. We are getting the attention of the right people.

CT

ity is growing, but because we don't have trained leaders, cults and heresies are springing up. Nine thousand evangelists should be trained," he says.

But the spirit of cooperation that Chen has forged in rural areas has not always translated into urban settings. When Chen traveled to a village near a major urban area in southern China, he was invited to preach at a Sunday service. But at the last minute, officials denied permission for him to preach.

MORE TURNING TO CHRIST: China missions experts who have studied the growth of Christianity during the past 35

says Daniel H. Bays, history professor at the University of Kansas and author of *Christianity in China: From the Eighteenth Century to the Present* (Stanford, 1996). "Nobody believes in communism anymore. This is one reason why people are becoming Christians. There is a lot of corruption, people are cynical, and ever since the 1980s, there's been a good bit of public anger with the government officials lining their own pockets."

New research on Christian growth in certain provinces reveals how China in some regions is turning to Christianity. In the eastern coastal province of Jiang-

Christian theology, teaching, and practice. These include:

- Lightning from the East, which promotes the idea that Christ has come again, bodily reincarnated in a woman named Lightning, and that only those who believe in this female messiah will be saved.

- The Disciples (Mentuhui Society), started in 1989 by farmer Ji Sanbao, who has a strong end-times orientation and calls for overthrow of the government.

- The Lingling Cult, which was begun as a religious movement in 1985 by Hua Xuehe, who sees himself as a second Jesus and in 1990 prophesied the second coming of Christ.

THE GOSPEL THREAT? The Chinese government has increasingly employed the strategy of associating charismatic religious leaders with antisocial cults and charging those leaders with violating criminal laws, not religious regulations.

In the case of the imprisoned evangelist Xu, the founder of BAM, the government has alleged that Xu's church members have committed suicide amid intense religious fervor. Church leaders deny the allegation.

But it was not Xu's theology itself that posed a threat to the Chinese government, China scholars say. Xu's covert, independent network of evangelists was the true target of the state. Last year, six other house-church evangelists were arrested with Xu as they apparently laid plans to coordinate their outreach efforts.

In a discussion with CT, a Chinese central government official who asked not to be named reported that the government's actions in the Xu case reveal the depth of its concerns about independent Christian evangelists. But he said, "I don't think it's important for the church in China to get Xu out [of prison]. No matter how many people or church leaders are put into jail, the church keeps on growing."

"The reason is that the church is not controlled by these leaders. The church develops in China in a very strange and incredible way."

As Xu serves out his prison sentence, hidden Chinese evangelists travel to western China, Vietnam, Myanmar (Burma), Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Outer Mongolia with no visas, passports, or support. Asia Outreach's Wang says, "But they have feet. They travel as far as transportation will take them; then they walk into those countries."

With reporting in China by Tony Carnes, Bruce Brander, Carol Thiessen, and Alex Buchan.



years often say that the decade-long cultural revolution in the 1960s and '70s was the church's time of greatest persecution and greatest rate of growth.

But in the late 1990s, the economic revolution in China is a central element in driving individuals toward religion and spirituality. China scholars say the surge of working-age adults from rural villages to industrial areas, along with urban unemployment, has created a displaced "floating population" of 100 million people, desperate for work and living on the margins of society.

Among China's 1.2 billion people, more than 700 million are considered non-religious, making them the largest group of unchurched people in the world. With the collapse of communist ideology, Chinese society is facing a vacuum of values and beliefs, and many Chinese are turning to nationalism, consumerism, or religion.

"The prestige of the party has gone,"

su, the site of the nationalist capital of Nanjing, there are 890,000 Christians, four times as many as a decade earlier.

Tony Lambert, director of Chinese research for a large mission agency, says China's leaders are well aware of Christian meteoric growth rates, which drives their need for stricter control. "I did a sampling and analysis of letters we are receiving from China," he said. "I grouped them by province. Jiangsu [Province] letters reported the worst persecution. Anhui and Henan [Provinces] also reported very tight control in some localities."

For Lambert and other scholars of Chinese Christianity, the growth of new religious sects, Christian cults, and heresies in many ways poses a greater threat to the church than the state.

While some heresies develop from non-Christian religions, dozens of heretical groups in China that are drawing millions of followers develop from distortions of



Christians hold the missing key to racial reconciliation—but it won't be popular.

SPENCER PERKINS

Playing the GRACE CARD

We are at an impasse over race because we cannot forgive, declared Spencer Perkins in what became his last public statement. Speaking at a conference on racial reconciliation last January, the activist and writer confessed his past struggles in dealing with “white folks” and how he discovered a radical way forward in healing our racial divide. The following week he died of heart failure at the age of 44. Perkins, along with Chris Rice, directed Reconcilers Fellowship in Jackson, Mississippi, coauthored *More than Equals: Racial Healing for the Sake of the Gospel* (IVP), and coedited *Reconcilers* magazine.



It was winter 1970, and my mother was taking my seven siblings and me to visit our father in the hospital. No auto accident or natural illness had landed him in this life-threatening condition. Rather, it was the

nightsticks and fists of white law-enforcement officers that had nearly beaten him to death for his civil-rights activities.

My sister Joanie, then 14 years old, took one look at my battered father and stormed out of the room repeating angrily, “I hate white people. I will never like them!”

My mother tried to convince her that her attitude was not very Christlike. But at that moment, with my father lying bruised and swollen, I could tell that even though my mother knew the right things to say, her heart was not in the words she spoke.

Not that it would have mattered. My sister was having no part of those tired, old words—*love* and *forgiveness*—anyway. Those white people were not going to get off that easily. All of us siblings wanted those men to get what they deserved. To our knowledge, they never did.

Today, to the casual observer, my sister looks as though she has reneged on her vow. She has white friends, attends an interracial church, and functions well in a white environment. But all her life, like many African Americans, Joanie has had a safe, time-tested method for emotionally dealing with whites.

There is a scene from the movie *Roots* that illustrates the way blacks tend to label whites. Tom and his family (newly freed slaves) have befriended a poor white couple. Against tradition, George and Mary treat their new black friends as equals. One night Tom is visited by white night riders, tied to a tree, and about to be horse-whipped for being “uppity.” In a backhanded way, George saves Tom’s life by demanding that he deliver the whipping.

Afterward, Tom’s young son sits in tears on the porch with Mary. Summoning all the hate and bitterness an eight-year-old can muster, he vents his feelings. “I hate white folks,” he sobs bitterly. “And if I get a chance I’ll do to them what they did to my daddy.”

“But what about me and George?” Mary asks. “We’re white.”

The boy looks up as if surprised that Mary could say such a silly thing. “But you and George are different,” he says. “You good white people.”

This is precisely how many blacks deal with whites today. From a distance, they are “white folks” and therefore suspect. Once we get to know them up close and personal, we may mentally remove them from the “bad” category.

Explaining this procedure is risky. Generalizations are always dangerous; and many of my black brothers and sisters feel that *revealing* our secrets in mixed company borders on treason. But there are also many of us African Americans who

are growing tired of the tiptoeing that takes place in so many racial-reconciliation gatherings. For us, it is time to move into deeper waters.

White folks

There is an automatic mental procedure that takes place for many blacks upon first meeting a white. First a decision must be made as to whether or not we will give him or her the time of day. If so, then, immediately the "Is he for real or phony?" antennas are raised, the "white superiority" sensors powered up, and the "racism" detector activated—all in an effort to analyze quickly any "vibes" and interpret any data, verbal or nonverbal, from the subject. All this is necessary to determine whether the white person deserves special consideration as an "individual," that is, a "good white person," or as a "typical" white person who should be quickly relegated to the simple category "white folks," as in "You know how white folks is."

Whether the label is deserved or undeserved, in the minds of most blacks, all white people are "white folks" until they prove themselves "different." It is part life experience, part self-preservation, and part projection. I have questioned very intelligent black people who admit that this "sizing up" of whites is often not very objective. But it takes place just the same.

Now, before you white readers get too indignant, you need to acknowledge that many of you do something similar when you meet a black person: "Is this a run-of-the-mill black or is he or she an exception that I can respect and treat like a peer?"

This is not intended to be another hoop for whites to jump through. This is about black responsibility in the reconciliation process.

Obviously, this judging is unfair to whites. But most blacks don't care about the fairness of it. They have a convenient rationalization that goes something like this: In the grand historical scheme of fairness, the incidence of blacks beating the system, blacks placing unfair demands on whites, and whites getting the short end of the stick today is only a brief moment in history—whether this happens through the courts or through affirmative action. And these minor inconveniences whites experience don't even deposit an ounce of weight toward balancing the cosmic scales of historical justice.

There is a problem for those of us who believe that God intends for all believers to be one family and that our faith should supersede our race: We sense that something is not right in our attitudes about whites. Something has been conspicuously missing in our dialogue about racial justice and reconciliation. It is the one characteristic that sets our God and faith apart from all the other religions. It is our secret weapon and the major reason why Christians have the best shot at making racial reconciliation a reality.

I am not all that excited about bringing up the subject of *grace*. It's similar to the way white people don't like apologies for slavery and the injustices of the past because of where that may lead—to a demand for reparations.

Part of my consciousness trembles because it has already calculated the consequences of allowing grace to take its rightful place in reconciliation. That part of me already knows where I am heading with this and that it will not go over very well with my homeys. Still, I know that it is the truth according to the gospel of Jesus.

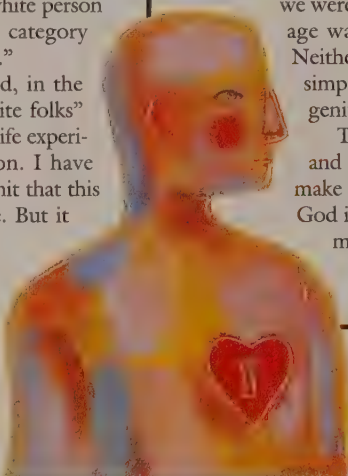
Irreconcilable differences

For more than 10 years, Chris Rice, my white ministry partner, and I have preached the importance of relationships in achieving racial reconciliation. We are so adamant about this because most of what we have learned and now teach comes out of our own relationship.

For what was not the first time nor likely to be the last, Chris and I had come to what seemed like insurmountable obstacles in our relationship. By summer's end, both of us held tightly to a long mental list of ways that each of us had hurt or disappointed the other. We were close to settling for irreconcilable differences and going our separate ways.

But in order to demonstrate that we were good Christian boys, we sought the counsel of some dear friends. In my mind, we were just going through the motions. The damage was already done. The pain was too great. Neither of us was prepared for the overwhelming simplicity, the complete absurdity, and illogical genius of God's amazing grace.

The brand of Christianity that both Chris and I feebly attempt to live by demands that we make a good-faith effort to follow when we feel God is leading. Trying to live up to that commitment allowed us to be bushwhacked by John and Judy Alexander and their ramblings about grace.



Practicing forgiveness will mean "white folks" category and practice

"Yeah, yeah, I know all about grace," I thought. I could quote John 3:16 when I was knee high to a duck. Grace is God's love demonstrated to us, even though we don't deserve it. But in all my 43 years of evangelical teaching, I never understood until now that God intended for grace to be a way of life for his followers. Maybe I'm the only one who missed it, but judging by the way that we all get along, I don't think so. Sure, I knew that we are supposed to love one another as Christ loved us. But somehow it was much easier for me to swallow the lofty untested notion of dying for each other than simply giving grace to brothers and sisters on a daily basis, the way God gives us grace. Maybe I'm dense, but I just never got it.

At our relationship's weakest moment, Chris and I saw, as clearly as we had ever seen anything, that only by giving each other grace could we find healing and restoration. We could either hold on to our grievances and demand that all our hurts be redressed, or we could follow God's example, give each other grace, and trust God when we lacked the ability to forgive. We chose grace.

I heard a well-known Christian black woman tell about her grown daughter getting into a fight with a white woman on an airplane. Although she taught her children all their lives to be nonviolent, a smile crept across her face and a gleam of pleasure twinkled in her eyes as she described how her daughter "gave that white woman a black eye." Although this woman believed wholeheartedly in racial reconciliation, there was still something deep down in her that felt it was payback every time a white person got the short end of the stick at the hands of someone black. And she's not alone.

Because blacks have suffered unjustly at the hands of whites,

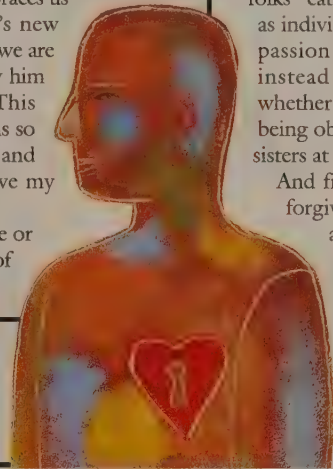
our brand of Christianity has allowed us to hang on to this particular category of unforgiveness. Sure, we say that we are willing to forgive, and we do. But that special dispensation is reserved for whites who prove that they are "worthy."

I stumbled across Philip Yancey's landmark book, *What's So Amazing About Grace*, just when Chris and I were discovering grace all over again. God was attacking me with grace from all angles. According to Yancey, "Grace is unfair, which is one of the hardest things about it. It is unreasonable to expect a woman to forgive the terrible things her father did to her just because he apologizes many years later. . . . Grace, however, is not about fairness."

It is just as unreasonable for blacks to forgive whites for past and present mistreatment. But grace is not about being fair. We wouldn't dare demand fairness from God. What's so amazing about grace is that God forgives us and embraces us even though we don't deserve it. What's new about grace, at least for me, is that because we are grateful for what God did for us, we allow him to do the same to others through us. This means that if I know this loving God who is so full of grace, then I will forgive, accept, and embrace those who, like me, don't deserve my grace and forgiveness.

Our willingness and ability to give grace or to forgive others is an accurate indicator of how well we know God.

Learning to dismantle the old seeing whites as individuals.



A new player

We African Americans have rightly considered much of white Christianity illegitimate because it accommodated itself so conveniently to racism. But lately I have been questioning our own brand of Christianity. What does our inability to forgive and embrace undeserving whites say about our knowledge of and intimacy with this God of grace?

When I was much younger and just beginning to wrestle with the concept of reconciliation, I was occasionally asked if I had forgiven the men who beat and almost killed my father, or the white classmates who made my life hell while I was integrating a segregated school. At that time, my response always focused on the ones who had committed the offense. "They've never asked me to forgive them," I would say. End of discussion.

However, Jesus knew that the only sure way to peace on earth and peace of mind was for humans to practice forgiveness. His last words on the cross were spoken aloud so that we would have an example to follow. "Father, forgive them because they don't know what they are doing." Jesus forgave without being asked. For our own sakes, not the offenders', we are expected to do the same.

Black Christians possessing a truly Christlike faith would not only be compelled, but would also be willing and empowered to forgive specific white offenders. Moreover, we would have the faith and compassion to begin practicing forgiveness to the nameless collective we refer to as "white folks."

I believe that African Americans will easily grasp the implications and magnitude of totally and unconditionally forgiving "white folks." Some blacks will find ways to justify themselves.

Others will rise to the challenge. My sister, who vowed as a child never to like white people, is just now beginning the process.

In December she participated in a first-of-its-kind gathering in our city. We brought together 25 black Christian leaders and 25 white Christian leaders for an intense, honest, off-the-record dialogue on racial reconciliation. I have been participating in racial dialogue gatherings for more than 15 years, and everyone agreed that none of us had ever been involved in anything this honest. Two days after the gathering, in our small group meeting, my sister bravely confessed through her tears that she, for the first time in her life, had begun the process of forgiving "white folks."

For Joanie and many other African Americans, practicing forgiveness will mean beginning to dismantle the old "white folks" category and practicing the discipline of seeing whites as individuals. It will mean responding with Christlike compassion and kindness to whites who reach out a hand, instead of going through the process of determining whether or not they are "worthy." It will mean no longer being obsessed with the blindness of our white brothers and sisters at the expense of tolerating our own.

And finally, reconciliation will ultimately mean not only forgiving and tolerating, but fully embracing each other as brothers and sisters, all of us equally unworthy in the eyes of God.

No, it ain't fair, but it's right. And God understands that there will be slip-ups and wrong turns, moments of anger and unforgiveness. But as we grow in our discipleship of grace, each day will bring more victories. And when we fail, our God, who is full of grace, is eager to forgive. The more I have come to know this divine quality, the dearer he becomes to me, and the more I want to demonstrate this quality to others.

What about justice?

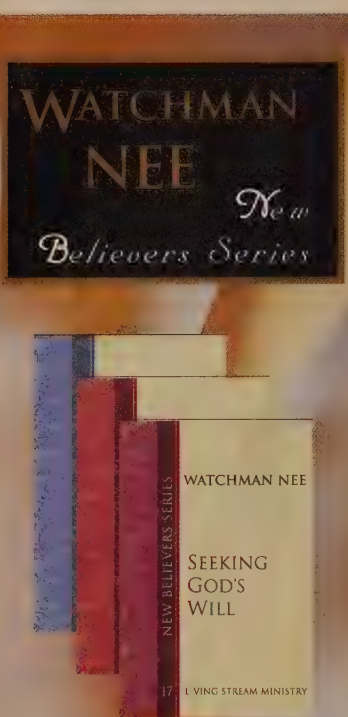
I grew up in one of the most justice-oriented families in this country. My father has been called a modern-day prophet of justice. Two of his most popular books are entitled *Let Justice Roll Down* and *With Justice for All*.

Nothing that I have been learning about grace and forgiveness diminishes my belief in Christians working for justice, especially on behalf of the poor and oppressed. I know many tired soldiers who, like me, have fought for social justice most of their lives. Nothing in the Scriptures even hints that these modern-day prophets of justice should soften their message.

But I know that some of them have carried an extra weight of resentment against people they consider oppressors and against people of privilege who seem to care nothing about the poor. I recognize it in them because I feel it in myself. But what I have found and latched onto is a whole new way of looking at those who refuse to hear the message of justice.

Although we must continue to speak on behalf of those who are oppressed and warn oppressors, my willingness to forgive them is not dependent on how they respond. Being able to extend grace and to forgive people sets us free. We no longer need to spend precious emotional energy thinking about the day oppressors will get what they deserve.

What I am learning about grace lifts a weight from my shoulders, which is nothing short of invigorating. When we can forgive and accept those who refuse to listen to God's command to do justice, it allows them to hear God's judgment without feeling a



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personal judgment from us. Which, in the end gives our message more integrity. The ability to give grace while preaching justice makes our witness even more effective.

Taking baby steps

"Daddy, come quick," shouted my four-year-old daughter. "Someone stole the presents from under the Christmas tree."

At first I thought it was a joke that the children were playing on me. But immediately I could see that they were visibly upset. Apparently someone had come into our house while we slept, picked out some choice presents, removed the blanket that covers my favorite chair, and used it to haul away about a dozen or so gifts that were to be given to the children and to friends and family on Christmas morning.

To say that the children were angry would be an understatement. My 11-year-old son, Jonathan, after realizing that among the gifts stolen were his brand new Nike sneakers, stormed out of the house in tears.

I sat silent on my coverless chair, stunned, fuming. I had seen the children's Christmas special *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* dozens of times since childhood. But I never believed such a tale could come true. How do you forgive a person like this? How do I teach my children to practice forgiveness?

Because it is unnatural, we have to practice forgiveness, like any other discipline. According to Dr. King, "Forgiveness is not just an occasional act: It is a permanent attitude."

Later that day I put the question to my son, "How should we respond as Christians to the person who tried to steal our Christmas?"

"Yeah, yeah, I know, Dad," he said. "Even though he doesn't deserve it, we're supposed to give him grace."

Sure, I knew that the words that came out of his mouth were almost the complete opposite of what he was feeling in his heart (I knew because I felt the same way). But I also knew we had to start somewhere. And if, one step at a time, our discipleship as Christians could include giving each other grace, if our children could learn and practice forgiveness as well as they practice praise and worship, if we could literally create a counterculture of grace, then just maybe, as we all mature in our faith, our hearts could finally line up with our words.

And the world would have to take notice. **CT**



*How my hometown
deals with being
the execution capital
of the world.*

VIRGINIA STEM OWENS

Karla Faye's Final Stop



LISA RIGSTAD

When I moved back this year to Huntsville, Texas, my childhood home, only one small cloud shaded my anticipation of warmer weather, a longer growing season, and waking up to mockingbirds calling through the morning mists. Though it has grown a good bit since I lived here as a child, my hometown has remained verdant, well kept, and user friendly. Live oaks still arch the walks of the state university. Redbuds, jonquils, and bluebonnets paint the early spring hillsides. The crime rate is low and church attendance high. Huntsville's public-spirited citizens volunteer to teach literacy classes, sort used clothing for Good Shepherd Mission, and serve as docents for the historical museum.

Such manifest virtues got Huntsville named the

most desirable place to live in Texas on a recent survey of the nation's best small cities. But the compilers failed to mention the distinction that darkens my hometown's history: Huntsville is also the execution capital of the nation.

If you drive just two blocks east of the courthouse square, past the auto-parts store, the shop advertising Perfect Nails, and the First Baptist Church, you come to The Walls, the prison where the state of Texas last year put to death 37 men—a number that equals the combined executions in all the other states. Since 1976, when the U.S. Supreme Court lifted the ban on capital punishment, one-third of all the nation's executions have taken place in this small town. At this moment, 446 people wait on Death Row at the Ellis Unit, a few miles outside the city limits.

Huntsville citizens are not proud of this distinction. In fact, it makes them—or I should say us—downright uncomfortable, especially since the executions, which used to be done in the dead of night, are now performed at six in the evening, right about the time most of us are sitting down to our suppers. And “performed” became the operative word last February at the execution of Karla Faye Tucker, who, 14 years earlier, had taken a pickax and, with a friend, hacked the life out of two people. A week before her sentence was scheduled to be carried out, camera crews, international news teams, Amnesty International representatives, and victims’-rights advocates crowded our town to chronicle the event. Every motel room was booked, the town’s restaurants were packed, the Enterprise car rental office overwhelmed. Even the stylist who did Bianca Jagger’s hair for the occasion got interviewed by the press.

No one denies that the town is economically dependent on the prison system—or as it is now called, the Department of Criminal Justice. Crime pays in Huntsville—the salaries of our six prisons’ 7,000 employees, to be specific. Gray TDCJ (Texas Department of Criminal Justice) uniforms show up everywhere—shopping at Kroger, picking up children at daycare centers, eating at fast-food restaurants. If Texas felons suddenly reformed or went elsewhere to rob banks or shoot their wives, the Wal-Mart superstore out by the Interstate would have to shut its automatic doors.

Yet incarcerating criminals is not quite the same as executing them, especially when they turn into born-again Christians. Though the local newspaper’s informal poll showed most of Huntsville’s citizens favored executing Karla Faye, despite her religious conversion and changed life, the citizenry would still have preferred the sentence be carried out elsewhere.

So even as the city’s tourism board met to figure out a way to bring good out of this evil, ordinary townsfolk retreated to their homes to wait out the media invasion, the way they would batten down against a hurricane blowing in off the Gulf. Everyone knew that rowdy fraternity boys, drinking beer and waving Rebel flags, would treat the execution like a human fox hunt. Yet even diehard death-penalty advocates shuddered at the bad impression of our town these unseemly shenanigans would make. We expected that the world’s media, camped on our small doorstep, would portray Huntsvillians as uniformly sanctioning and collectively responsible for killing this repentant woman.

Huntsville has always been the location for executions in Texas, yet until Karla Faye Tucker’s execution we had never felt our imputed guilt quite so keenly. The U.S. Supreme Court’s 1972 ruling against capital punishment had given Huntsville a respite from its dark heritage, and even after the death penalty

became legal again in 1976, another six years would pass before anyone was actually executed in Texas. That decade-long hiatus temporarily lightened the dark cloud over our town.

But during the past decade, steadily growing numbers of convicted murderers have been making their way to the gurney waiting on the second floor of The Walls. Before the ban on capital punishment, prisoners had met their end strapped down in Old Sparky, the low-tech electric chair now displayed in the Texas Prison Museum on the courthouse square between Rogers Shoe Store and Ernst Jewelers. As a child, I had listened to the local legend telling why these executions were carried out at midnight. Supposedly, the lights dimmed all over town when the switch was thrown. But I never quite understood the point. Was the late hour meant to avoid an inconvenient interruption of services, or to evade an unpleasant reminder of what was happening across town?

We don’t have to worry about execution brownouts nowadays, however. After the right to rid themselves of their worst offenders against peace and safety was restored to the states, Texas initiated a purportedly more humane method of execution—lethal injection. Now the smell of singed feathers no longer pervades the execution chamber. The prisoner’s limbs don’t jerk, and there’s no danger the body will catch fire as one did in Florida last year. The only accouterments are a white-sheeted hospital gurney and a doctor with a syringe containing pancuronium chloride. The process is quick—the chemical takes effect in 18 to 20 seconds—and the experience is certainly easier on the survivors’ sensibilities. But I wonder if such medically modeled executions are good for our collective soul? Does this switch in styles show we have grown more humane or merely more fastidious about our own feelings?

My grandfather, who worked as a prison guard during the chain-gang era when a prison was still called a penitentiary, insisted on the justice of the death penalty as retribution. A life for a life. At the same time, he considered executions occasions of high seriousness. He debated the subject with rhetorical passion, but also with a reverential awe that today seems almost antique. To take a human life was to put oneself in the place of God, who only could give it. Though he upheld society’s right to exact retribution for capital crimes, he owned that pulling the lever that released the necessary voltage to kill a man might be beyond his personal capacities. And he pitied the man whose job it was.

By that simple confession he early and unwittingly influenced my own attitude toward this thorny subject more than any theologian or legal expert since. Could I throw the switch? It came down to that simple question. As a child, I could feel my skin grow cold when I pondered an answer. However, since coming back to Huntsville, I have yet to hear anyone wonder aloud if he could depress the plunger in the syringe.

Sometimes it takes an outsider to point out the elephant in the living room. The town’s Episcopal rector, still considered a newcomer here after four years, decided last year to see for himself what goes on outside The Walls during an execution. He stood in the parking lot across the street from the prison on an evening when the death sentence was served on one of the 37 men last year. Groups for and against the death penalty clotted opposite corners of the parking lot, he reported. Some had come to celebrate, some to accuse. “One side was yelling ‘Kill him!’ and the other side was yelling ‘Murderers!’”



RNS/REUTERS

*Could I throw
the switch?
It came down
to that simple
question.*

he said. "I didn't feel like I belonged on either corner."

Still, he felt the church should be taking some notice of such a momentous event. Among the town's 31 churches, no congregation had ever met to pray on the day of an execution. However, on February 3 at 5:30 P.M., just as Karla Faye Tucker was being readied for the gurney, some of the members of Saint Stephen's parish, along with a number of other townsfolk, gathered at the church to pray. Television camera crews, getting wind of this new angle, asked to film the service but were turned away. The service was not a demonstration for or against capital punishment. We were there to pray for someone who was dying, for those already dead, for those they left behind.

In my pew that evening, I feel my skin grow cold again the way it did when I listened to my grandfather telling about the man throwing the switch for Old Sparky. I think about the husband of the woman Karla Faye killed. His wheelchair is parked now, facing a plate-glass window through which the state's invited guests view executions. He has told reporters he will relish watching Karla Faye die.

A church member who leads weekend prison retreats reads the Old Testament lesson—Genesis 4, the story of Cain. "Sin is crouching at the door. . . . Am I my brother's keeper? . . . Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground. . . . My punishment is more than I can bear. . . . Then the Lord put a mark on Cain so that no one who found him would kill him" (NIV).

I recall the slogans on the placards I saw in the parking lot across from The Walls. "Hands off Cain," demand signs on one corner. "Forget the injection, use a pickax," the other side's say.

A man who works as a prison guard reads the New Testament lesson—Luke 23, the thief on the cross. "Are you not the Christ? . . . we are receiving the due reward for our deeds. . . . [T]oday you will be with me in Paradise" (RSV).

I think about the brother of the murder victim, a thin, sad man I saw interviewed this afternoon. His sister's death opened a way for him to find peace in Jesus, he told the reporter. Otherwise, he would still harbor the same rage the rest of his family feels. They don't speak to him anymore, he told the reporter. "I understand. I just don't know what they'll do when they wake up a year from now and find the pain is still there."

The Prayers of the People are led by a retired parole officer. We pray for Karla Faye's sincere contrition and confidence in Jesus Christ, for eternal peace for her victims, for forgiving hearts for their families, for the guards that are preparing Karla Faye for execution, for the chaplains, the warden, the judges, the jury, the attorneys. The board of pardons and paroles, the governor. For the executioners.

And last, we pray "for the people of Huntsville, that we remain distressed and avoid complacency." I find the words sticking in my throat. It was easy to pray for the others. It's harder to pray for ourselves.

In fact, I find the experience both an upper and a downer. Holding a person, rather than an issue, in your mind makes it more painful to picture the scene unfolding on both sides of the plate-glass window at The Walls. Nevertheless, I feel a strangely incongruous surge of joy as we stand and hold hands to sing "Amazing Grace," the default setting these days for expressing the spiritually inexpressible. Where does this joy come from, I wonder? It feels like some kind of victory—not ours, certainly. We are merely witnessing that repentance counts, even when the cost is everything. That forgiveness alters reality.

The next week, however, we discover to our dismay that we have to come back and do it all over again. This time we're praying for Steven Renfro who, on August 25, 1996, according to his confession, took 70 Valium tablets, washed them down with liquor, then dressed in camouflage clothes, blackened his face, and shot his girlfriend, Rhena, and her Aunt Rose, who lived with them in the East Texas town of Marshall. Afterward, armed with four guns, one an assault rifle, and 500 rounds of ammunition, he went to a nearby trailer house and shot George Counts, a man against whom he had a grudge. He fired 150 rounds into the trailer, and when police turned up to check out reports of gunfire, he turned the patrol car "into Swiss cheese," hitting an officer in the shoulder.

The state of Steven Renfro's soul remains a mystery. Unlike Karla Faye, he has granted no interviews from prison, nor has he appeared on television or developed a Web page. We only see video clips of him on the evening news the day he dies. Surrounded by a phalanx of gray uniforms, the prisoner moves in the protracted bob of slow motion along the hall as if they are all—the condemned man and his guards—swimming through the same thick tide of time. His hair is dark, as is the full mustache weighing his grim mouth. His eyes catch the camera only briefly before turning back to focus down the hall where they are leading him.

As soon as he was taken into custody, Steven Renfro confessed to the arresting officers and has never gone back on that confession. As it turned out, Rick Berry, the district attorney who prosecuted this case, had gone to high school with the accused. Steven Renfro made it easy for his former classmate by assuring the jury at the conclusion of his trial that he deserved to die for his crime. They didn't argue with him. Neither did the judge. In the months that followed, Steven Renfro was adamant that no appeals be filed on his behalf. He wanted the death sentence carried out as soon as possible.

The state of Texas obliged him. It took 14 years to kill Karla Faye Tucker. It took only 10 months to execute Steven Renfro. Karla Faye had thousands of supporters. Steven Renfro had Rick Berry.

After the hearing to set the execution date, the district attorney picked up hamburgers at McDonald's and shared them with the murderer in his office. As they ate, they reminisced about growing up in Marshall, then talked about life and the death penalty. "We had a kind of handshake deal," Rick Berry says, "that we were going to see this thing through."

Twelve hundred demonstrators, both for and against the death penalty, along with two hundred reporters, had poured into Huntsville days in advance of Karla Faye Tucker's execution. The next week, a scant two dozen people showed up less than an hour before Steven Renfro was scheduled to die. Rick Berry was one of them.

Though Steven Renfro had refused to give any interviews from Death Row, Rick Berry, his prosecutor and friend, provided the public some interpretation for his unusual—and some would say misguided—resistance to judicial appeals. According to Berry, Steven Renfro's religious convictions governed those decisions as surely as Karla Faye's conversion guided hers. He saw his execution "as a way to get to heaven," the attorney says. "By voluntarily going ahead and being punished, it's like atonement. He was pretty adamant about this."

The notion of atonement, of making up for, of balancing moral accounts in some cosmic zero-sum game, has little currency in contemporary Western culture. It's the opposite of fil-

ing for bankruptcy. It's like submitting to elective retribution. Even Christians struggle to understand the concept. Most of us find atonement efficacious only when applied to Jesus.

Karla Faye Tucker's supporters, especially evangelicals, based their opposition to her execution on the changes her conversion effected in her. Even inside the prison's walls she was making a positive contribution to society. So why wipe out her potential for doing good? For years the same argument has been made by those who see prison as a means to rehabilitation, a position evangelicals have not always taken. They have tended to agree with Steven Renfro and the Old Testament: criminals must pay with their own lives for the ones they take. Retribution makes sense in a tit-for-tat world. It elevates the value of human life by putting a high price on it. But can one life make up for the three Steven Renfro took? Can anyone work the moral arithmetic required to solve this problem, I wondered. Only a few people came to the service that evening. How do you weigh the mere handful of prayers for Steven Renfro?

Two weeks later, though, the church is full again. It's Ash Wednesday, and the execution scheduled for that evening has been stayed, pending an appeal. Instead of the Litany for an Execution, we are starting our series of Lenten soup suppers and speakers. Tonight the soup is vegetable and the speaker James Brazzil, chaplain at The Walls unit, the man the state of Texas pays to provide spiritual counsel for the people it puts to death.

At supper, I sit across the table from a man in a deep blue shirt who identifies himself as a producer from National Public Radio. He explains he came to Huntsville to do a story on the execution scheduled for that day. "I guess I'll have to leave though," he says, hunkering over his bowl. "I know it sounds callous, but the execution is the story. If it doesn't happen, there's not any story."

Chaplain Brazzil, his reddish hair thinning and his sport coat barely buttoning across his middle, begins by telling several stories. As he speaks, his fair skin flushes peach with fervor. His deft narratives soon put us in the damp palm of his hand. We feel the urgency in these stories that come from the borderland between life and death. He reads us the note Karla Faye wrote in his Bible the day she was executed, the first time he has shared it in public. He also tells of men he has accompanied to the death chamber whose faith he found as authentic as hers.

From his Bible he pulls another letter, this one written to one of those men by his 16-year-old daughter the week he was executed. In it, she tells her father she thinks about him often, even though she has not seen him since she was two years old. She says she has never really known him and recognizes she will never have that chance now. She tells him she wishes she had the faith he has told her he's been given, but he'll be gone, and no one else has ever spoken to her about Jesus.

The chaplain folds the letter carefully and puts it away. In the morning, he tells us, he will be out at Peckerwood Hill, the graveyard for inmates who die unclaimed in prison. Except for the two bodies he'll be burying and the inmates operating the backhoe, he'll be the only one there.

I glance over at the NPR producer who said there is no story without an execution. I wonder if he can feel the weight of the stories filling up this room. Maybe not. Maybe you have to live here in Huntsville.

CI

Virginia Stem Owens is former director of the Milton Center in Wichita, Kansas, and author of Looking for Jesus, forthcoming from Westminster-John Knox.

David Horn ON Distance Learning

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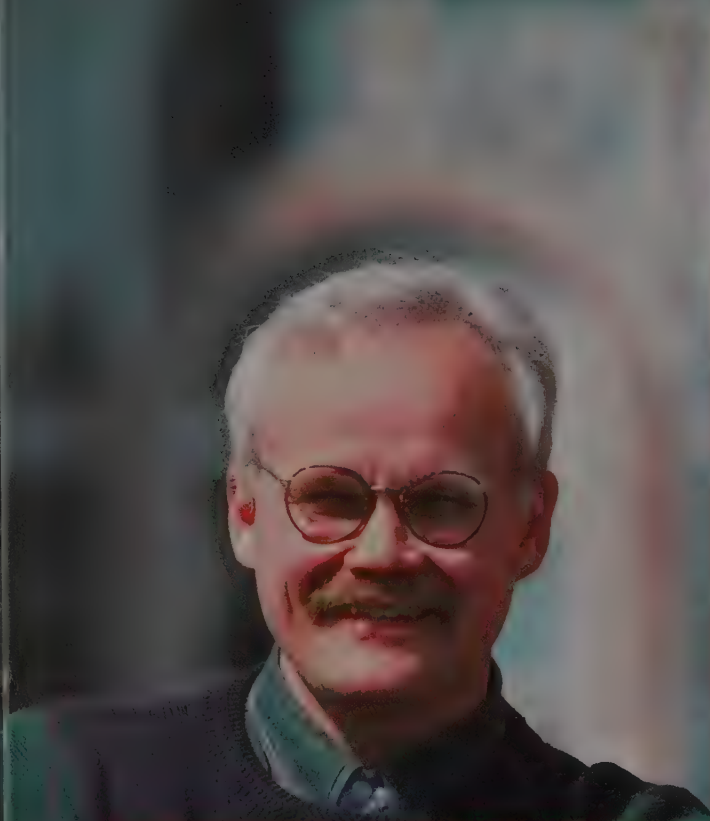
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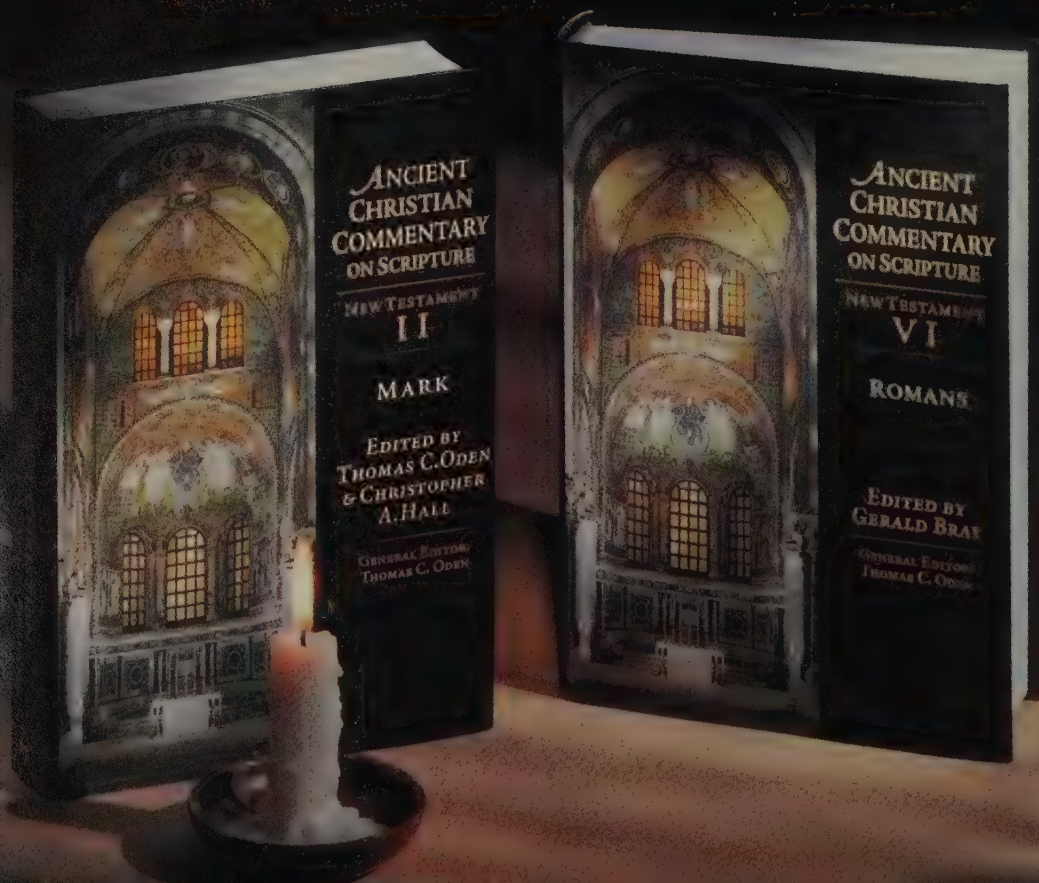
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What's Wrong with Spirituality?

The Gospel of Mark's prescription for spiritual sanity.

Eugene H. Peterson



ILLUSTRATED ALASKAN MOOSE

on. Each character contributes something essential to the quest. The world is large with meaning, and no one is left out—but no one is sure what the North Pole is, not even Christopher Robin who proposed the expedition.

Along the way little Roo falls into a stream and needs rescuing—everyone pitches in. Pooh picks up a pole and fishes him out. The emergency over, the animals talk it over while Pooh stands there with the pole in his hands. Christopher Robin then says,

"Pooh . . . where did you find that pole?"

Pooh looked at the pole in his hands.

"I just found it," he said, "I thought it ought to be useful. I just picked it up."

"Pooh," said Christopher Robin solemnly, "the Expedition is over. You have found the North Pole!"

"Oh!" said Pooh.

The animals go on with their desultory, haphazard conversation for a while until Christopher Robin finally gets them back to attending to the North Pole that Pooh had discovered.

They stuck the pole in the ground, and Christopher Robin tied a message on to it,
North Pole
Discovered By Pooh
Pooh Found It.

Then they all went home again. . . .

What I so suddenly "saw" as I was listening to Jan read was the culture in which I live, peopled with engaging characters out looking for a vaguely defined spirituality (the "North Pole"). Every once in a while one of them picks up something and someone says, "That's it!" Sure enough, it does look like "it." And someone, usually a "spiritual authority" (Christopher Robin), hangs a sign on it: "Spirituality." And then everyone goes home again, until the next expedition is proposed.

People are attracted to "spirituality" in increasing numbers these days. Fresh expeditions for the "North Pole" set out almost daily from most places in the country. (The "East Pole" and the "West Pole" are also options). As I listened to the story that late autumn evening, I recognized many of the "characters" whom I love and admire so much but am not content to leave as is: I want to honor every

Recently my wife started reading *Winnie the Pooh* to me. She had read it to our children 35 years ago, and I had overheard parts of it. But she thought it would be good if I got it whole and firsthand before it was too late.

One evening while she was reading, I was watching the autumn light leak out of the mountain lake that is our front yard and letting the words of the story drift through my consciousness. Suddenly I was fully awake: the blurred world in which I teach and write on Christian spiritual theology came into crisp focus. I saw the people I was working with in a fresh way.

Jan had just completed chapter 8 in which the childlike animals had been assembled by Christopher Robin for an adventure—they were off to discover the North Pole. It is a meandering tale in which everyone takes everything with complete seriousness, although no one understands much of what is going

detail of their childlike charm, but I also want to show them both what and where the “North Pole” is. I want to lead them to Jesus.

Fundamental to the Christian task of dealing with our meaning-hungry, spirit-thirsty, God-curious world is to teach and preach the Holy Scriptures as the Revelation of Life, the life defined and created by Jesus. This has always been necessary, but there is a contemporary urgency to the task in these times in which we are flooded with “spiritualities” that, ignorant of Jesus, are developed from the various and sundry experiences of Christopher Robin and friends, especially Pooh, “a bear of very little brain.”

If the Holy Spirit through Scripture as a whole both forms the company and provides the map to the “North Pole,” the Gospel of Mark is as good a place as any to take our bearings. The entire canon of Scripture is our comprehensive text, but Mark as the first Gospel holds a certain primacy. It is *the* basic text for Christian spirituality.

Formed by gospel

No one had ever written a Christian gospel before Mark wrote his. He created a new genre. It turned out to be a form of writing that quickly became both foundational and formative for the life of church and Christian.

The Bible as a whole comes to us in the form of narrative, and it is within this large, somewhat sprawling narrative that Mark writes his gospel. Stories invite us into a world other than ourselves, and, if they are good and true stories, a world larger than ourselves. Bible stories are good and true stories, and the world that they invite us into is the world of God’s creation and salvation and blessing.

This is in contrast to the ancient preference for myth making, which turns us into spectators of the supernatural. It is also in contrast to the modern preference for moral philosophy that puts us in charge of our own salvation. “Gospel story” is a verbal way of accounting for reality that, like its subject—the Incarnation—is simultaneously divine and human. It *reveals* something we could never come up with on our own by observation or experiment or guess; and at the same time, it *engages*, it brings us into the action as recipients and participants without dumping the responsibility



ty on us for making it turn out right.

This has great implications for our spirituality, for the form itself protects us against two major ways we go off the rails: becoming frivolous spectators, clamoring for new and more exotic entertainment out of heaven; or, becoming anxious moralists, putting our shoulders to the wheel and taking on the burdens of the world. The very form of the text shapes responses in us that make it hard to become a mere spectator or a mere moralist. This is not a text that we master, it is one that we are mastered by.

Spirituality is the attention we give to our souls, to the invisible interior of our lives that is the core of our identity, these image-of-God souls that comprise our uniqueness and glory. Spirituality would appear to be a wonderful thing, and our initial exclamation is most likely, “Would that all the Lord’s people were so engaged!” But 20 centuries of experience in spirituality qualifies our enthusiasm considerably. In actual practice, it turns out to be not so wonderful. When you look at our history, it is no wonder that spirituality is so often treated with suspicion, and not infrequently with outright hostility. For in actual practice, spirituality very often develops into neurosis, degenerates into selfishness, becomes pretentious, turns violent. How does this happen?

The short answer is that it happens when we step outside the gospel story and take ourselves as the basic and authoritative text for our spirituality; we begin exegesis of ourselves as a sacred text. We don’t usually throw the gospel out; we merely put it on the shelf and think that we are honoring it by consulting it from time to time as an indispensable reference work.

Our spiritual guides tell us, “You are wonderful, glorious beings, precious

souls. Your aspirations for holiness and goodness and truth are splendid. But you are not the content of spirituality; God revealed in Jesus is that. You need a text to read and study and learn from—here’s your text, the gospel of Jesus Christ. Start with Mark’s gospel as your basic text.”

We open the text and read the story of Jesus, an odd kind of story. It tells us very little of what interests us in a story. We learn virtually nothing about Jesus that we really want to know. There is no description of his appearance. Nothing about his origin, friends, education, family. How are we to evaluate or understand this person? And there is very little reference to what he thought, to how he felt, his emotions, his interior struggles.

At some point or other we realize that this is a story about God—and about us. Even though Jesus is the most referred-to person in the story, there is a surprising reticence in regard to Jesus. Jesus is the revelation of God, so we are always being faced in Jesus with what we are faced with in God: most of what is here we don’t get, we don’t see, don’t understand. We don’t figure Jesus out, we don’t search Jesus out, we don’t get Jesus on our terms. It follows that neither do we get God on our terms. As a story, it is a most unsatisfying story.

And then we realize that our attention has been drawn away from ourselves and is on Jesus, God revealed in Jesus. True spirituality, Christian spirituality, takes attention off of ourselves and focuses it on another, on Jesus.

There are others in the story, of course, many others—the sick and hungry, victims and outsiders, friends and enemies. But Jesus is always the subject. No event and no person appears in this story apart from Jesus. Jesus provides both context and content for everyone’s life. Spirituality—the attention we give to our souls—turns out in practice (when we let Saint Mark

There can hardly be any question about the intent of Saint Mark: the plot and emphasis and meaning of Jesus is his death.

shape our practice) to be the attention we give to God revealed in Jesus. The text trains us in such perception and practice. Line after line, page after page—Jesus, Jesus, Jesus. None of us provides the content for our own spirituality; it is given to us; Jesus gives it to us. The text allows for no exceptions.



The death of Jesus

As we read this text we soon discover that the entire story funnels into the narration of the events of a single week of Jesus' life, the week of his passion, death, and resurrection. And of these three items, death gets the most detailed treatment. If we are asked to say as briefly as possible what Mark's gospel consists of, we must say, "the death of Jesus."

That doesn't sound very promising, especially for those of us who are looking for a text by which to live, a text by which to nurture our souls. But there it is. There are 16 chapters in the story. For the first eight, Jesus is alive, strolling unhurriedly through the villages and backroads of Galilee, bringing others to life.

And then, just as he has everyone's attention, he starts talking about death. The last eight chapters of the Gospel are dominated by death talk.

The death announcement also signals a change of pace. As the story is told through the first eight chapters, there is a leisurely and meandering quality to the narration. But with the death announcement, that changes: now he heads straight for Jerusalem. Urgency and gravity and destination now characterize the narration. The direction changes, the pace changes, the mood changes. Three times Jesus is explicit: he is going to suffer and be killed and rise again (8:31; 9:31; 10:33).

And then it happens: death. Jesus' death is narrated carefully and precisely. No incident in his life is told with this much detail. There can hardly be any question about Mark's intent: the plot and emphasis and meaning of Jesus is his death. This is a carefully *defined* death. It is defined as voluntary. Jesus did not have to go to Jerusalem; he went on his own volition. He gave his assent to death. This was not accidental death; this was not an unavoidable death.

It is defined as sacrificial. He accepted

death that others might receive life, "his life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45; cf. 14:23–24).

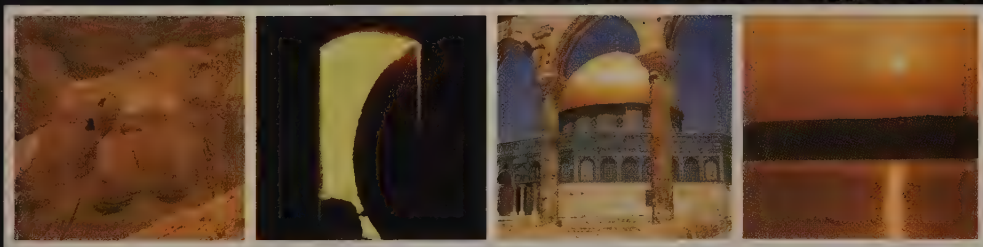
And it is defined in the company of resurrection. Each of the three explicit death announcements concludes with a statement of resurrection. The gospel story as a whole concludes with a witness to resurrection. This does not make it any less a death, but it is a quite differently defined death than we are accustomed to dealing with.

Tragedy and *procrastination* are the words that characterize our culture's attitude toward death. The tragic view of death is a legacy of the Greeks. The Greeks wrote with elegance of tragic deaths—lives that were caught up in the working out of large, impersonal forces, lives pursued with the best of intentions, but then enmeshed in circumstances that canceled the intentions, circumstances indifferent to human heroism or hope. The death of Jesus is not tragic.

The procrastinated death is a legacy of modern medicine. In a culture where life is reduced to heartbeat and brainwave, death can never be accepted as such. Since there is no more to life than can be

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accounted for by biology—no meaning, no spirituality, no eternity—increasingly desperate attempts are made to put it off, to delay it, to deny it. The death of Jesus is not procrastinated.

It is essential that we counter our culture by letting Mark's storytelling shape our understanding of death and eventually come to understand our own death within the rich dimensions and relations of Jesus' story.

The ascetic and the aesthetic

Right at the center of Mark's text is a passage that I designate as the "spirituality" of the text: 8:27–9:9. It is set at the center of the gospel story so that one half of the Gospel, the multiple Galilean evocations of life, falls symmetrically on one side, and on the other side, the single-minded travel to Jerusalem and death.

This passage consists of two stories. The first story, Jesus' call for renunciation as he and his disciples start out on the road to Jerusalem, provides the *ascetic* dimension in spirituality. The second story, Jesus' transfiguration on Mount Tabor, provides the *aesthetic* di-

mension in spirituality.

The stories are bracketed at either end by affirmations of Jesus' true identity as God among us: first, Peter saying, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God"; second, the voice out of heaven saying, "This is my beloved son, listen to him." Human testimony at one end, divine attestation at the other.

These stories are organically connected. They are the two-beat rhythm in a single spiritual theology, not two alternate ways of doing spiritual theology. The two stories bring together the ascetic and aesthetic movements, the no and the yes that work together at the heart of spiritual theology.

The ascetic. This is God's no in Jesus. Jesus' words are succinct and stark: "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me" (8:34). The ascetic life deals with life on the road.

The verbs that leap out of the sentence and pounce on us are "deny yourself" and "take up your cross." Renunciation and death. It feels like an assault, an attack. We recoil.

But then we notice that these two negatives are bracketed by the positive verb "follow," first as an infinitive, then as an imperative. "If anyone wants to follow" opens the sentence; "you follow me" concludes it. Jesus is going someplace; he invites us to come along. There is no hostility in that. It sounds, in fact, quite glorious: the great verb "follow" sheds glory on the negative verbs that call for renunciation and death.

There is always a strong ascetic element in true spiritual theology. Following Jesus means *not* following your impulses and appetites and whims and dreams, all of which are sufficiently damaged by sin to make them unreliable guides for getting anyplace worth going. Following Jesus means *not* following the death-procrastinating, death-denying practices of a culture that, by obsessively pursuing life under the aegis of idols and ideologies, ends up with a life that is so constricted and diminished that it is hardly worthy of the name.

Grammatically, the negative, our capacity to say no, is one of the most impressive features of our language. The

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Dennis Schlappi was a husband, father of three kids, and an electrical engineer when he felt God's call to full-time ministry.

negative is our access to freedom. Only humans can say no. Animals can't say no. Animals do what instinct dictates. The judicious, well-placed no frees us from many a blind alley, many a rough detour, frees us from debilitating distractions and seductive sacrilege. The art of saying no sets us free to follow Jesus.

If we adhere carefully to Mark's text, we will never associate the ascetic with the life-denying. Ascetic practice sweeps out the clutter of the god-prententious self, making ample space for Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; it embraces and prepares for a kind of death that the culture knows nothing about, making room for the dance of resurrection. Whenever we are around someone who is doing this well, we notice the lightness of step, the nimbleness of spirit, the quickness to laughter.

The aesthetic. Alongside Mark's ascetic is his aesthetic. This is God's yes in Jesus. Peter, James, and John see Jesus transfigured before them on the mountain into cloud-brightness in the company of Moses and Elijah and hear God's blessing, "This is my Son, the Beloved, listen to him!" (9:7). The aesthetic deals with life on the mountain. The word *beauty* does not occur in the story, but beauty is what the disciples experienced, and what we find ourselves experiencing.

There is always a strong aesthetic element in true spiritual theology. Climbing the mountain with Jesus means coming upon beauty that takes our breath away. Staying in the company of Jesus means contemplating his glory, listening in on this vast, intergenerational conversation consisting of law and prophet and gospel that takes place around Jesus, hearing the divine confirmation of revelation in Jesus. When God's Spirit makes his appearance, we recognize the appearance as beautiful.

Now here is the thing about the transfigured Jesus. Jesus is the form of revelation, "and the light does not fall on this form from above and from outside, rather it breaks forth from the form's interior" (Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord*, vol. 1, p. 151). The only adequate response that can be made to light is to keep our eyes open, to attend to what is illumined—adoration.

The aesthetic impulse in spiritual theology has to do with training in perception, acquiring a taste for what is being revealed in Jesus. We are not good at this. Our senses have been dulled by sin. The world, for all its vaunted celebration of sensuality,

Following Jesus means not following your impulses and appetites and whims and dreams.



is relentlessly anesthetic, obliterating feeling by ugliness and noise, draining the beauty out of people and things so that they are functionally efficient, scornful of the aesthetic except as it can be contained in a museum or flower garden. Our senses require healing and rehabilitation so that they are adequate for receiving and responding to visitations and appearances of Spirit, God's Holy Spirit.

These bodies of ours with their five senses are not impediments to a life of faith; our sensuality is not a barrier to spirituality but our only access to it. When John wanted to assure some early Christians of the authenticity of his spiritual experience, he did it by calling on the witness of his senses of sight, hearing, and touch (1 John 1:1). In his opening sentence, he calls on the witness of his senses seven times.

Mark sets this story of glorious affirmation in immediate juxtaposition to his story of stern negation. He knows that, simple and obvious as it is, it is easy to get it wrong. Peter's initial response in both the ascetic road story and the aesthetic mountain story was wrong.

On the road, Peter tried to avoid the cross; on the mountain, he tried to possess the glory. Peter rejected the ascetic way by offering Jesus a better plan, a way of salvation in which no one has to be inconvenienced. Jesus, in the sternest rebuke recorded in the Gospels, called him Satan. Peter rejected the aesthetic way by offering to build memorials on the mountain, a way of worship in which he could take over from Jesus and provide something hands-on and practical. This time Jesus just ignored him.

Peter's propensity to get it wrong keeps us on our toes. Century after century we Christians keep getting it wrong

—and in numerous ways. Every time we get sloppy in reading this text of Saint Mark and leave the company of Jesus, we get it wrong.

One more thing

Mark chose to tell us about Jesus as the revelation of God, a full accounting of Jesus' work of salvation. We are invited to become full participants in the story of Jesus and shown how to become such participants. We are not simply *told* that Jesus is the Son of God; we not only *become* beneficiaries of his atonement; we are invited to die his death and live his life with the freedom and dignity of participants. And here is a marvelous thing: we enter the center of the story without becoming the center of the story.

Spirituality is always in danger of self-absorption, of becoming so intrigued with matters of soul that God is treated as a mere accessory to my experience. This requires much vigilance. Spiritual theology is, among other things, the exercise of this vigilance.

And for this Mark provides our basic text. The two stories at the center, the road and mountain stories, are clearly proleptic—they anticipate Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. They immerse us and train us in the ascetic negations and aesthetic affirmations, but they don't leave us there; they cast us forward in faith and obedience to the life that is finally and only complete in the definitive no and glorious yes of Jesus crucified and risen. **CI**

Eugene H. Peterson is the James M. Houston Professor of Spiritual Theology at Regent College, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, and author of Leap over a Wall: Earthy Spirituality for Everyday Christians (Harper San Francisco, 1997).

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Do Demons Have Zip Codes?

Q: We hear a lot today about citywide exorcisms of territorial spirits. Where does this idea come from, and what does the Bible have to say about it? —Nathan Miller
Rosedale, Ohio

A: The exorcism of territorial spirits is a growing practice around the globe, including among evangelicals in America. I know of a group of Christians who flew to a foreign city where they spread into key neighborhoods and historic spots to identify the demons that ruled over those areas. Afterward they reassembled for a time of aggressive prayer to name and bind the demons so that the gospel could spread powerfully there.

In terms of influence, perhaps two decades of overly mechanistic techniques, including church-growth methods and step-by-step evangelistic and discipleship programs, have left Christians thirsting for raw supernaturalism. In response, the church has seen a series of emphases on power evangelism, prophetic ministry, and even “holy laughter.” Also, the New Age interest in spirit guides has stimulated a corresponding fascination among evangelicals with angels and demons, evident, for example, in the enormous popularity of Frank Peretti’s novels.

The territorial component grew—at least in part—out of the notable effectiveness of citywide evangelistic campaigns in Latin America. Some evangelists in those campaigns attributed their success to days spent in wrestling in prayer against the powers of darkness.

I believe there is another influence as well: animism, which is strong in much of Latin America, Africa, and Asia. In animism, all sorts of spirits are worshipped—including those of tribes and geographic territories. When this animistic world-view is taken at face value, a certain logic follows: demons oppose the church; extended prayer leads to powerful evangelism; some demons are territorial, and thus can only be overcome through on-site citywide exorcism.

This is not the first time that Christians have attempted to discern the bureaucratic structure of the spirit world. Some of the early church fathers tried to reconstruct demon hierarchies. The medieval church tried again. But when the Reformation led the church back to the Word of God, Luther, Calvin, and Wesley each renounced such speculation as futile. What does the Bible itself say about this practice? Actually, very little. Instead, the Old Testament focuses on God’s sovereignty, noting that even Satan

requires God’s permission before doing evil (Job 1:6–12). While Daniel alludes briefly to a “prince of Persia” and a “prince of Greece” (10:13, 20), these “princes” are not colleagues ruling over different regions, but competitors, battling each other (see 11:2). Daniel is describing the future history of the Middle East: with Persia falling before Greece, and Greece splitting into four smaller kingdoms (Dan. 11–12). Of course, any nation that attacks the people of God is serving the cause of Satan. This much Daniel intends. But Daniel never prays against demon princes over Persia or Greece nor attempts to cast them from their respective regions.

Another commonly cited passage is Revelation 2:12–13, which says Satan resides in Pergamum. A literalistic interpretation of this passage, however, poses more complications than clarification. If, as some claim, a demon’s power is reflected in the size of its territory, the identification with Pergamum reduces Satan to relative insignificance. Furthermore, Satan would then need to live and work in Pergamum, yet worship in Smyrna (Rev. 2:9) and Philadelphia (Rev. 3:9) and teach Sunday school in Thyatira (Rev. 2:24). This is a lot of commuting for a “territorial” spirit! In the end, the closest things to territorial spirits in the New Testament are the angels—not the demons—of Revelation 2 and 3 (each assigned to one of the seven churches).

The Bible has more to say about the practice of “shouting down” the Devil, but in consistently negative terms. In contrast to the Qumran community (of Dead Sea Scrolls fame), whose liturgy included curses of Satan alongside praise of God, Jude 8–10 and 2 Peter 2:10–12 rebuke those who verbally abuse spirits. We do better, Jude warns, simply to turn the demons over to God. Satan is indeed a formidable adversary (1 Pet. 5:8), yet Jesus has already conquered him on the cross (Col. 2:15) and will one day confine him in hell (Rev. 20:1–10). In the meantime, we are called to oppose Satan—but not by identifying the names of his subordinates, reconstructing their hierarchy, or mapping their supposed jurisdictions. Rather, we are called to stand firm through spiritual disciplines (Eph. 6:10–18), persevere in persecution (Rev. 3:21), and cast out demons as they become manifest in people (Acts 16:16–18). 

By Chuck Lowe, author of Territorial Spirits and World Evangelisation? (Mentor/OMF) and an OMF missionary lecturing at Singapore Bible College. Send questions to be answered by evangelical scholars to "Directions" at CTedit@aol.com; or CHRISTIANITY TODAY, 465 Gundersen Dr., Carol Stream, IL 60188.

The closest things to territorial spirits in the New Testament are angels, not demons.



Whatever Happened to Good Old Middle-Class Hypocrisy?

**Sorry,
Jimmy Olsen;
middle-class
morality
ain't what it
used to be.**

Pundits and commentators, who normally consider themselves more open-minded than the plodding masses, have been rocked by a discovery in the last six months: When it comes to a President's indiscretions, most people just don't care. "But you're supposed to be outraged," you can almost hear them pleading. "That's your *job*." Sorry, Jimmy Olsen; middle-class morality ain't what it used to be.

What it used to be, middle-aged readers may remember, was "hypocritical." At least, that was the charge, that conventional morality was a false front: seemingly upright citizens would deplore sexual hanky-panky and publicly condemn anyone who strayed, but their private lives were not so pristine. The sad suburban couples in John Updike's stories illustrate this thesis: on the surface, big happy families; underneath, sneaking and adultery and broken hearts.

One goal of the sexual revolution was to eliminate the false front. Fooling around was to be freely admitted, even celebrated—the more "love," the merrier. No one's indiscretions would be condemned. You'll still find people waving this anti-hypocrisy banner, as if it were a new idea that they alone are brave enough to champion.

No, hypocrisy is not our besetting national sin. If anything, the reverse is true. Americans no longer do naughty things secretly while condemning the same conduct in others; instead, while we are increasingly reluctant to condemn anything or anybody, we actually live more circumspectly than we did a couple of decades ago. Since the mideighties, generalized promiscuity has been on the decline. First herpes, then AIDS sobered up the party. The tragic mess of abortion added accumulating grief, hardly an aphrodisiac.

Sex moved from the bedroom to the living-room TV, a less risky site. There, competition among the media prompted an increasingly wide display of the varieties of sexual behavior. Once people did it but didn't talk about it; now every imaginable practice is talked about frantically, and loves that dared not speak their name won't shut up. We're forcibly educated about practices that the ordinary person will never experience and may have no desire to experience. There is much more talk than action.

When the comprehensive survey *Sex in America* was published a few years ago, the results made headlines: ordinary people weren't committing adul-

tery, weren't sleeping around, weren't just misbehavin' to nearly the extent everyone had presumed. Among married couples, 94 percent said that they had been faithful to each other during the previous year. Among singles, a third of women and a fourth of men said they had not had sex at all, all year. Similar proportions could claim only "a few times," indicating that over half of singles were not doing much swinging. I had this finding inadvertently confirmed when I went to buy the book. "Do you have *Sex in America*?" I asked the plump young man behind the counter. "In my case, no," he said sadly.

In his new book, *One Nation, After All*, based on interviews with middle-class Americans in eight communities, sociologist Alan Wolfe demolishes the popular misconception that a typical American "insists everyone conform to a stern moral code, yet personally violates that code." In fact, Wolfe concludes, "Most middle-class Americans uphold strict moral standards for judging their own behavior but are extremely reluctant to judge the behavior of anyone else." He attributes this widespread tolerance to the conjunction of sixties' culture and corporate culture, both rigorously nonjudgmental. While generally approving the live-and-let-live outlook of his subjects, as one might expect of a good liberal sociologist, Wolfe adds: "I'm not sure toleration is always the best thing. I think at some point you have to make judgments."

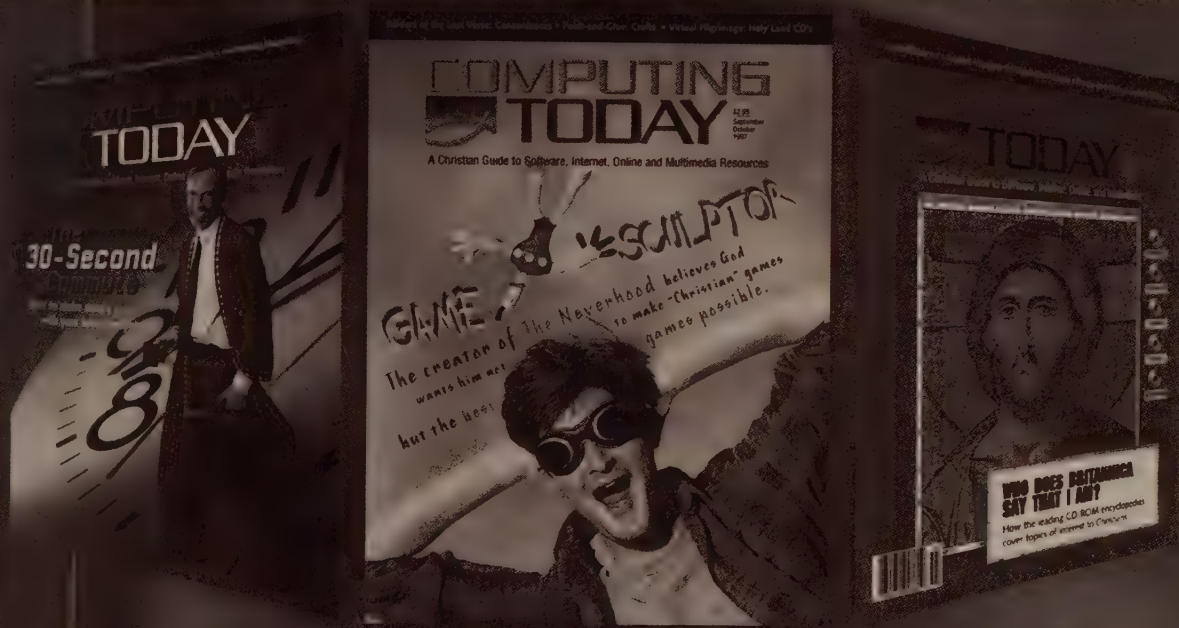
Of course, people *do* make judgments; they are just ashamed to admit it to pollsters. They know that openly criticizing others' behavior would be scandalous. Voicing moral objection is the last great act of social transgression.

This is one explanation, I think, for the bizarre popularity of tabloid TV shows—the ones that showcase pregnant strippers and bald men wearing dog leashes. The titillating appeal is that these characters are so plainly worthy of decent folks' ridicule. They have been preselected by show producers to give better-behaved citizens something to hoot at in the privacy of their own homes.

When questioned in a public poll, decent citizens have to put on the long face of tolerance. But when the shades are drawn, tabloid TV gives them a chance they have to act up. It's not sexual urges they have been compelled to restrict, but their minds—their intelligence, wisdom, and common sense. Thanks to Jerry Springer, upstanding citizens can occasionally be as naughty as they wanna be. **CT**

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Dear John the Evangelist

Bob Hudson

What if the writer of the Fourth Gospel had to get his work published in today's market...



Dear John: Enclosed you will find my editing comments for the first few chapters of your book. Overall, it looks great! Your story has wonderful suspense (will the Pharisees manage to kill the protagonist or not?), a sense of mystery (the miracles are fascinating, though a couple, like raising people from the dead, strain credibility), and lots of good characterization (all those wise sayings of Jesus make for great sound bites; we'll use some on the flap). It's going to cause quite a stir in the Christian bookstores, though it will probably have only limited crossover potential in the secular stores. It should get rave reviews in *CBA Marketplace* and *Moody*.

There are a couple of problems, however, that we need to work through.

Structure. Right off, consider deleting the entire opening section. All that "In the beginning was the Word" stuff is confusing, abstract, and sure to make the average reader say, "Huh? What's going on here?" As you probably know, storytellers have always used the technique of starting *in medias res*—that is, in the middle of the story. (Have you read John Grisham?) I recommend you begin chapter 1 with John the Baptist's interrogation by the Pharisees. It's so intense! And it gets the reader hooked right away.

Scene. In your writing you tend to emphasize character at the expense of developing the scene. For instance, where does John's encounter with the Pharisees take place? What kind of day is it? Are there mosquitoes and that kind of thing? Only after the dialogue ends do you mention that it takes place "in the desert, near Bethany, on the other side of the Jordan." Let's beef up that section and move it to the front as exposition so the reader will have more of a sense of locale. Don't be afraid to make the reader sweat; after all, it's a desert.

Dialogue. You really need to work on your dialogue. I recommend you read Hemingway to see how a true master handles it. Your characters speak all these great, dramatic lines, but they sound so stogy and formal, as when John says, "I am the voice of one calling in the desert." It certainly has a bell-like tone, but people just don't talk that way. You've already characterized John as a kind of wild man (have you read *Iron John?*), so why doesn't he speak like one? Remember,

he's a vagrant, really, an outcast. He goes around in sandals and animal skins. It will help your development of his character if you have him say, instead, something like, "Hey, I'm shoutin' my fool head off out here and nobody's listenin'!" See what I mean? It's so much gutsier. It portrays his frustration and his colloquial way of talking.

Market sensitivities. First of all, the mention of wine at the Cana wedding will be a problem in our market. Wouldn't the scene work equally well with some other beverage? I recently attended a wedding at which nonalcoholic punch was served. Though I have no objection to wine personally, we are sure to get angry letters from readers if we leave the reference in.

Also, in the opening section you refer to Jesus as having been conceived by the Holy Spirit and not by "human decision or a husband's will." Many readers will find that sexual innuendo tasteless, and it should probably come out. (We have to be extra careful in our romance novels on that score.)

Similarly, I'm surprised that Jesus, in chapter 8, doesn't deal a little more harshly with the "woman taken in adultery." I know you want to portray his compassion, but the fact that she gets off scot-free will leave us open to the charge that you (the author) and we (the publisher) are tacitly condoning her sin.

As it stands, parents would have a hard time sharing this book with their teenagers, wouldn't they? Isn't the whole point of Christian stories that evil people get punished?

Since the whole issue of prostitutes and adultery is probably too much of a "red flag" for our market anyway, maybe you could rewrite it as "the woman taken in shoplifting," or something like that.

Finally, while the conflict with the Pharisees is extremely well developed and moves the story along nicely, I think we need to show some sensitivity here. You characterize the Pharisees, basically, as the legalistic, conservative religious establishment of the time. This may cut a little too close to home for some readers. Could we possibly characterize them instead as the secular humanists and religious liberals of their time? If not, maybe it's best not to say anything at all. We'll just let the reader fill in the blanks.

Naming. Since another character pops up later in the story, the Beloved Disciple, who we know is really you (like Alfred Hitchcock making cameo appearances in his films), it will be confusing for readers to have two major characters with the same name. I'm not alone on this one—all of the major books on narrative technique say the same thing. Therefore, I've taken the liberty of changing the Baptist's name to Bill. I like the phrase "Bill the Baptist." It has a certain punch.

Market position. We're really pumped about pushing this one in our market. "Spirituality" and "narrative theology" are big buzzwords right now, so I think you'll be hitting the market at the right time. My gut feeling is that you've hit on a very hot topic—believe it or not, we are currently considering three other manuscripts on the same subject.

One of the unique things about your book is that it can be read not only for its fast-paced story line but also for its devotional value. In fact, one of our marketing people even suggested that we divide the chapters into short passages and number them for those readers who would like to read just a couple of sentences each day. Makes sense to me. What do you think?

Title. We haven't decided on a title yet. Our committee is still working on it. I will warn you in advance that I'm fairly certain we won't be going with your original title since several people on the committee felt the word *Gospel* is too over-used in book titles nowadays. (Have you seen John MacArthur's *The Gospel According to Jesus*, or the humor book *The Gospel According to First Grade*?) It's a

cliché, I'm afraid. We need to find something epic, suggesting intrigue and suspense, as hard-hitting as a good movie title. Something like *Prophet* would be ideal—but Frank Peretti has already used that. We'll let you know.

Author photo. I don't know how to deal with this next issue other than honestly. We've decided not to use your photo on the back cover. It's nothing against you personally, but you must understand that people with dark complexions and strong Middle Eastern features, like yourself, are looked upon with considerable distrust in the United States right now, and our marketing people are afraid that having your picture on the book could hurt sales. It's just one of those hard realities we have to live with. Sorry.

Marketing plan. As for promotion, I think you'll be a natural for radio interviews, and that will certainly be key in selling your book. I would suggest, however, that you don't mention your belief that your work is directly inspired by a Higher Power. As real as that may seem to you,

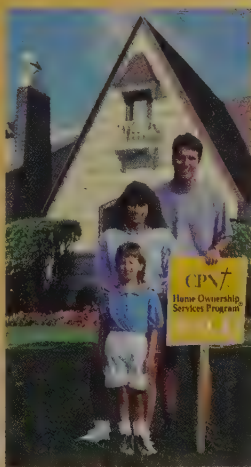
it's bound to strike most Christian radio listeners as smacking of New Age religion—you know, channeling, out-of-body experiences, and all that. Also, speaking of out-of-body experiences, I would avoid any mention of the heavenly visions that you told me about over the phone recently. No offense intended, but it might give listeners the impression that you're a little off-kilter—or else a charismatic. Then again, with all the interest in angels recently, maybe you should collect those visions and put them into your next book! Send us a proposal. If anyone can make it work, you can!

Sorry you couldn't make it to the Christian Booksellers Association convention. Your agent said something about not being able to get a flight out—hey, must be tough living on a sunny island in the Mediterranean! Hope all is well on Patmos.

Sincerely, Your Editor.

CT

Bob Hudson is a senior editor at Zondervan Publishing House, and coauthor, with his wife, Shelley, of *Companions for the Soul* (Zondervan).



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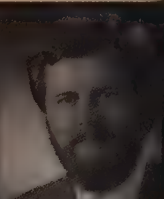
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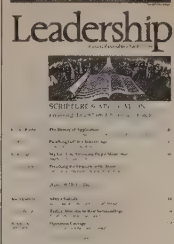
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HIGHLIGHTS: LEADERSHIP

Brimstone for the Broad-Minded

Can we seriously preach hell in a tolerant age?

Only if we also communicate the true sacrifice of the cross, says Tim Keller, pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York City. His article is condensed from LEADERSHIP journal, one of a dozen periodicals published by Christianity Today, Inc.

The main objection secular people make to the Christian message is hell.

The young man in my office was an Ivy League MBA, successful in the financial world. He had lived in three countries before age 30. Raised in a family with only the loosest connections to a mainline church, he had little understanding of Christianity.

I was therefore gratified to learn of his intense spiritual interest, recently piqued as he attended our church. He said he was ready to embrace the gospel. But there was a final obstacle: hell.

"I work with some fine people who are Muslim, Jewish, or agnostic," he said. "I cannot believe they are going to hell just because they don't believe in Jesus. In fact, I cannot reconcile the very idea of hell with a loving God—even if he is holy too."

This young man expressed what may be the main objection contemporary secular people make to the Christian message. Moderns reject the idea of final judgment and hell.

When preaching hell to people of this mindset (who tend to be younger, from nominal Catholic or nonreligious Jewish backgrounds, from liberal mainline Protestant backgrounds, and from the western and northeastern U.S. and Europe), I've found I must clearly communicate the following four points:

Sin is slavery. I do not define sin as just breaking the rules, but also as "making something besides God our ultimate value and worth." These good things, which become gods, will drive us relentlessly, enslaving us mentally and spiritually, even to hell forever if we let them.

C. S. Lewis writes, "Hell . . . begins with a grumbling mood, and yourself still distinct from it: perhaps even criticizing it. . . . You can repent and come out of it again. But there may come a day when you can do that no longer. Then there will be no *you* left to criticize the mood or even enjoy it, but just the grumble itself going on forever like a machine."

When sin is seen as slavery, and hell as the freely chosen, eternal skid row of the universe, hell becomes much more comprehensible.

Tolerance is exclusive too. Nothing is more characteristic of the modern mindset than the state-

ment "I think Christ is fine, but I believe a devout Muslim or Buddhist or even a good atheist will certainly find God." This approach is seen as more inclusive.

I point out that the universal religion of humankind is: We develop a good record and give it to God, and then he owes us. The gospel is: God develops a good record and gives it to us, then we owe him (Rom. 1:17). In short, to say a good person, not just Christians, can find God is to say good works are enough to find God. But this apparently inclusive approach is really quite exclusive. It says, "The good people can find God, and the bad people do not." What does this mean for those of us with moral failures? We are excluded.

So both approaches are exclusive, but the gospel's is the more inclusive exclusivity. It says joyfully, "It doesn't matter who you are or what you've done. It doesn't matter if you've been at the gates of hell. You can be welcomed and embraced fully and instantly through Christ."

Salvation in Christianity is more personal. The postmodern "sensitive" approach to the subject of hell says, "It doesn't matter if you believe in the person of Christ, as long as you follow his example." But to say that is to say the essence of religion is intellectual and ethical, not personal. If any good person can find God, then the essential core of religion is understanding and following the rules.

There is no love without wrath. I answer people who say, "What kind of loving God is filled with such wrath as to send people to hell to suffer eternally?" by pointing out that a wrathless God cannot be a loving God. In *Hope Has Its Reasons*, Becky Pippert writes, "Think how we feel when we see someone we love ravaged by unwise actions or relationships. Do we respond with benign tolerance as we might toward strangers? Far from it. . . . Anger isn't the opposite of love. Hate is, and the final form of hate is indifference."

Pippert then quotes E. H. Gifford: "Human love here offers a true analogy: the more a father loves his son, the more he hates in him the drunkard, the liar, the traitor."

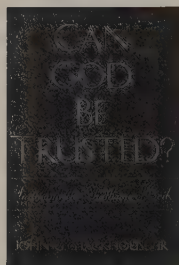
She concludes: "God's wrath is not a cranky explosion, but his settled opposition to the cancer of sin which is eating out the insides of the human race he loves with his whole being."

Ultimately, it is only *because* of the doctrine of judgment and hell that Jesus' proclamation of grace and love is so brilliant and astounding. **CT**

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Bad Things Still Happen

A concise, clear argument for how God can be both good and omnipotent.



Can God Be Trusted? Faith and the Challenge of Evil, by John G. Stackhouse, Jr. (Oxford University Press, 196 pp.; \$25, hardcover). Reviewed by Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, who teaches literature, history, and women's studies at Emory University.

If God is all good and all-powerful, how can evil exist? The problem, known to theologians as *theodicy*, has haunted Christianity from its distant origins in the Old Testament. Why should God have visited untold miseries upon Job, his most exemplary and faithful servant? How may we explain, much less accept, the death of "innocent" babies? The destruction of "good" people and their homes through tornadoes or earthquakes? The indiscriminate ravages of famines, floods, and plagues?

If anything, human impatience with pain, suffering, and destruction seems to have increased with the passage of centuries, perhaps because we moderns have become more arrogant about our ability to judge the good and the bad in human affairs and more presumptuous about our ability to control so many of life's

normal vicissitudes. Increasingly reluctant to recognize either sin or suffering as inherent in the human condition, we grow rebellious against a God who could subject us to either. In this slim volume, John Stackhouse, Jr., sets the daunting challenge of evil within the context of Christian faith, recasting the problem of God's willingness to tolerate evil as the question of whether God can be trusted.

Throughout, Stackhouse's language is deceptively direct and accessible, and he more than fulfills his self-imposed task of translating the work of philosophers and theologians into terms that ordinary Christians can understand. His admirable avoidance of intellectual pretension and technical jargon should not be mistaken for philosophical simplicity. He neither obscures the intractability of the central problem nor claims to have fully "solved" it. Rather, he graciously invites readers to progress with him through the steps in an argument that must inevitably end with the mystery with which it began.

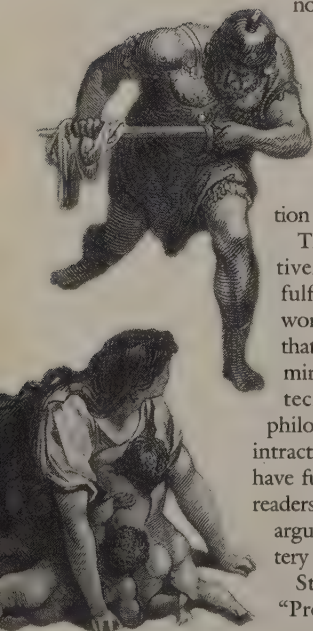
Stackhouse divides his book into two parts: "Problems" and "Responses." The first begins

with the question of whether the existence of evil does pose a problem. Many religions revere an omnipotent god capable of capriciously wreaking hardship upon his faithful without jeopardizing their devotion. In contrast, Christianity worships a God whom it celebrates as ultimately and absolutely good. This emphasis upon God's goodness opens the possibility that he may be powerless to prevent evil and, hence, not be omnipotent. Stackhouse, following orthodox Christian tradition, rejects this explanation, reminding us that Christians condemn the Manichean heresy that would raise Satan to equality with God in a struggle to control the world.

But if God is both good and omnipotent, then why does he inflict evil upon the children he claims to love? We must begin, Stackhouse suggests, by examining our idea of evil. First, we may view evil from either a subjective or an objective perspective. Our subjective perception includes the anger, pain, or outrage we feel when evil directly befalls us or those we cherish, or perhaps offends our convictions about how things should be. The objective perspective, in contrast, adopts a certain distance on specific events, permitting us to acknowledge our own inability to see and assess distant consequences: Even the most painful apparent evil may turn out to further a larger good.

Such objectivity does not, however, offer emotional satisfaction, nor does it let God "off the hook or out of the dock." Stackhouse acknowledges that God's works everywhere confront us with apparent inconsistency and moral contradictions, which make it impossible to "derive a consistent ethic from the available phenomena around us." To complicate matters further, evil itself does not follow consistent patterns: some evil results from natural phenomena over which we have no control; some evil results from our own moral failings—from our proclivity to choose sin rather than virtue.

Above all, Stackhouse insists that to ask why God could create evil is to ask the wrong question: "Evil is not a 'something' God could create." Evil in this sense is only an abstraction, not a real entity. Evil, he insists, "is primarily an adjective." Actions, events, human qualities, or even human beings can be evil, but the evil does not exist independent of their embodiment of it. Nor are we endowed with an innate ability to



recognize the evil quality of specific phenomena: Our ability to recognize a phenomenon as evil depends upon our having a prior idea of the good. For evil can only be understood as a deviation from the good—as something or someone gone awry. But the recognition of evil as a violation of the good in turn forces us to ask why there is good. Thus does the consideration of evil force us back upon the ultimate problem of meaning.

Stackhouse concludes “Problems” with the acknowledgment that any adequate response must take account of all of the dimensions of evil he has evoked: its natural, moral, and possibly supernatural causes; its various degrees; its place in the lives of the guilty and the innocent; and, especially, the questions it raises about meaning and the existence of good. His succeeding section on “Responses” successively reviews a range of Christian explanations of evil, but his delineation of the problems has already pointed the way toward his main point, namely, that, as Christians, we must trust—and have reason to trust—in the essential goodness of God.

In this respect, some readers may feel that Stackhouse begs precisely the question he set out to answer, for he never fully explains why a God of love could or should tolerate a prevalence of evil that leads many to doubt his power, his goodness, and, indeed, his very existence. That charge, however, itself misses the point, as the most important of Stackhouse’s responses implicitly suggests: in attempting to reconcile ourselves to the simultaneous existence of the myriad manifestations of evil in our world and of a good and omnipotent God, we must learn truly to think as Christians. For, as Christians, we do know that none of us can pretend to the comprehensive understanding that belongs to God alone.

We further know that each of us is, by the mark of our birth, a sinner and, accordingly, liable to be complicit even in the manifestations of evil from which we most seek to distance ourselves. In this connection, Stackhouse quotes Mother Teresa, who, when asked by a reporter where God is when a baby dies in a Calcutta alley, responded, “God is there, suffering with the baby. The question really is, where are you?”

We know also that when God created the world he found it “good,” and that he found Adam and Eve “very good.” Loving his human creatures, he endowed them with free will, which our ancestors

rapidly—and repeatedly thereafter—used to sinful ends. Entrusted with stewardship for the rest of creation, our kind has frequently chosen the temptations of exploitation and abuse. In sum, we bear no small share of responsibility for the world’s pervasive and recalcitrant deviation from the good.

Our acceptance of these explanations, Stackhouse acknowledges, requires our prior adherence to Christianity—requires a faith that leads us to trust in God. He thus devotes the most substantial part of his responses to a defense of Christianity as the truth that commands our adherence. Scrupulously acknowledging the claims of other religions upon their faithful, he does not put the matter as baldly as I have, but his arguments permit no doubt about his meaning.

Christianity, Stackhouse insists, uniquely combines reason and faith, which it holds as both compatible and mutually reinforcing. Relying heavily upon the work of Alvin Plantinga, he details the many “warrants” that support the truth of Christianity, notably the gospel accounts of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Stackhouse takes the reliability of the warrants for the gospel account of Jesus as the crux of our Christian response to evil, and herein lies the special form he gives to the general problem of theodicy.

The point for Christians is emphatically not that we should complacently accept

evil. What Christian faith offers us is the certainty that even the most daunting manifestations of evil represent an (imperfectly understood) aspect of the truth or meaning that gives shape, direction, and purpose to our lives. For however mysterious many of the central tenets of our faith remain, we have the certainty that “Christ was and is the actual human face of God.” The mysteries remain: the mystery of God’s providence has not been fully revealed, nor has it been revealed why some suffer and others do not. “But God has revealed Godself in Jesus in a manner adequate for faith. And that, we recall, ‘is the point of it all.’”

Stackhouse thus answers his own question, “Can God be trusted?” with a steadfast yes. Only that trust, which rests upon the adequately warranted conviction of reason, can effectively locate evil within the context of meaning. Trust in God does not strip evil of the power to wound, but it does offer us a way to accept it as a consequence of God’s meaning, about which we have only the most fragmentary and partial understanding. Informed by grace, this trust might even help us to recognize ourselves as part of the evil that tempts us into rebellion against God himself and thereby chasten those aspects of our own nature that cripple our ability to embrace and return his love. For, as Stackhouse might well have concluded, despair is a sin. **CT**

If Christ Be Not Risen...

Scholars debate the meaning of the Resurrection.

The Resurrection: An Interdisciplinary Symposium on the Resurrection of Jesus, edited by Stephen T. Davis, Daniel Kendall, and Gerald O’Collins (Oxford University Press, 368 pp; \$35, hardcover). Reviewed by D. A. Carson, research professor of New Testament at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School.



Books on the resurrection of Jesus are many. What makes this one distinctive is its scope. Its chapters include contributions from biblical studies, systematic theology, the philosophy of religion, homiletics, liturgy, fundamental theology (in the Catholic defini-

tion), the study of religious art, and literary criticism. Theologically, the contributors range from confessional conservatives such as William Craig to a variety of liberals (though in the current mix of outlooks these categories are inadequate and leave me uneasy).

The sheer diversity makes the book as interesting as it is difficult to review. The contribution of some of the essays is primarily to the history of thought about the Resurrection. Thus, after sketching the history of biblical expressions for resurrection, Alan Segal argues that second-temple Jews were divided: on the one side were “millenarian” movements that

lionized the Jewish martyrs who lost their lives in the expectation of bodily resurrection at the end of time; on the other were those intellectuals who embraced some form of the Platonic idea of the immortality of the soul, emphasizing continuity of consciousness beyond death. Segal argues that the martyrdom context influenced Christians living in the shadow of the Cross. Eventually immortality was subsumed under resurrection in both Judaism and Christianity, though in characteristically different forms.

No less interested in historical development is Marguerite Shuster, who demonstrates how central the resurrection of Jesus is in the line of preacher-theologians that runs from Paul through Augustine, Luther, Barth, and Thielicke. In each instance, these Christian thinkers understood the resurrection of Jesus to be a *bodily* resurrection, however transformed his body was, and tied Jesus' resurrection to our resurrection at the End. Moreover, they defended this confession against major currents of intellectual thought in their own day that took contrary positions.

Another group of essays belongs to the stream of classical apologetics: they focus on the historical reality and credibility of the Resurrection. William Craig's essay is a critique of the work of John Dominic Crossan, whose reconstruction of Jesus' resurrection, Craig charges, is based on idiosyncratic methods and presuppositions embraced by no major New Testament scholar.

William Alston argues for the substantial historical credibility of the New Testament Resurrection accounts. His procedure is primarily to refute suggestions that this or that detail is *not* historical. In particular, he interacts with the work of Reginald Fuller.

Stephen Davis asks what it is the first witnesses "saw." He refutes theories that argue their "seeing" was some kind of visualization, "grace-assisted seeing." On the axis from "sight" to "insight," Davis situates the "seeing" of the first witnesses at the "sight" end. Even when the two disciples on the road to Emmaus failed to recognize Jesus, it was not because they required some special grace to make the connection, but because their eyes were *withheld* from "seeing" Jesus: in other words, the actual textual evidence suggests that normal vision would have enabled them to see the resurrected Jesus had their powers not somehow been restrained.

Summarizing some of the work in one of his books, Carey Newman examines the theological logic at work in the New Testament's identification of Jesus as "Glory." This not only signals the dawning of the eschatological age, but opens a "breach" in Jewish monotheism by identifying Jesus as the divine presence. Tied as it is to the resurrection of Jesus, this glory-language not only supports the view that high Christology was early, but indicates that the parting of the ways between Jews and Christians began rather early as well.

None of this suggests that all the contributors to the symposium are convinced by these arguments. In her reply to Alston, Sarah Coakley suggests that while he effectively parries Fuller's dogmatic skepticism, Alston downplays the redactional (and, in her view, therefore probably unhistorical) elements of the Gospels.

In his reflection on the summit, John Wilkens distances himself from Davis's argument that if a modern camera had been present in the first century, it would have been able to capture an image of Jesus' resurrection body on film. In his response to a largely survey essay by Gerald O'Collins, Peter Carnley argues that one can neither prove nor disprove John Hick's conjecture that the Resurrection appearances are psychogenic projections. In Carnley's view, it doesn't really matter: a contemporary theology of the Resurrection should focus more attention on how to construct an "epistemology of faith" that enables us to identify the "Spirit of Christ" in our experience with the crucified Jesus.

Richard Swinburne argues that, in coming to an informed opinion as to what really happened, one must not only examine the detailed historical evidence but also evaluate the general background evidence. Here he includes, on the negative side, the obvious human experience that people do not normally rise from the dead, and, on the positive side, various arguments from natural theology, and especially the argument that the celebration of the Eucharist on the first day of the week constitutes admissible historical evidence for Jesus' resurrection on what came to be called "the Lord's day."

Inevitably, some contributions approach the subject with self-conscious reliance upon, or at least interaction with, postmodern assumptions. Alan Padgett insists that it is illegitimate to bracket off Christian faith, including

faith in the resurrection of Jesus, from "scientific" knowledge. The ideology (he calls it a "myth") that these two domains are mutually incommensurable needs to be rejected. The way forward is a post-modern approach that is holistic and humble, that recognizes the "prejudice of perspective" in science as in religion, that refuses to rule out the pursuit of objectivity even while not succumbing to the kind of subjectivity that drowns in a sea of relativism. The resurrection of Jesus becomes the "test case" for Padgett's arguments.

Francis Schüssler Fiorenza is equally willing to critique foundationalism. He probably explores how one should affirm the resurrection of Jesus with fundamental theology once the foundationalism that has long characterized fundamental theology is set aside.

Some of the essays reflect on the ethical implications of the Resurrection. Brian Johnstone argues that while the Resurrection of the crucified Jesus has been at the heart of the Christian *kerygma*, it has not been at the heart of moral theology and Christian ethics. He sets out to explore what such an ethical system might look like, focusing not least on an ethics of transformation. Janet Martin Soskice argues that for Paul, belief in the Resurrection has implications not only for "corporeality" (bodiliness) but for "corporateness," as she ties the personal body of Jesus to the body of Christ that is the church.

The strength of the book is also its weakness. It could not usefully serve as a textbook (unless the course were on contemporary theology, using the resurrection of Jesus as a test case). There is no focused and balanced theology of the Resurrection, no systematic presentation of critical issues, no obvious basis for selecting which people will be discussed (apart from the idiosyncratic preferences of the essayists).

Why, for instance, is there extended evaluation of the views of Reginald Fuller, and only passing comment on Wolfhart Pannenberg? Above all, the diversity of the contributors, for all that it adds interest to the book, means that there is no developing line of thought, no overarching stance with which to engage—though I confess I wanted to say "Yes, but . . ." to many of the essays.

Nevertheless, this volume remains a useful reflection of the breadth of current discussion about the resurrection of Jesus, and for that we can be grateful. C1



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What the Hands Reveal

His Bill of Rights sculpture shows American hands, but Wu Kwan knows his life journey has been shaped by God's hand.

While it seems inconceivable that Olympian Jim Ryun, Chinese dictator Mao Zedong, baseball great Satchel Paige, and Carolyn Kennedy Schlossberg could have much in common, they share one thing: all have been shaped into likenesses by the hands of Chinese sculptor Wu Kwan.

During China's Cultural Revolution (1966–76), Mao considered artists the most dangerous intellectuals because art has the ability to mobilize people of all levels and education. China's artists, and most other intellectuals, were often incarcerated or sent to farms and put "out to pasture." Even after the revolution, libraries were considered centers of potentially dangerous capitalist ideas and remained padlocked mortuaries for the dust-covered books not destroyed. But in the 1970s, as a teen in Guangzhou, Wu showed such artistic promise that his headmaster slipped him a key to the library so he could thumb through Western art books at night.

Gradually, the government began to invite artists back into society. By 1981, Wu Kwan was teaching at the Art Institute of Guangzhou, and much of the cultural chaos caused by Maoist doctrines had faded into a bad dream. Wu gained recognition as a sculptor of monumental pieces—some as high as 45 feet—exhibiting the muscularity and heroic proportions of Russian social realist art. In 1988, Wu met a leading American bronze sculptor at a cultural exchange. Unexpectedly, he was invited to serve as visiting professor at the University of Kansas for one year.

Wu Kwan never expected to leave his native country—travel even between provinces prior to 1990 was heavily monitored by the government. His only exposure to English had been during casual evenings at the institute, where an American from Zhongshan University taught English by reading from the Old and New Testaments. "In my background, I had no religion," Wu explains, referring to Mao's complete repression of religion. "But this teacher spoke simply about Jesus taking care of all our sins in a way that moved many of us. I began to understand something of Christianity, even though my priority was to learn English."

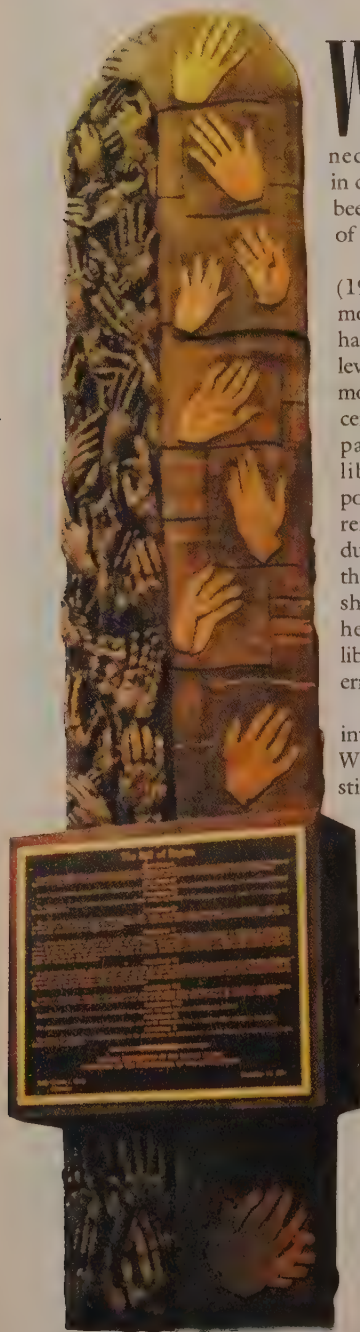
Transplanted suddenly to Kansas, Wu's lack of English made life difficult, although it did not affect his ability to teach, because art is truly a universal language and he could let his hands talk for him. Socially, however, "not having language was like being no different from an animal," Wu remembers. Alone, because he could not afford to bring his wife and teenage son to America, he faced anonymity, financial stress, and the prospect of starting from scratch after unqualified artistic success in China.

A track coach's generosity

To his surprise, Wu was championed by Bob Timmons, Jim Ryun's track coach. Timmons—who knows no Chinese and knew even less about art—took Wu under his wing, relating Wu's story to anyone who would listen. This supportive experience gave the artist, for the first time, the sense that God had plucked him out of China for a reason and would provide for him. He felt convicted that he should recreate his career in the States, and Timmons's generous spirit prompted him to choose the Christian God as his Savior.

In 1989, Wu's legal status in America was vouchsafed by Sen. Bob Dole and a Washington, D.C.-based sculpture association. In 1990, he brought his family to Kansas, and his wife, also an artist, eventually converted to Christianity too, as amazed as Wu by the hospitality and concern of Christian friends. Last January, Wu proudly became an American citizen in a ceremony presided over by Federal Judge Scott Wright, who in 1991 had commissioned Wu to create a bronze commemorative for the bicentennial of the Constitution's Bill of Rights.

Hands and the American dream:
Wu Kwan's 100 Hands symbolizes the strength of U.S. democracy.



The riddle that links a patriotic American sculpture to a transplanted Chinese artist rests, apparently, with Wu's creative solution. Like his faith, the idea came out of adversity. Before he knew English, Wu observed people closely in an attempt to understand them. He noticed that Americans spoke with their hands much more than the Chinese, using a large repertoire of "OKs" and other signage. He also realized that, because Americans display such a wide variety of facial features, he could not use in an American sculpture the social realist portrait approach of one figure as representative of thousands. It seemed logical, then, to use hands to portray America, so he began "collecting" hands just as he "collects" faces, photographing hundreds of examples. Each pair of hands came to signify the individual strengths and successes that brought American democracy into action, forming the motif for Wu's Bill of Rights sculpture.

100 Hands is a bronze stack of minutely

detailed hands, topped by those of runner Jim Ryun. One set of hands belongs to a deaf woman, who signed "love" in a way that moved Wu deeply; another is missing a finger. Asked by Judge Wright why that hand seemed "unfinished," Wu explained, "Even American history is not that smooth. You have not been without your wars or violence. I wanted that hand to symbolize the tragedies, as well as the hard work, that also built the country."

Among a "personal" repertoire, Wu's loosely titled works often depict a study of a deeply contained emotion hidden stoically within a muscular body. In *Struggling*, Wu sculpts the idealized portrait of an Asian, frowning with concentration as he struggles to burst the bindings cutting into his arms and torso. It is Wu's portrait of China and the Chinese, who are often stereotyped as "inscrutable": in fact, he says, they "look inward for strength, struggling inwardly all the time—not in the free, open poses of Western figures by Rodin

and Henry Moore. Quiet on the outside, but inside, always trying to get emotions under control."

Wu's approach to his faith, much as his sculpture, is designed on the grand scale. "My attitude as a Christian is shaped by God bringing me to the States and getting me through all the hard times. So often people pray for small things but don't work hard themselves to get the answer. I think that if you don't work hard, God is not going to be as likely to help you. I was brought to a Promised Land, which is a big thing, and after facing the hard challenges God gave me, I feel stronger, and my heart is light. When I pray, I don't stay in the details of life—he gave me faith, and transferred his spirit to me, and brought me here," he says contentedly. "Isn't that enough?"

CT

By Karen L. Mulder. For more information on Wu Kwan or his work, contact Ron Stowe at rstowe@gvi.net or 913-963-7953.

UPDATE

Miracle Monument

Red tape couldn't stymie sculptor Esther Augsburger. After a mere three years—a brief moment by bureaucratic standards—the artist's dream for a protest against gun violence, made of disarmed handguns and a huge, steel plowshare, has materialized in Judiciary Square in Washington, D.C. Augsburger described her vision for CT in "A .38-calibre Plowshare" (Oct. 2, 1995, p. 38) but had no idea that in such a relatively short time she could have beaten the odds and cut through the red tape of a city famous for its red tape. She gives the credit all to God.

Monument proposals in the capital face a trying array of local committees, then other inquisitions occur on the federal level. This process has interrupted such commissions as Franklin D. Roosevelt's memorial or the statue commemorating women in the military by as much as eight years—one sculpture proposed by a private citizen has been pending for 38 years. Nevertheless, Augsburger engaged in the fray knowing that God supported the effort. In retrospect, she is still amazed by the outcome.

On September 9, 1997, before 500 onlookers, the 16-foot high, four-ton plowshare form was lowered by crane into a permanent cement and steel base. Augsburger fervently hopes that it will remain there as a memorial to every child and adult destroyed by gunfire—a considerable constituency.

Symbols of life and death

Augsburger knew the project was particularly blessed by God when the chairman of the formidable Commission of Fine Arts, who has the final say on such projects, asked to be quoted on the record as approving the project "with enthusiasm."

While guns stand for death, the plowshare is a symbol of preparing the ground for life-sustaining growth. Augsburger, a Mennonite who lived near the capitol for 14 years and felt the pain of violence each day in her work with inner-city children, said in her dedication speech, "When we lay down our instruments of violence and

turn our attention to implements which cultivate life, we will have peace. . . . We want this sculpture to help bear the pain of those who have lost loved ones by gun violence. And we hope that it can be a symbol of joy. . . ."

For a time, after the sculpture's installation, gang members met regularly to discuss peacekeeping; Augsburger reports, however, that gang leaders ultimately did not support that effort, and so it withered. Undaunted, the artist begins work this summer on a commission to honor Christians martyred in the Soviet gulags. She will travel to Siberia to review the site and interview families of the victims. As she knows from experience, the work of sowing peace and making restitution never ends.

CT



DR. WYRON S. AUGSBURGER

REFLECTIONS

Classic and contemporary excerpts

Traveling God's Road

Before we were born, God knew us. He knew that some of us would rebel against His love and His mercy, and that others would love Him from the moment that they could love anything, and never change that love. He knew that there would be joy in heaven among the angels of His house for the conversion of some of us. . . .

In one sense we are always travelling, and travelling as if we did not know where we were going.

In another sense we have already arrived.

We cannot arrive at the perfect possession of God in this life, and that is why we are travelling and in darkness. But we already possess Him by grace, and therefore in that sense we have arrived and are dwelling in the light.

—Thomas Merton in
Mornings with
Thomas Merton

Grace to Follow

Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, Communion without confession, absolution without personal confession. Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate.

Costly grace is the treasure hidden in the field; for the sake of it a man will gladly go and sell all that he has. It is the pearl of great price to buy [for] which the merchant will sell all his goods. It is the kingly rule of Christ, for whose sake a man will pluck out the eye which causes him to stumble, it is the call of Jesus Christ at

which the disciple leaves his nets and follows him. . . .

Such grace is *costly* because it calls us to follow, and it is *grace* because it calls us to follow Jesus Christ.

—Dietrich Bonhoeffer in
The Cost of Discipleship

Sledgehammer

Authority without wisdom is like a heavy axe without an edge: fitter to bruise than polish.

—Ann Bradstreet in
Wise Women

Sightlessness

When you have first learned God, or His will, you can address yourself cheerfully to the study of His works. If

you do not see yourselves and all things as living, moving, and having their being in God, you see nothing, whatever you may think you see.

—Richard Baxter in
The Reformed Pastor

Poor Substitutions

A post-intellectual society is one where public relations substitutes for public policy, where one mass-media image can wipe out many careful arguments, where sound moral character means feeling good about yourself, and the increase of freedom means more consumer choices. It is, finally, a society where intellectuals are very comfortably kept thinking about what they are told to think about. I suppose the biggest difference in the past 30 years is that the intellectually gifted now have so many more places to sell out. Freshmen with any smarts at all now arrive at universities eager to become commodities

—Richard Lee,

in a commencement address at
Valparaiso University (Cresset,
Christmas/Epiphany 1997–98)

Whose Image?

Is Christian music really a ministry or a business, or

both, and how do we define its success? . . .

Musicians, as well as record companies, are perplexed by these questions. Ministry is great, but is God honored by an artist who defaults on his or her mortgage and can't feed his or her children? What good is a record company that does its books only in red? . . .

I think our society inwardly, even unknowingly, longs for a truth that endures. For people of character. For substance and meaning behind the images. . . .

Ultimately, Christian musicians must ask whether they are more concerned with their own image or being made in the image of God.

—Mark Gersmehl of
Whiteheart in

Billboard (Apr. 25, 1998)

To Effect Change—

You must be the change you wish to see in the world.

—Mahatma Gandhi,
quoted in Zen Soup

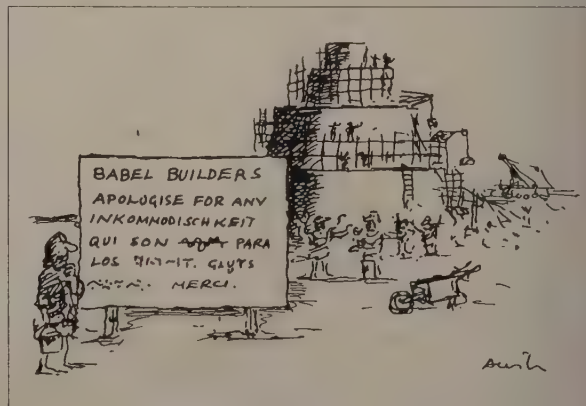
Past and Future with God

For what has been—thanks!

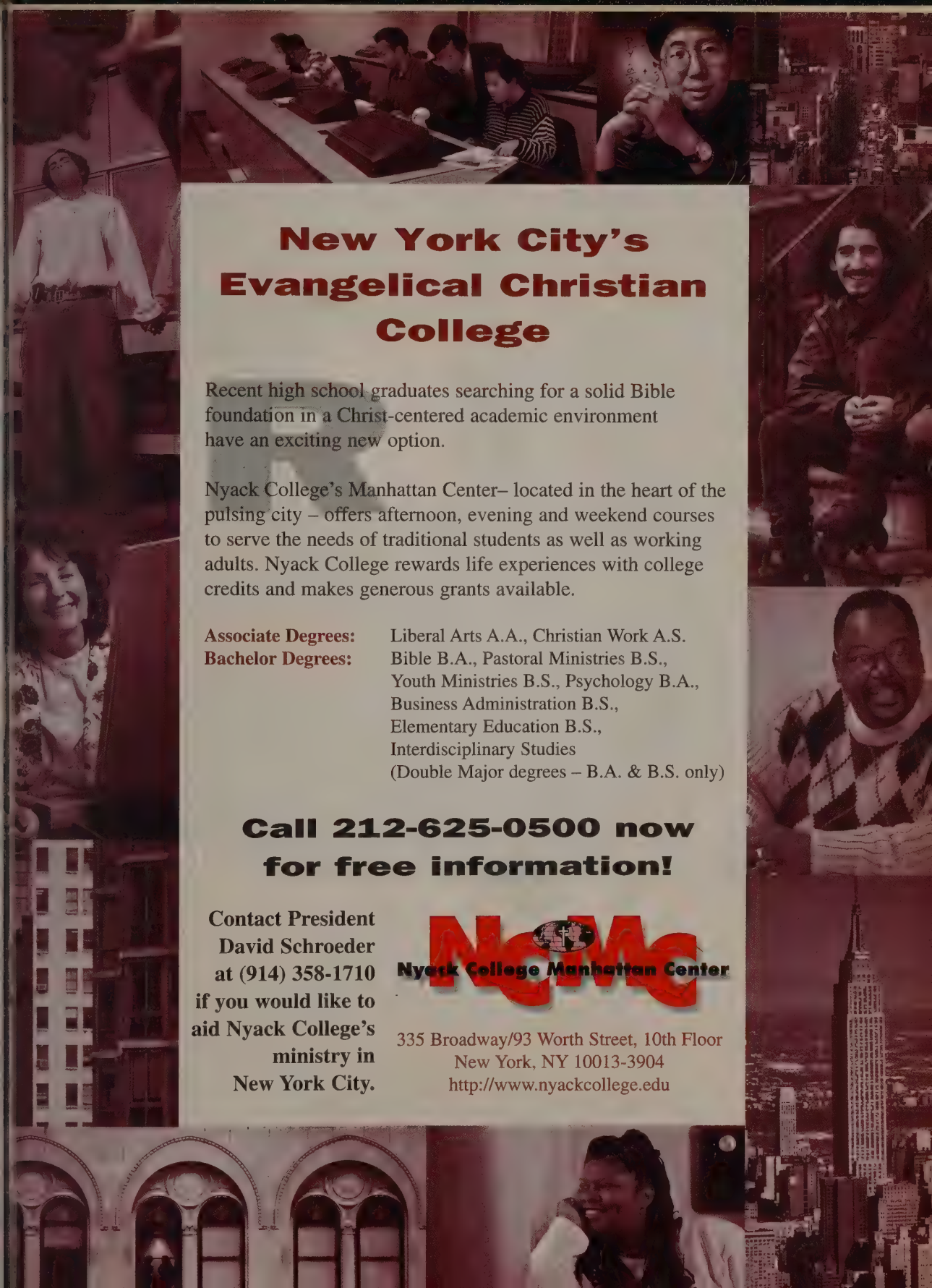
For what shall be—yes!

—Dag Hammarskjöld,

quoted in Sacred Moments



THE SPECTATOR (UK), JULY 21, 1990.



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- Send vita to Daniel C. Fredericks, Provost, 1500 Peachtree St., Jackson, MS 39202. Minorities are encouraged to apply.

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Tuesday-Friday, Sunday, 40 hours: \$30,000-35,000+ benefits. Pastor Kent Crawford, Westside Christian Fellowship, 2948 Colorado Avenue, Santa Monica, CA 90404; (310) 829-9344.

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- HR Dept., GWP, P.O. Box 2330, Asheville, NC 28802; fax: (828) 253-1556. Deadline: July 25, 1998.

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EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

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Large Midwestern church seeks children's pastor to oversee the church's ministries to children and their families. Applicants should possess good leadership, administrative and relational skills, ability to develop volunteer leaders, and administer a large multi-faceted children's ministry. Understanding of cultural issues facing children and families and enthusiasm for outreach to children and parents are essential. Advanced degree and large-church experience preferred. Send résumés to: Children's Pastor Calling Committee, P.O. Box 24414, Minneapolis, MN 55424.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

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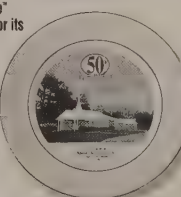
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Fear and Faith in the Middle East

**As I remember
my trip to
Lebanon,
I think how
easy it is
to write about
the gospel
from my
serene perch
in Colorado.**

The sky turned first an eerie yellow, then the color of charcoal. A gritty rain began to fall, coating windshields, sidewalks, and clothing with damp spots the color and consistency of white clay. It was Libya we were feeling, its sands swept up in a freak storm, the worst in a quarter-century, and blown across the Mediterranean to be deposited on Cyprus. I was attending a conference of Christians involved in media, and the sandstorm seemed a poignant symbol of the siege mentality of Christians in the region.

To the south and east, Cyprus faces hundreds of millions of Muslims; from the north, Turkey has invaded and now occupies a third of the island. Flags emblazoned with the Muslim crescent flap defiantly over church buildings seized from the hilltops around Nicosia. Only a thin line of UN peacekeepers keeps the two sides from breaking into war again.

Christian workers at the conference had gathered to discuss new ways of reaching the Muslim world. They used pseudonyms to throw off Muslim agents who might be tailing them. In restaurants and public places they spoke in hushed tones and glanced around frequently. They left no notes lying about after their closed meetings.

Like inverted mushrooms, satellite dishes have sprouted on Arab rooftops, and Christian programs are now beaming into places like Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and the slums of Cairo. Syria recently resigned itself to the inevitable, and Internet providers are now bringing Christian Web sites into private homes there. Christian ministries receive letters like this: "Should I tell my parents that I have become a Christian? It is a capital crime here to convert, and they could have me executed. What do you advise?"

The region's largest nation, Egypt, has long tolerated a strong Christian minority. As I visited, evangelicals were celebrating the success of a nontraditional Luis Palau crusade. Unable to rent stadiums for an evangelistic event, they organized hundreds of churches to run proxy crusades by videotape. Palau himself appeared at a large Presbyterian church in Cairo; after a hectic night's work by volunteers, videotapes of that service were shown the next day in churches, halls, and open courtyards at more than 500 sites across Egypt.

Ironically, young Christians see some advantages to living in a Muslim culture. As one told me, "We have restrictions, yes, but we and the Muslims have lived together for centuries. I have gone to the U.S. to study, but certainly I would not want to raise a family there. Here we have no pornography, little premarital sex or alcohol, and I feel safe walking on

the streets. As long as I have the freedom to worship, I prefer living in Egypt."

The same young person, though, admitted that he seldom attends the Coptic church in which he was baptized. The service, after all, is conducted in Old Coptic, a language no one in the congregation understands. It lasts several hours, during most of which the congregation stands, and it is filled with obscure iconic symbolism.

Lebanon, like Egypt, was once known for its amicable coexistence of different faiths. That was before religious groups formed private militias and began killing each other. Over 150,000 died in a civil war that lasted 15 years, and the vast majority of buildings in Beirut still bear the scars of shrapnel and bullet holes.

Psychological scars go much deeper. A visiting American told me he attended a basketball game that referees had to interrupt because of fighting—among the opposing fans, not the players. "They cleared the entire arena, except for a handful of us foreigners. The players resumed the game and the fans went into the street to continue their brawl."

A 20-year-old in Lebanon has known little but war. Every time she drives to a church event she must pass through two or three army checkpoints. Even without those reminders, she's not likely to forget the sight of a decapitated head mounted on the hood of a Mercedes, or of a sniper being dragged through the streets, his feet tied to a bumper, his head bouncing grotesquely on the pavement.

"Christian" militias were as notorious for their cruelty as their Muslim counterparts. Today in Beirut the most prevalent Christian shrines are devoted to Elijah. You see the prophet in churches, at intersections, on street corners, always portrayed with a sword in his hand. Pilgrims bring him flowers and kiss the statues. Elijah, after all, slew 850 false prophets (at a site just down the highway). He makes a formidable militia mascot.

In Lebanon I met a woman who had pored over my book *Disappointment with God* by candlelight in the basement as bombs were destroying her building. And another who is actively trying to apply principles from *What's So Amazing About Grace?* to her neighbors: "squatters" who commandeered her apartment and who regularly siphon off her water and electricity supplies. As I remember my trip to the Middle East, I think how easy it is to write about the gospel from my serene perch in Colorado, and how hard to put it into practice on its home turf—now the literal frontier of faith. **CT**

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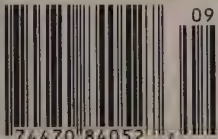
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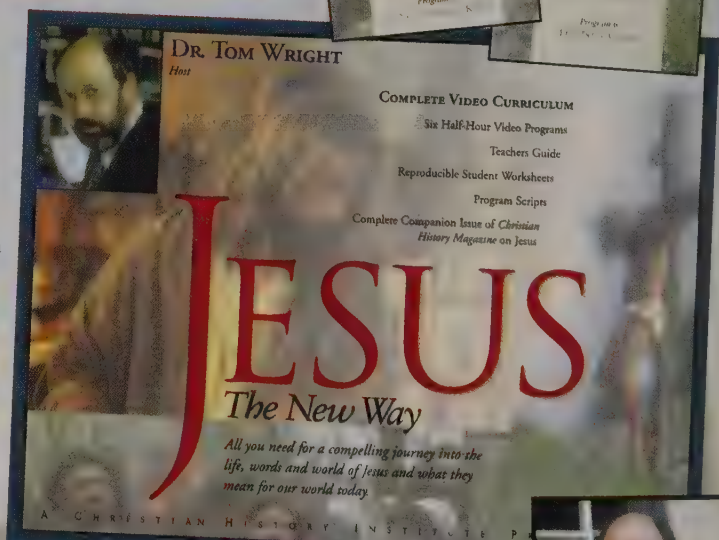
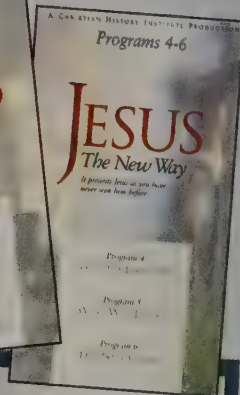
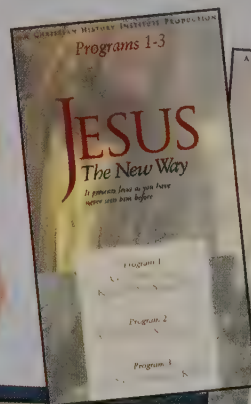
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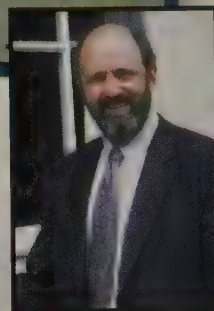
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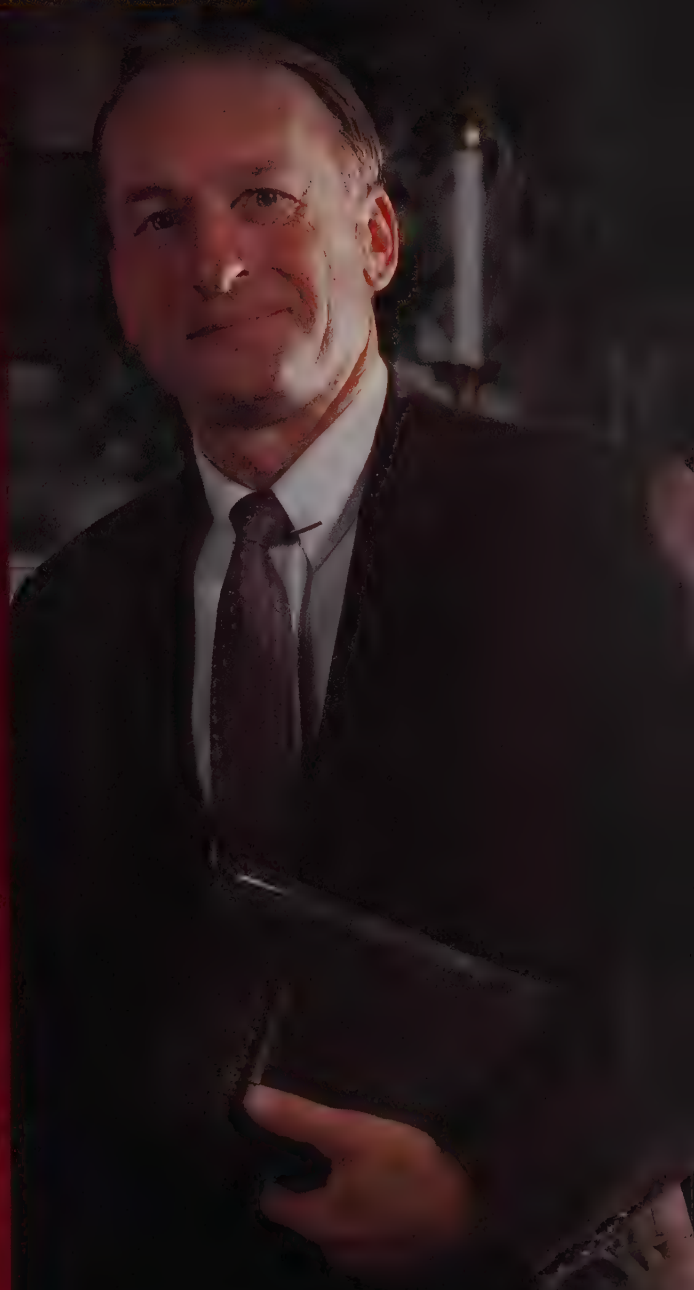
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CHRISTIANITY TODAY

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August 10, 1998

A Magazine of Evangelical Conviction



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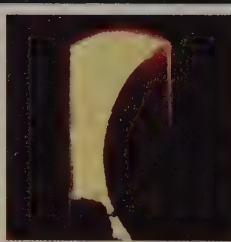
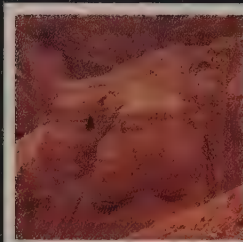
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Michael G. Maudlin,
Managing Editor

From Russia with Dreams

INSIDE CT

It's easy to tell that the building used to be a church. The rich red brick is now pocked and broken, but the outline of a Russian Orthodox sanctuary can be discerned. The exposed pipes crudely jutting into the building's side also make it clear it had been converted to a factory during the Stalinist era. But one certainly cannot tell from the street that this is now Saint Petersburg's second-largest and fastest-growing evangelical church, the Temple of the Gospel.

In the basement, the large open room serves as classroom, ministries' headquarters, and restaurant. Upstairs, the sanctuary holds two levels of pews where the Orthodox faithful used to stand. The once magnificent frescoes are now painted over, except for one of the resurrected Christ behind the pulpit and choir. (If the frescoes were fully restored, it is likely the Orthodox would sue to reclaim the church.) This ten-year reclamation project resulted from the vision of a pastor, Sergei Nikolaev, who has also dreamed of a new graduate-level seminary (see "A Fuller for Russia," p. 23).

This church, my first stop in Saint Petersburg, made me feel I was taking a time trip, 50 years back in the history of American evangelicalism—before our institutions were so large, before we had an infrastructure of publishing houses, magazines, and radio and

TV stations for communicating with fellow believers, before it was clear we were going to "make it."

Today it is a real question whether the Russian evangelicals will make it. One pastor estimates there are only 12,000 evangelicals among Saint Petersburg's 5 million. Some Orthodox leaders make life difficult for evangelicals, while others are partners; but the difficulties pale in comparison to the challenge of reaching the nihilistic, secular populace. Some Christians, like Nikolaev, see opportunity, and they dream dreams they believe God has given them. So one church is built; then another. A seminary is inaugurated, a social ministry begun, a radio station built, a television ministry launched, a few more churches started.

Few of us still worry whether evangelicalism will prosper. Yet, a generation ago we were just as dependent on our dreamers. Campus Crusade, Focus on the Family, Willow Creek Community Church, Jesus People USA, World Vision, the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, all began with young visionaries who thought, "What if . . . ?" At the time, success was far from obvious, and many projects failed.

American evangelicalism still has its dreamers, but we are less dependent on them. But in Russia, dreamers are still critical. Which dreams will become major institutions is uncertain, but what is certain to all involved is that God is at work, because it can only be *God* at work when your only assets are faith and dreams. **CT**

Dr. Robert H. Schuller



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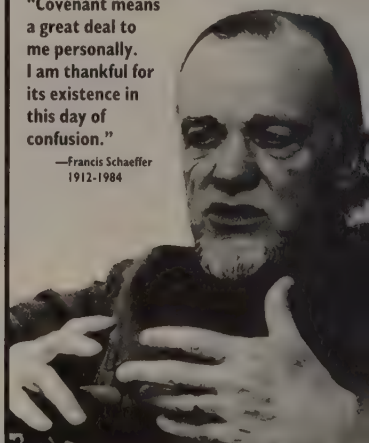


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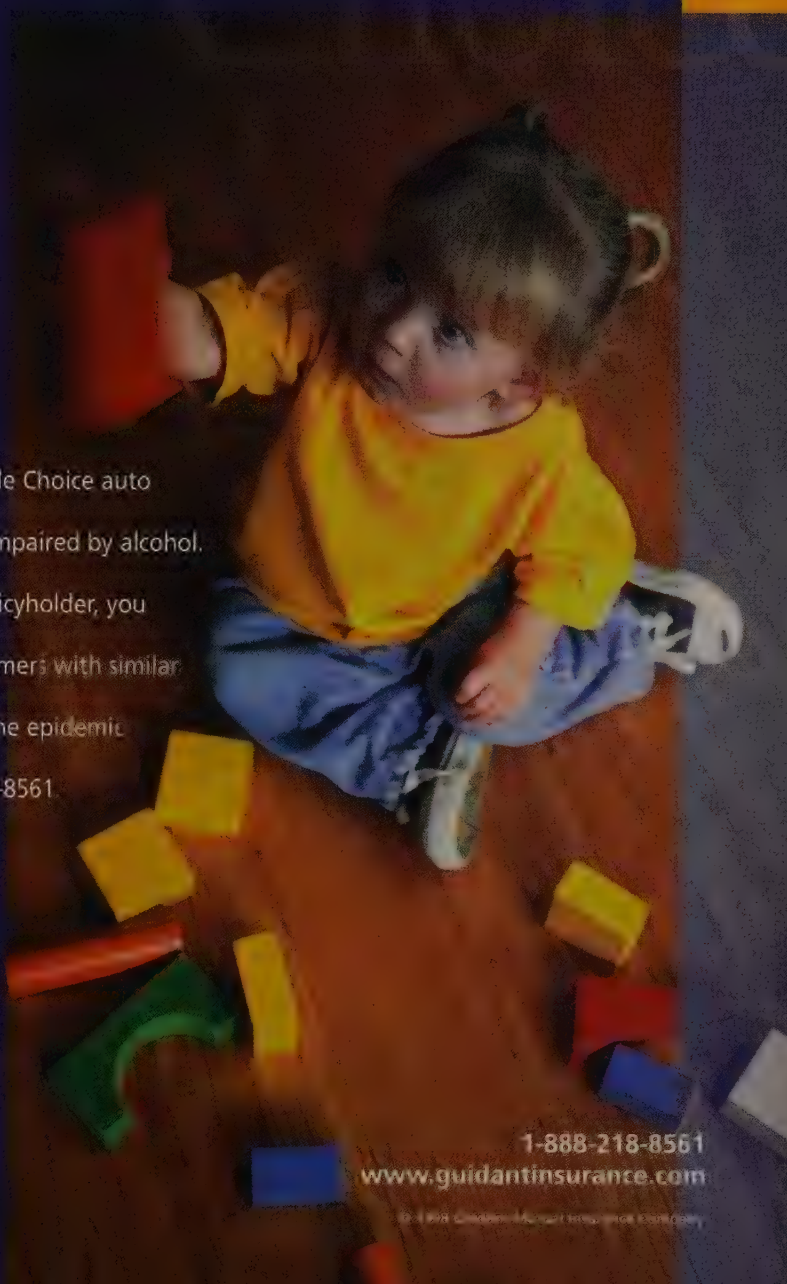
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Objective, Not Sensational

✉ Thank you for the objectivity presented in "Southern Baptists Take Up the Mormon Challenge" [June 15]. As a Latter-day Saint of 31 years, I have read many articles, books, and commentaries that distort the beliefs of my faith. Usually I find sensationalism, half-truths, and misnomers. The recent articles by John W. Kennedy are the most objective take on the Mormon Church that I have ever read. Although he did consult with the infamous anti-Mormons, the Tanners, he showed unusual restraint as he presented a more objective view. The decision of the editors to be objective rather than sensational shows a true Christian attitude.

*Derek White
Orem, Utah*

I wish to applaud John W. Kennedy's balanced and informative article. The statistical projections of Mormon growth in the article—from 10 to 270 million by the year 2080—are *conservative*. Mormonism is quickly becoming a global challenge to evangelicalism. Outreach to Mormons, like Muslims or Hindus, must be seen as outreach to a larger culture, and not just to a "cult."

I humbly suggest that the larger Christian church look to the cross-cultural approach to Mormons that evangelicals in Utah have used for some time now, with remarkable evangelistic success, which is central to the mission of Salt Lake Seminary.

*Ken Mulholland, President
Salt Lake Seminary
Salt Lake City, Utah*

I enthusiastically applaud the incredible ministry of the Southern Baptists around the world and now their zeal for reaching Mormons. On the other hand, let's not get panicky about Mormon growth or that of other religious movements around the world.

With a flaming arrow pointing skyward, CT dramatizes their projected growth to 267 million adherents by 2080. On the other hand, there is much evidence that evangelicals around the world are growing at a rate of 6 or 7 percent a year. Even if we slowed to just 5 percent average annual growth rate, the current 600 million evangelicals would become more than 30 billion worldwide by that date.

So what's the big deal about 267 million Mormons by AD 2080?

*Jim Montgomery, President
Dawn Ministries
Colorado Springs, Colo.*

✉ Your article on Mormonism quotes R. Philip Rogers: "Mormons shamelessly proselytize members of Christian churches, encouraging them to leave their own denomination and renounce the validity of their former group." This is a puzzling statement in light of the SBC's efforts to go door-to-door in Utah, encouraging Mormons to leave their church and renounce its validity. In the same breath, the article "warns Christians not to let door-knocking Mormons enter the house" because such true believers are "susceptible" to being deceived by the people you label "the enemy."

I welcomed the SBC's visit to Utah and was disappointed that they did not knock on my door. Sharing one's faith is never "sheep-stealing" to be feared. Evangelicals and Mormons are not "diametrically opposed" in our common faith in the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Clearly, there is much we have yet to learn about each other. And we will never learn when we are afraid to listen to each other.

*John Williams
Elk Ridge, Utah*

When the Mormon church can address factually and honestly issues [such as] the following, I will consider the group to be credible. Otherwise, the Mormon church is, for me, a sect at best, or a cult at worst.

- Since the production of steel is only a few hundred years old, how was it possible for the Book of Mormon to speak of Nephi and Shule as possessing and having the knowledge to forge steel (1 Nephi 4:9, 16:18; 2 Nephi 5:15; Ether 7:9)?

- Silk became known to the world outside China in A.D. 552. How was it possible for silk to be available to and used by the people of the Book of Mormon (1 Nephi 13:7; Alma 4:6; Ether 9:17; 11:24)?

- How about that compass that worked by faith (1 Nephi 16:10, 28; 18:21)?

The Book of Mormon is a fantasy. Through his fertile imagination and by "borrowing" liberally from other "science fiction" of his day, Joseph Smith created a fanciful history for America. What is so

perplexing to me is how so many reasonable, intelligent people can ignore the facts. How the Book of Mormon can be considered to be infallible is a mystery. Evangelicals need to base all dialogue with Mormons on the gospel and the truth of Scripture. There is no reason or room for conversation on any other basis. The similarities existing between me and a Mormon are superficial, not substantive.

*Edmond Long
Ringgold, Ga.*

✉ As a Mormon reading that descriptive article of a Sunday meeting in a ward of the church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, that's the first and only news article, of hundreds I have read, that actually reports the facts, accurately, and without bias or opinion. Well done! *Mark Dupree
Logan, Utah*

✉ The Mormons can teach us a lot. Here are some of the things they are doing from which we could learn:

1. Rejecting mercenary ministry. In an age of high disposable income and abundant free time, the LDS have built a model in which every leadership function needed by a local congregation can be and is done without pay.

2. Giving primacy to testimony. In addition to the conventional "lecture" format, the LDS place emphasis on the power of ordinary members sharing their faith.

3. Allocating maximum resources to evangelism. Instead of building bureaucracies and careers, the LDS devote all available resources of time and money to the spreading of their message.

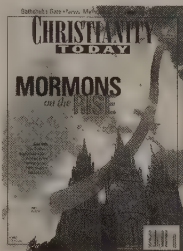
4. Emphasizing family values and social responsibility. We, who are the body of Christ, have not matched the LDS at instilling morality, practical living skills, and essential care toward each other.

Your article and personal experience demonstrate that the above approaches go a long way toward explaining the LDS success story.

*Jim Vander Spek
Escondido, Calif.*

Are Catholics Christians?

✉ As an evangelical, or born again, to be exact—saved in a Catholic college while at the same time being an avid member of the Eastern Orthodox Church—I am repulsed by Timothy George's all-inclusive reference to Roman Catholics as our "brothers and sisters" in his article on "What I'd Like to Tell the Pope About the Church" [June 15]. If what consti-



tutes them (or Orthodox, for that matter) Christians is their soteriology, that is, baptism (according to the Pope and the official catechisms of the Roman Church), then those like myself have erred in our understanding of Scripture, need to consider returning to our native nominal "Christian" roots, and question the authenticity of our "new birth experience"—was it the operation created by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit? This is the ultimate question of ecclesiology.

I fear the direction that George and others are going as leaders, and who may be ignorantly following.

*Pastor Gary George
Leicester, Mass.*

✉ The article by Timothy George contained headings that correspond to the church's attributes described in the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds. I think that fewer than one in three American evangelicals has any knowledge of those great creeds and probably fewer than one in five recites them in worship. The great legitimacy for noncreedal churches really began with the Campbellite Restorationists. Even the Anabaptists had the Schleithem Confession (1527) and the separatists had the Westminster, Savoy, and London Baptist (1689) confessions to appeal to.

Anticreedalism in this country has really harmed Protestantism and evangelicalism a great deal and has paved the way for a new liberalism based on ignorance of the facts, not rejection of them. The seeker-church movement could be the final nail in the coffin for evangelicalism, since it "dumbs down" the understanding of the gospel until it dissipates into total experientialism.

We can't have a worldwide missionary vision without the gospel, and we can't have a gospel to preach without agreement as to what we should teach.

*Edwin B. Couser
Mount Holly Springs, Pa.*

Qualifications for Leadership

✉ Eugene Peterson's contention that "our flawed ideas of leadership need chastening quite as much as our flawed leaders" seems to cloud rather than clarify the biblical perspective ["What Bible Heroes Can Teach Us About Scandals," June 15]. The expectation that our leaders, particularly in the church, will be above reproach and exercise marital fidelity is hardly some overidealized hang-up of American Christians. It is rather the qualification for ecclesiastical leadership that God himself has expressed in his Word (1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:6). When



"There must be some mistake—I haven't had my mid-life crisis yet!"

Peterson notes in the example of David that "morality is not a precondition for salvation," he fails to differentiate between qualifications for salvation and qualifications for leadership. The question Christians must discern is not the salvation status of fallen leaders but the leader's qualifications for continued leadership.

The potential influence leaders exercise over those in their fold means that the consequences of their behavior is that much greater. In a recent *Time* magazine report (May 15, 1998, p. 52), a few middle-school boys rationalized their sexual exploits by retorting, "If the President can do it, why can't we?" The lesson from the biblical record is not that we should not express shock and disappointment when our leaders fall prey to moral lapses, but that no leaders in their human condition are so strong as to be beyond susceptibility to moral failure, and that consequently we have a great responsibility to uphold their continued integrity and fidelity in our prayers.

*Barry Danylak
Aurora, Ill.*

Castle for a Few?

I read "God's Green Acres" [June 15], with interest, because as a conservationist and farmer, I believe that we can supply the world's material needs and still leave this planet in a better position to serve the next generation. Modern technology has given us the tools to produce much more from our farms and forests and leave the soil and the environment in better condition. Only good soil produces big crops, and big crops leave more residue, which improves the soil.

I applaud those who are working to discover the secrets of nature so that we can live in harmony with the environment, and as a consequence, our generation and those who may follow will have adequate supplies. The Dunn experiment seems to build an environmental castle for a few where the drawbridge can be raised and the serfs outside the mote can mix the asphalt and build the roads and schools and all the other "messy" things that make our modern life possible.

*Enos Heatwole
Denmark, S.C.*

✉ Eugene Peterson catalogs the sins of David, Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Samson, Samuel, Solomon, and pre-Pentecost Peter and concludes, "They turn out to be no better nor worse than the people with whom he [God] works still, the very ones we meet in daily newspapers." But one vital ingredient should make a great deal of difference for leaders today who claim to be Christians. They supposedly have the Holy Spirit to remind them of all that Jesus taught. Hence Americans are rightfully disappointed in Clinton.

*Peter Yuen
Oakland, Calif.*

✉ I enjoyed your profile of Christian environmentalist and Calvin College graduate Calvin DeWitt. DeWitt, a 1957 graduate of Calvin, was one of two men honored as winners of the 1998 Distinguished Alumni Awards at Calvin (the other was Anthony VanZanten, a 1961 graduate who is director of Roseland Christian Ministries in Chicago).

I also enjoyed the piece by Cornelius Plantinga, but I did want to note that he is dean of the chapel of Calvin College, not Calvin Theological Seminary. His

duties at the seminary are as a professor.

*Phil de Haan, Director, Media Relations
Calvin College
Grand Rapids, Mich.*

More, Please!

Bravo! and thank you for Cornelius Plantinga's meditation on Psalm 91 ["Can God Be Trusted?" June 15]. I have just used it in our prayer meeting, shared it profitably on a personal level with several individuals, and have personally benefited from his insights. This is the kind of material we need more of in the pages of CT.

*Pastor Jim Kutnow
The Blue Church
Springfield, Pa.*

Spong: Comical or Tragic?

In regard to the review of John Shelby Spong's book *Why Christianity Must Change or Die* [Books, June 15], it is hard to tell if people like Bishop Spong are more comical or merely tragic figures on the fringes of American religion. He reminds me of the last man on the *Titanic*, crying out, "Get back on the boat! Don't you know it is unsinkable?" The "Father Almighty" God that so offends Spong is the only one who could be changing the lives of sin-hardened sinners in this jail. His new book should be titled *Why Spong Must Change—Or Die*.

*Chaplain Rick McEver
Good News Jail and Prison Ministry
Bisbee, Ariz.*

While I can agree with Michael Maudlin's assessment of Bishop Spong's theology, I heartily disagree with his view of the Anglican (Episcopal) church. The Anglican church has 70 million members worldwide and is growing, despite the fact that as a church we encompass different views on some matters. We can hardly be compared to the *Titanic*.

It was unfair and hurtful to have a whole church condemned because of the views of one of its leaders.

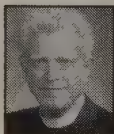
*Rector Bill Clarke
Parish of the Rideau
Portland, Ont., Canada*

For the Children's Sake

Thank you for reissuing the call for Christian parents to find a way to stay home with their children [Editorial, "Home Is Where the Parent Should Be," June 15]. As a stay-at-home mom and pastor's wife, I am saddened by the large number of Christians who delegate their

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LOREN B. MEAD

Author of *Five Challenges for the Once and Future Church* (1996) and *Financial Meltdown in the Mainline?* (1998), Mr. Mead is Founder and former President of the Alban Institute in Washington, D.C.



MARK CHAVES

Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of Arizona, Mr. Chaves is author of *Ordaining Women: Culture and Conflict in Religious Organizations* (1997) and co-editor of *Financing American Religion* (Alta Mira Press, 1998).



ROBERT WOOD LYNN

Mr. Lynn is former Senior Vice President of Religion at Lilly Endowment, Inc. His recent scholarship focuses on the relationship between money and the Christian faith.

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children's care to outside and often non-Christian caretakers.

I am more convinced than ever that we must break out of our current culture that says women are only fulfilled and have self-worth if they pursue a career away from the home. We have a lifetime to pursue the corporate ladder or a second car but only 18 years to develop children of character.

Debbie Hardinger
Lynden, Wash.

Work for Change

Your article concerning the reaction to the acquittal of United Methodist pastor Jimmy Creech neglected a significant point [News, "Verdict Aftershocks," June 15]. The United Methodist Book of Discipline contains not only church law, but also theological and advisory materials, such as the Constitution, Our Doctrinal Heritage and Our Theological Task, and the Social Principles.

Because the Social Principles are advisory rather than binding, they do not carry the authority of church law. The statement Creech violated is in these Social Principles; therefore, he was acquitted. The conservative voices now crying *foul* need to accept this as fact and work for change in the legal paragraphs pertaining to the ordained ministry if they want a social prohibition across the church on performing same-sex unions. I find a disturbing lack of veracity among conservative United Methodists at points like this.

Pastor Jim Frisbie, Sr.
First United Methodist Church
Twin Falls, Idaho

The removal of Jimmy Creech will not solve the problem of gay marriages nor any other point of dissension. Many church members are fed up with the waffling and indecision on the part of the leadership of the United Methodist Church. Its devotion to "political correctness" has reached the point of no return and has evolved into absurdness.

Unless the UMC returns to biblical doctrine and its strong Wesleyan tradition, there is little hope that effective reform can occur. It will take strong action by the laity to bring this about.

Jimmy R. Cash, Sr.
Fayetteville, N.C.

Greek Orthodox Respond

We respond, respectfully but sadly, to errors and impressions created by the article "Lay Coalition Demands Removal of U.S. Archbishop Spyridon (News, June 15).

First, it states that an incident of sexual harassment at the seminary was covered up. This allegation is false. The archbishop appointed a blue-ribbon committee of lawyers to investigate this charge, and it was completely refuted. Moreover, the article fails to mention (1) our policy against sexual harassment and (2) our record of dealing directly with such incidents by cooperating with legal investigations and then following up on adverse findings, when they occur, with procedures before the spiritual courts of our church.

Second, rather than removing lay oversight of archdiocesan finances, the archbishop has actually acted to give laypeople more control over financial assets of the church. For example, the archbishop, in cooperation with lay boards and trustees, has recently restructured our endowment fund into an exclusively lay-controlled fund.

Third, the author never asked the archdiocese whether the complaint that priests who question diocesan decisions are frequently reassigned is true. In fact, it is false.

We appreciate the opportunity to correct the record.

Mark B. Arey,
Director of Communications
Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America
New York, N.Y.

Baroness Cox's CSI Team

The article by Baroness Caroline Cox on Nagorno-Karabakh [April 27], which references her team from Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW), does not reflect the facts. She made the trip on behalf of Christian Solidarity International (CSI), Switzerland, which paid for this visit to Karabakh and provided most of the administrative support. As CSI-U.K. broke away from CSI-International last September and is now called CSW, readers will assume that the wrong organization was responsible for the action in Karabakh described in that article.

Rev. Hans-J. Stückelberger
Founder and International President
Christian Solidarity International
Binz, Switzerland

Brief letters are welcome. They may be edited for space and clarity and **must include the writer's name and address** if intended for publication. Due to the volume of mail, we cannot respond personally to individual letters. Write to Eutychus, CHRISTIANITY TODAY, 465 Gundersen Drive, Carol Stream, IL 60188; fax: 630/260-0114. E-mail: ctedit@aol.com (✉).



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FISH FIGHT

Missouri Town in Symbolic Struggle

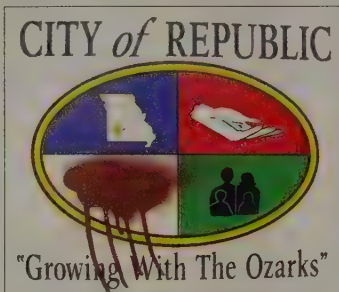
The town of Republic, Missouri, is fighting a lawsuit filed in federal court July 1 by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) for having an *ichthus*, the early Christian fish symbol, in its town logo.

"The symbol is very clearly a Christian symbol," says Dick Kurtenbach, regional ACLU executive director. "They were declaring Republic a Christian community."

A poll indicates 87 percent of residents want to retain the emblem, which appears on the town's flag, trucks, street signs, and stationery.

The ten-member Support Republic Committee, created by the town's board of aldermen and composed of volunteers from the local Assemblies of God, Baptist,

Catholic, Christian, Evangelical Free, and Methodist churches, has raised about \$12,500 for legal fees



Unappreciated target: Vandals spray-painted the *ichthus* on a welcome sign into the city.

through private donations and the sale of T-shirts bearing the logo. Support has come from as far away as New Zealand, says Keith Miller, committee cochair.

Marilyn Shexsnayder, who submitted the winning logo

design as part of a local contest eight years ago, says she added the fish to represent the role of faith in the community, which has 8,000 residents and two dozen churches. "I thought the fish was a universal symbol of religion," she told CT. "I think it would be really simple just to change that fish into a halo."

But the fight for the fish has rallied the town's denominationally diverse Christians. "We don't appreciate an organization coming in and telling us what we can and cannot do," says Miller.

Local Christians view the controversy as an evangelistic opportunity. "There is an openness in the city to dialogue about faith in Christ," says Denny Marr, minister of education at Calvary Baptist Church in Republic. "It's been a very positive situation."

By Christine J. Gardner.

Tithe Protection Law Signed

The Evangelical Free Church in New Hope, Minnesota, has finally been vindicated in a six-year legal battle that involved \$13,450 in tithes from a couple who had declared bankruptcy. Initially, a judge determined the couple received "no reasonable equivalent value" for their donations to the church. Ultimately, after a \$300,000 legal battle, a new federal law prohibits collectors from confiscating donations made by insolvent contributors (CT, May 18, 1998, p. 14).

In June, President Clinton signed the Religious Liberty and Charitable Donation Protection Act. The new law effectively closes a loophole that infringed on the right of religious exercise and allows those who have filed Chapter 13 bankruptcy to contribute up to 15 percent of their yearly income to a religious organization or charity. CT

PUBLISHING

Experiencing God Crosses Over

Canadian pastor Henry Blackaby wrote *Experiencing God*, a 13-week interactive discipleship workbook, for use in the Southern Baptist Convention. Yet the 224-page course about knowing and doing the will of God is now being used in at least 17 other denominations, including Church of God, Assemblies of God, Roman Catholic, Vineyard, Menonite, and Episcopal churches.

Blackaby, 63, says Christians often ask the wrong question: "What is God's will for my life?" What they should be asking, he says,

is, "What is God's will?"

Blackaby developed the material through years of serving as a pastor in rural Canada. Often he had no resources and had to wait on God's provision. The workbook, which emphasizes a deeper relationship with God, teaches that to know God intimately requires knowing his Word.

The *Experiencing God* (LifeWay Christian Resources) work-

book has sold more than 2 million copies, plus another 2.5 million ancillary products, including a specialized Bible.

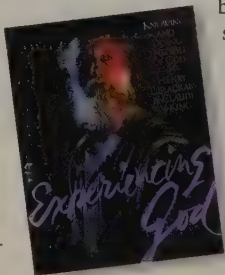
"It's popular because it's

interactive and meets people where they are," LifeWay's Sam House says of the workbook. "Rather than emphasizing a process, *Experiencing God* emphasizes a relationship with God. Some people go through it two or three times and they get something new every time."

Lutheran pastor Warren D. Freiheit of Peoria, Illinois, says those in his church who have gone through the study have developed a deeper appreciation and understanding of God's work.

"They're also much more active," he says. Freiheit first heard about the study from Kristie Toniny, a layperson in his church who had studied *Experiencing God* at a local Presbyterian church.

"I had been churchd all of



Prayer man: Blackaby wants to see revival.

my life, but I never truly understood what it meant to have a personal relationship with God until I went through this material," Toniny says. "The whole concept of *Experiencing God* allows it to move easily from one denomination to another."

By Jon Kent Walker.

New Religious Liberty Bill Unveiled

After the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) suffered defeat in the Supreme Court last year (CT, Aug. 11, 1997, p. 48), lawmakers scrambled to draft a bill that could withstand a constitutional challenge.

Legislators say the recently introduced Religious Liberty Protection Act (RLPA) could do just that. But some Christian groups say the new bill inappropriately links religious liberty with interstate commerce, expanding federal power. RLPA critics say the bill denigrates religion by associating it with commercial enterprise. The new bill is motivated by recent court cases that religious groups say have eroded the free exercise of religion as spelled out in the Bill of Rights.

Bill advocate Steven McFarland, director of the Center for Law and Religious Freedom, says, "The issue is one of civil liberty, whether religion will be the only place not receiving

[legal] protection."

Lawmakers have sought to legislate stronger protections for religious freedom by developing the standard that prohibits state interference with religious practice unless there is a "compelling government interest." Also, governments must act in the least restrictive manner in cases involving religious practice.

More than 80 diverse organizations, from the Christian Coalition to the American Civil Liberties Union, support RLPA, introduced by Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) and Rep. Charles Canady (R-Fla.). But a few key conservative family groups that backed RFRA are not supporting the new bill.

"Our major concern is that the bill offers protection only on the basis of federally funded programs and commercial activity," says Concerned Women for America president Carmen Pate. "It minimizes the importance of religion."

*By Walter Ratliff
in Washington, D.C.*

SUPREME COURT

Raucy Art Ruled Unprotected

In an 8-to-1 decision, the Supreme Court ruled June 25 that the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) can refuse to give federal money to artists whose work is considered indecent.

Justice Sandra Day O'Connor wrote for the majority, saying the policy "neither interferes with First Amendment rights nor involves constitutional vagueness principles." The law "admonishes the NEA merely to take 'decency and respect' into consideration," she wrote.

Lower courts had struck down the decency standard as too vague and unconstitutional. For many years the NEA has

been under attack for funding offensive material at taxpayer expense (CT, Oct. 7, 1997, p. 88). In 1990, Congress restricted funding after the agency sponsored controversial photo exhibits, one of which featured a crucifix immersed in urine.

While many conservative groups are hailing the ruling, some NEA critics doubt there will be much improvement in arts funding. The NEA has a \$98 million annual budget. The U.S. House voted 217 to 216 to dismantle the NEA last year, but a Senate panel approved a bill to finance the agency through 2002.

*By Greg Clugston in
Washington, D.C.*

News Briefs

◆ After a yearlong investigation, a federal grand jury on July 2 indicted Henry Lyons, president of the **National Baptist Convention USA**, on 56 counts, including fraud, conspiracy, and tax evasion. He is accused of extorting millions from corporations, obtaining loans with false documents, and fraudulently soliciting donations to purchase houses, cars, and jewelry (CT, Oct. 27, 1997, p. 102). If convicted, Lyons, 56, of St. Petersburg, Florida, faces a maximum of 815 years in prison and \$25 million in fines.



REUTERS/ANS

Too big a Lyons share? National Baptists gave a vote of confidence last fall.

◆ The Salvation Army is cutting three programs and laying off 60 of its 390 employees in San Francisco because of disagreements with the city's **domestic partners law**. The ordinance approved last year (CT, April 28, 1997, p. 79) redefines the traditional family by requiring employers to give the same medical and retirement benefits to workers' domestic partners as to spouses. Catholic Charities will continue working in the city without officially recognizing the decree by providing "spousal equivalent" benefits to an employee's spouse, sibling, or unmarried housemate.

◆ The Supreme Court rejected an appeal June 26 to lift the ban on the sale of **pornography on military bases**. The decision reaffirms the Military Honor and Decency Act of 1996, stating the ban does not violate free-speech rights.

◆ The **Presbyterian Church in America** General Assembly last month agreed to review its doctrinal standards regarding the days of Creation. Some say the Westminster Confession of Faith requires belief that God created the world in six 24-hour days; others say it allows belief in six indefinite periods of time.

◆ The **Reformed Church in America's** (RCA) General Synod voted June 8 against a proposal to end discipline based solely on a person's sexual orientation. The RCA also agreed to a three-year moratorium on discussions regarding homosexual issues.

◆ Former PTL Ministries head **Jim Bakker** has joined the staff of the 1,000-member Los Angeles International Church, also known as the Dream Center. Bakker, 58, who spent five years in prison for multimillion-dollar fraud, serves in a full-time, unpaid position with the church's inner-city outreach.

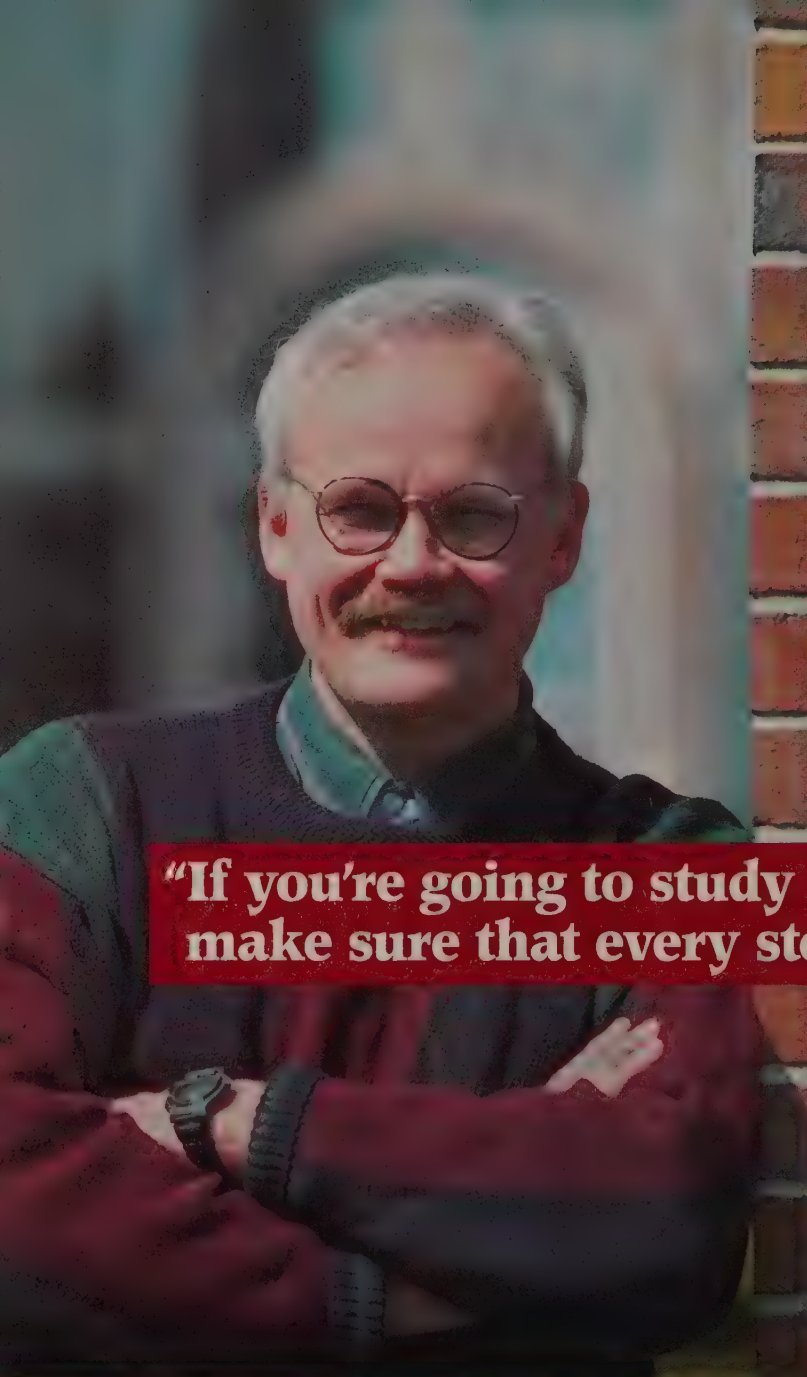
◆ Larry Tomczak, 48, has joined the faculty of the **Brownsville Revival School of Ministry** in Pensacola, Florida. Tomczak is the cofounder of People of Destiny International, a network of charismatic churches.

◆ Peter Nanfelt, 61, has been elected president of the **Christian and Missionary Alliance**. Nanfelt has worked in missions for 39 years with the C&MA, most recently as vice president for the Division of Overseas Ministries. He replaces Paul Bubna, who died March 31.



New digs: Bakker has a different perspective.

REUTERS/RNS



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Graham Unites English, French in Ottawa Crusade

Ottawa, as Billy Graham observed during his recent visit to Canada's capital city, is like a house divided. The geographical division of the Ottawa River between the province of Ontario and the province of Quebec is symbolic of the country's "two solitudes"—English on one side and French on the other.

The church is not exempt from that division. Traditionally, Anglophone Canadians have been largely Protestant, while Francophones have been Roman Catholic. Suspicion of each other has often prevented the two branches from cooperating.

But in the months preceding the June 25–28 Billy Graham mission to the national capital region, an area of about one million people, the barriers between Catholic and Protestant—and to an extent, between French and English—began to dissipate. Out of the 470 area churches that supported the campaign, 60 were Catholic. The Catholic involvement was the most significant of any Graham evangelistic crusade ever.

LONG TIME COMING: Graham's visit to Ottawa marked the first time in 92 years—since Chicago evangelist R. A. Torrey preached—that the city had hosted a major interdenominational outreach.

Mission chair Allen Churchill, a United Church minister, said Christians had been praying about such a unifying event for three decades. "God pulled the blinkers off our eyes," Churchill said.

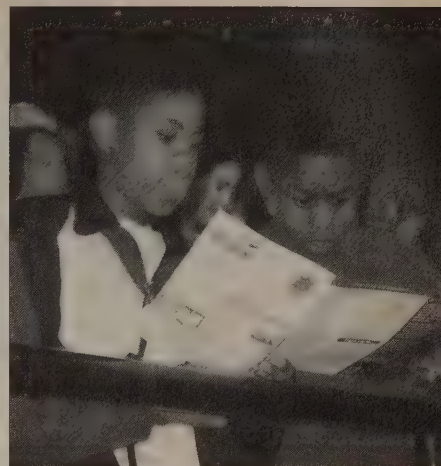
Division among Protestants constituted a major obstacle in itself, according to Doug Ward, a Baptist pastor on the executive committee. But the greater issue facing the committee concerned determining whether Protestants could work with Catholics. "We crossed that line," Ward said, "and then it was a go."

Receiving an endorsement from the region's Roman Catholic archbishop, Marcel Gervais, helped. In a pastoral letter, Gervais said he supported the evangelism meetings "based on the traditions of the Roman Catholic Church, the spirit of Vatican II, and the teachings of Pope John Paul II."

In the early 1960s, the council of Vatican II, meeting in Rome, concluded, among other things, that the Catholic church should seek increased dialogue with other denominations. Gervais told Graham that Catholics "need to get back to the Bible," and "people are hungry to know what the Bible says and what its message is."

DEEPLY HELD RESERVATIONS: Despite the fact that Gervais is a Francophone, French-speaking Christians—both Protestant and Catholic—expressed reservations about involvement. For the French, the division between Protestant and Catholic is historic and not easily reconciled, explained Richard LaPointe, pastor of a French Pentecostal church and the mission's cochair. French Protestant pastors spoke of reluctance to join the mission if new converts attending would wind up in a Catholic church, which some did. LaPointe said some Catholics "see Protestants as the enemy."

In Quebec, where church attendance has fallen to less than 10 percent of the population during the past 40 years, Protestants are still considered cultic by some Catholics. Yet LaPointe is optimistic about closing that ecumenical divide. As many as 400 people, representing 50 different French-speaking churches, participated in the Christian Life and Witness classes that preceded the Graham crusade.



Reaching youth: Two young Canadians sing hymns before listening to the 79-year-old evangelist.

DEBRA FIEGUTH

"There were small groups of people from most of the French churches represented in the area, even though the pastors as a whole didn't get involved," LaPointe said.

DIPLOMATIC SPECIALIST: Graham, ever the goodwill ambassador, made sure the bridge-building also reached the top level of the country's decision makers, spending a private hourlong meeting with Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien, who is a French-speaking Catholic, and attending a reception with opposition leader Preston Manning, an English-speaking evangelical.

Mission organizers took care to represent both French and English during the four nights of meetings. Speakers offered greetings and prayers in both languages. Some of the guest musicians, such as noted tenor Ben Heppner, sang in both French and English, as did Lena Di Paolo,

a popular French singer who is largely unknown in English Canada. And to broaden the cultural spectrum represented, the committee also invited Susan Aglukark, an Inuit pop star who sang in both Inuktitut and English.

Audiences averaged 23,500 each night to hear the 79-year-old evangelist at the 18,500-seat Corel Centre (overflow crowds watched a JumboTron in the parking lot). The largest crowd came the night of a "Concert for the NeXt Generation," featuring Christian musicians Jars of Clay and Michael W. Smith. In all, 8,634 people made salvation decisions.

By Debra Fieguth in Ottawa.



Diplomatic ties: Prime Minister Jean Chretien (left) meets with Billy Graham on Parliament Hill two days before the start of the Ottawa campaign.

Universities Question Orthodox Conversions

As Orthodoxy has gained a more visible presence within evangelical colleges and seminaries, new questions have surfaced on whether Orthodox teachings are in conflict with evangelical statements of faith. The Orthodox conversions of at least ten evangelical college faculty have pushed onto the front burner the debate among evangelicals of whether Orthodox teachings are in conflict with essential Protestant theology (CT, Jan. 6, 1997, p. 32).

Faculty and top administrators at evangelical institutions are commonly required to sign a statement of faith. Individuals who are unable to sign the statement might not be hired or could lose their jobs. In recent instances, professors at two schools have faced administrators who questioned the compatibility of Orthodox dogma with the doctrinal statements at those schools.

Edward Rommen, a recent convert to Orthodoxy, says he resigned from Columbia Biblical Seminary at Columbia (S.C.) International University (CIU) at the end of last fall's semester after the university's president asked him to leave.

At Biola University in La Mirada, California, administrators appointed a committee of Talbot Seminary faculty to look into the Orthodox faith after trustees and a student raised questions about whether three Orthodox faculty members, all of them converts, could still subscribe to the school's statement of belief and doctrine.

The Biola committee's report, completed a month before the end of the school year, concluded that the teachings found in Orthodox literature are incompatible with Biola's stated positions on the doctrine of justification and the authority of Scripture. The report found that Orthodox teaching explicitly denies justification by faith alone and that it requires good works and the necessity of sacramental rites for salvation.

Threatened with dismissal after the report, the Orthodox faculty, with two Orthodox theologians who teach at Ful-

ler Theological Seminary, met with Biola administrators and members of the faculty committee two weeks after the report's release. They rejected the report's conclusions, arguing that literature cited by the faculty committee did not reflect the true position of their church and maintained that other Orthodox literature contained views of justification and the authority of



Pre-Orthodoxy: Rommen teaches a missions course at a German evangelical seminary.

Scripture compatible with Biola's doctrinal statement.

Following that meeting, Biola provost Sherwood Lingenfelter recommended to president Clyde Cook that the faculty members be retained while the two sides clarify "what theological hurdles must be overcome for further opening of the Biola community to Orthodox Christians."

"These men showed me a dynamic side of the Orthodox church that I hadn't seen in the literature," Lingenfelter told CT. "It seemed to me that the Orthodox church in the U.S. is more open to evangelicals. They seemed much closer on the critical issues than what we'd read in the literature."

UNWELCOME CONVERSION: Former CIU professor Rommen grew up in the Evangelical Free Church and spent nearly 15 years as a missionary and seminary professor for that denomination in Germany. On returning to the United States, he taught at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois, for eight years before joining CIU's faculty in 1994.

He joined the Orthodox church in May 1997, even though he detected 10 points of difference between Orthodox theology and CIU's doctrinal statement. According to Rommen, the only substantive difference concerns end-times teaching: the school holds a premillennial position while the Orthodox are amillennial.

When the fall semester began, Rommen, who had signed a five-year contract that went into effect in June 1997, informed seminary dean Ken Mulholland of his conversion. In November, the school agreed to allow Rommen to teach for a two-year trial period.

Rommen says he received strong support from faculty members and students, who urged Mulholland to keep him. But university president Johnny Miller told Rommen to resign at the end of the fall semester or face dismissal at the board of trustees meeting in February.

Though Rommen says he believes the president's primary concerns involved constituency reaction to the presence of an Orthodox professor, Miller says his primary concerns were doctrinal. Miller says that Rommen from the beginning understood the doctrinal issues. Miller says, "I think the same thing would be true for a person who claimed to be an evangelical Catholic—what part is evangelical and what part is Catholic?"

CHARISMATIC CONVERTS: The conversions of evangelical faculty members to Orthodoxy reflect how some disenchanted evangelicals have been drawn to Orthodoxy's ancient liturgy, historic creeds, and family-supportive environment. According to Bradley Nassif, an administrator and adjunct professor of Eastern Orthodoxy at Fuller Seminary, Antiochian Orthodoxy has 200 North American parishes and 350,000 members and has become home to many Orthodox converts. About 75 percent of its clergy are converts, says Nassif, a lifelong Orthodox Christian.

Among the evangelical professors who have converted to Orthodoxy, many are charismatic. Nearly all say they found Orthodox worship more reverent and more God-centered, and they appreciate the emphasis on formalized prayers and strict preparation for worship. "This is not entertainment, not tickling the ears of those who attend," says Rommen.

See **HIGHER EDUCATION** on page 21

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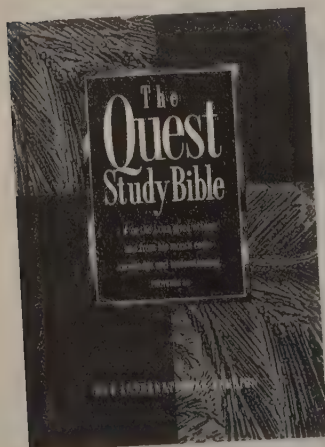
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HIGHER EDUCATION from page 18

Evangelical converts also point out that Orthodox beliefs have remained essentially the same for nearly two millennia. "The Orthodox church hasn't changed," says Oral Roberts University (ORU) engineering professor Dave Baumann, who converted four years ago.

DOCTRINAL DIFFERENCES: Orthodox beliefs and practices differ from evangelicals in areas such as veneration of saints and of Mary, prayers for the dead, the use of icons, church governance, the prominence of church tradition, the process of sanctification, and the Old Testament Canon.

But the statements of faith within many evangelical institutions were created in contrast to Roman Catholicism, secularism, liberal Christian theology, as well as to define further the tenets of evangelicalism.

Biola sociology professor Richard Flory, who has studied the development of evangelical education extensively, says statements of faith for schools not tied directly to a particular denomination tend to be broadly written, glossing over differences on less essential theological

points to include faculty members from a cross section of Protestant traditions.

"There was disagreement on some issues, but they were agreed on the major issues—the authority of Scripture, the deity of Christ, salvation," Flory says. As Orthodoxy becomes a more significant influence, Flory predicts schools will be forced to reassess their theological identity. "Schools have to decide," Flory says, "if they want to be only Protestant and evangelical, or if they are going to be open to anyone who believes what the Bible teaches."

A move to map the uncharted territory between evangelicalism and Eastern Orthodoxy is being undertaken at Fuller Seminary, where Nassif is director of academic programs for Fuller's Southern California extension campus. According to Fuller provost Russ Spittler, leaders from Fuller and the Antiochian church are discussing the creation of an Eastern Orthodox studies program at the seminary.

In 1990, Nassif founded and now heads the Society for the Study of Eastern Orthodoxy and Evangelicalism, a schol-

arly association that explores both religious communities. Nassif hopes the discussions at Fuller will lead to the creation of a degree-track program for aspiring Orthodox priests and other students.

But Spittler expects Fuller to move slowly on that decision. Among the many areas of potential tension are the role of women in ministry and the strained relations between Orthodox and evangelicals in Orthodox-majority countries, such as Russia.

Fuller has firm commitments to women's ordination as well as world evangelization. Orthodoxy does not allow ordination of women. And, in some parts of the world, Orthodox leaders have actively opposed Protestant evangelical outreach. "The behavior of the Orthodox on the grand scene, in other parts of the world, gives us some pause," Spittler says. While Nassif admits that a cooperative educational alliance between American evangelicals and Orthodoxy will be opposed by some on both sides, it is "nevertheless a timely and worthy goal to pursue."

By Scott A. Swanson.

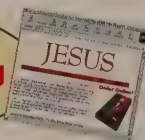


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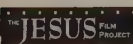


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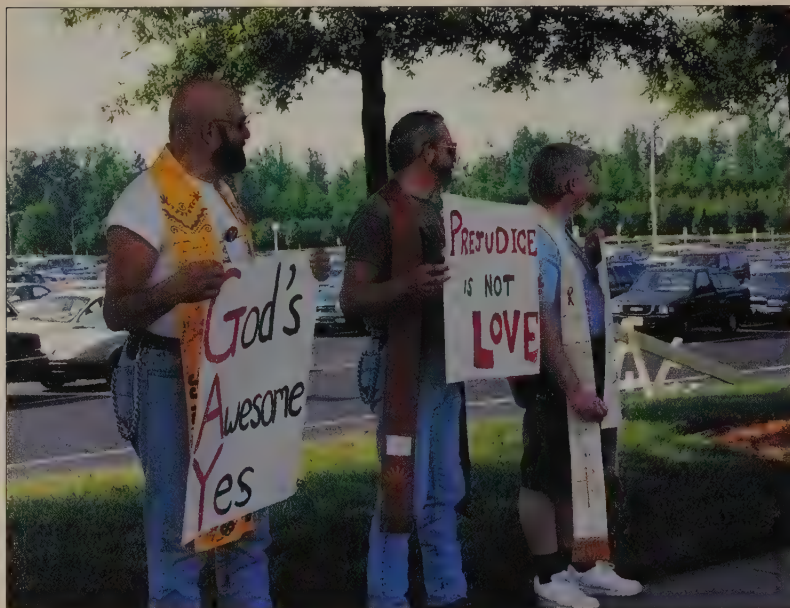
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Moratorium unappreciated: Several Presbyterians protest the cease-fire on discussions of sexual issues.

Presbyterians in Stalemate over Homosexual Ordination

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (PCUSA), at its annual general assembly in June, agreed to a cease-fire of sorts in the debate over homosexual ordination. Still, some outspoken Presbyterians see the effort as doomed because the stalemate is likely to create more ill will and further marginalize Presbyterian homosexuals.

After a week of debate, the denomination rejected, 412 to 92, a proposal that would have reopened the question of whether the church should ordain practicing homosexuals. This leaves standing the denomination's Book of Order, which requires pastors, elders, and deacons to practice chastity in singleness and fidelity in marriage between a man and woman, a 1996 rule aimed in part at keeping active homosexuals from leadership posts.

Earlier this year, the PCUSA announced that regional bodies had rejected by a 2-to-1 margin an effort to loosen official standards on who may be ordained (CT, May 18, 1998, p. 14). Thus, the "fidelity and chastity" amendment passed at last year's general assembly (CT, Aug. 11, 1997, p. 56) remains unchanged.

HALTING LOSSES: The battle over sexuality has occurred against the backdrop of further membership decline, in-

cluding a drop of 22,000 last year. For some, the divisive sexuality debates have distracted church leaders from focusing on the familiar work of evangelistic outreach and mission projects.

"It really is time to step back," said Richard Hutchison, pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Fort Wayne, Indiana. "I don't mean sweep it under the rug. What we need to be talking about now is how we can live together with our differences . . . as opposed to how we resolve our differences."

Hutchison and the other two candidates for moderator supported the respite, including winner Douglas Oldenburg, president of Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Georgia.

Oldenburg, 63, will lead the denomination for the next year, spending much of his time trying to fire up a 2.6-million-member denomination that has lost 1.5 million members since the Northern and Southern wings of the church merged in 1983.

DUCKING THE ISSUE? While 15,000 Presbyterian leaders opened the convention with worship in North Carolina's Charlotte Coliseum, a group of 50 who favor ordination of homosexuals gathered for prayer outside.

Homer Spencer, 76, a retired pastor and missionary from Lakeland, Florida, said the sabbatical is only allowing the denomination to duck the issue. A supporter of ordaining homosexuals, Spencer has a homosexual son who left the denomination.

Despite the vote to table the homosexual debate, Presbyterians took several steps to facilitate discussion and to discourage sanctions against members who are homosexual. In a resolution, they asked individual presbyteries not to exclude anyone from church membership on the basis of age, race, class, gender, or sexual orientation. "We trust our presbyteries and congregations to determine the fitness of individuals based upon their behavior," said Carol McDonald, chair of the committee that brought the issue to the general assembly floor.

Delegates also agreed to hold a national conference of Presbyterians within the next six months to explore the theological and ethical issues of homosexuality.

LUTHERAN AGREEMENT: With far less division, Presbyterians resolved several other issues. The PCUSA marked the formal beginning of "full communion" with the 5.2 million-member Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

After three decades of study, and ratification by presbyteries after last year's general assembly, the agreement recognized in Charlotte forges deeper ties between the two denominations, as well as with the United Church of Christ and Reformed Church in America.

Presbyterians and Lutherans will now be able to take Communion at each others' churches. Presbyterian congregations may hire Lutherans to be their pastors, and Lutherans may hire Presbyterians. Members may start joint churches. The agreement will be sealed at an October 4 worship service at the University of Chicago.

In the heart of tobacco country, Presbyterians voted to approve a resolution urging Congress to set a tax of at least \$1.10 per pack on cigarettes. In addition, the resolution also urged the elimination of cigarette vending machines.

Presbyterians also passed a resolution calling on members to remove handguns and assault weapons from their homes. While supporting gun control before, the resolution is the first to urge members actually to remove their weapons.

Philadelphia minister Bernice Warren said, "I have been to too many funerals of young people, particularly young black men, who have been killed by handguns."

By Ken Garfield in Charlotte.

A Fuller for Russia

A new home is dedicated for the nation's only graduate-level Protestant seminary.

Beware when giving advice. That is the lesson Arthur DeKruyter learned after completing a preaching tour in the Soviet Union in 1986. DeKruyter, the founding pastor of the megasized Christ Church Oak Brook (Ill.), visited churches at the invitation of the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christian-Baptist Churches. Meeting Russian clergy caused the Chicago-area cleric to tell Union officials that their leaders needed better theological training. "So help us build a seminary," they responded.

And so he did. On June 20, the new 35,000-square-foot building for the Saint Petersburg Theological Academy, the only graduate-level Protestant seminary in Russia, was dedicated. In operation since 1990, shuffling between church basements and rented classrooms, the school has issued more than 300 degrees, ranging from associate's to a pre-master's certificate, the latter accredited by Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, which allows students to receive an M.A. with only one year of additional study in the United States. Within the next few years, the school hopes to bestow an M.A. without students having to leave Russian soil. Fuller provides four faculty members a year, each undertaking a two-week stint of six-hour lectures, six days a week.

NEAR-DEATH VISION: The idea for the academy arose from a dramatic event in the life of Sergei Nikolaev, an evangelical minister from Saint Petersburg. Nikolaev suffered multiple fractures in a car accident in Norway in 1988. While near death, he says he was visited by the Lord, who told him to follow a three-pronged strategy for his ministry in Saint Petersburg: not only was he to build a church (the Temple of the Gospel Church, which quickly grew to 2,000 members), but also a mission (New Life Mission, the evangelistic and social ministry arm of the church) and a seminary.

Nikolaev did not just want a Bible college, either, even though he recognized that as the most immediate need. Few

pastors have undergraduate degrees because Christians were hindered from attending college during the Soviet era. But Nikolaev, now 49, looked to the future: "I think it's very important to have a school like this not only to prepare ministers but also to prepare theologians who can start the cross-religious, cross-denominational, and cultural dialogue which is so crucial today in Russia."



New era for Russia's Protestants: A procession behind a medieval Russian Bible and ribbon-cutting mark the achievement of Arthur DeKruyter (left) and Sergei Nikolaev in building the graduate seminary in Saint Petersburg.

As it turned out, Nikolaev's educational vision matched what DeKruyter wanted to pursue. After some false starts in Moscow, where leaders insisted on correspondence schools or a Bible college format, DeKruyter matched up with Nikolaev, who shared his vision of building a "Fuller seminary for Russia."

THE RIGHT MATCH: In many ways DeKruyter, now 72 and retired from pastoral responsibilities, was the perfect man for the job. His Dutch Reformed heritage gave him a passion for theological education; his connection as a board member of Fuller Seminary for the past 27 years provided academic resources from which to draw; and being the pastor of a large church in one of the wealthiest suburban communities in America gave him a donor base.

DeKruyter studied how other American-Russian partnerships had failed and strove to avoid those pitfalls. The academy is fully owned and controlled by Russians. It is financed by a founda-

tion in Oak Brook that DeKruyter set up, which also provides administrative consulting. The budget, salaries, and expectations are defined on a Russian scale versus an American one. As quickly as possible, he and Nikolaev are having Russians be trained for the teaching positions so the school is not dependent on visiting faculty. Four master's graduates now teach at the academy. Their dream is for the academy to be financially independent by 2006.

To his surprise, DeKruyter discovered that Americans are almost useless when teaching on subjects of practical ministry. "We tried bringing pastors and professors over, teaching homiletics and pastoral counseling, but it was not adequate," he says. "Only the Russian Christians know their culture and what works here." Visiting faculty concentrate on core academic subjects, including Bible and systematic theology.

RESULTS OF FREEDOM:

More than 200 people, including evangelical leaders from throughout Russia, jammed the chapel for the dedication service. Yet Nikolaev says in the early years he had few friends. Despite a position on the All-Union Council and his distinction as the translator for Billy Graham's two Russian speaking tours, other Protestant leaders opposed Nikolaev's vision for two reasons: many felt the graduate-level program wasted resources and was too ecumenical for a Protestant seminary (the faculty now includes three Russian Orthodox monks as adjunct staff).

Since the fall of communism in 1989, the government-enforced unity of Protestants has fallen apart. First the Mennonites left the All-Union Council, then the Pentecostals pulled out, and now there is fighting between Baptists and evangelicals (though it is hard for outsiders to understand exactly what distinguishes these two groups).

Nikolaev hopes to transcend those disputes by providing a seminary open to all strands of Protestants in Russia, which he has done. "We had a Baptist student who didn't think Pentecostals were Christians," Nikolaev says. "Now he asks his two Pentecostal friends from his seminary class to help him preach at his church's revival services." He adds, "Now that we have the building, we have many friends."

*By Michael G. Maudlin
in Saint Petersburg.*

Sudanese Christians Bloody, but Unbowed

Santino Manut, a one-legged former southern Sudanese soldier, sits on a stool in a small room where artificial legs are manufactured. A health assistant washes what remains of his leg, amputated at the knee. Soon the 24-year-old Manut will be fitted with an artificial limb.

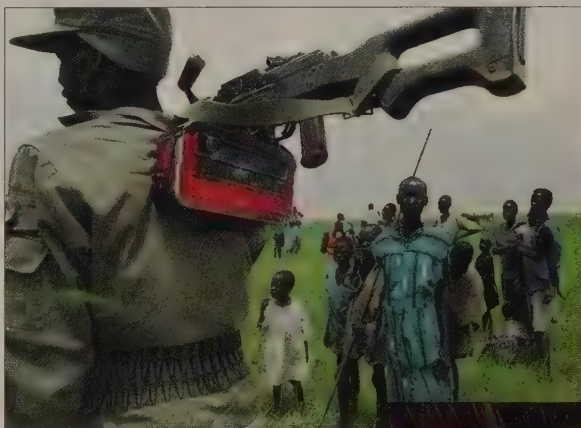
Manut is one of hundreds of war victims admitted to the International Red Cross hospital in Lokichoggio, the logistical center for humanitarian agencies working in southern Sudan.

Manut, a Christian, had to have his leg amputated after a gunshot wound became infected. Nevertheless, he is determined to see southern Sudan liberated. Although his church teaches peace and reconciliation, Manut believes he must fight to reclaim what has been stripped from his people. "I am not giving up until we get our rights." Manut realizes he cannot return to the battlefield, but he still longs to fight, which he has done for a decade—since age 14. "I wish God can perform a miracle and give me back my leg; I would go back to fight again."

According to head nurse Toril Perelius, there are 570 patients at Lokichoggio, nearly all Sudanese war victims. Many, such as Manut, have lost legs. Up to 80 new patients arrive from the interior each week, says Perelius during a tour of the eight wards. Some patients in the intensive care unit are still unconscious, having just emerged from surgery, fresh blood seeping through the dressings.

MUSLIM-CHRISTIAN CONFLICT: Sudan, the largest country in Africa, is divided between the predominantly Muslim north, including the capital, Khartoum, and the primarily Christian south. Civil war between the two regions has destabilized the country for the past 15 years (CT, April 4, 1994, p. 80) and led to the slavery of Christians (CT, April 29, 1996, p. 52). Southern rebels, the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), have waged guerrilla warfare against the Muslim government, which has been carrying

out *jihad*, or holy war of forced Islamization of the animists and the 4 million Christians in southern Sudan. In June, for instance, government troops shot Episcopal deacon Abraham Yac Deng to death in the village of Ayien and burned 400



Nomadic existence: Displaced civilians whose homes have been destroyed pass an SPLA soldier (above) as a mother cradles her severely malnourished teenager while waiting for food at a Sudanese feeding center.

Bibles that had just been delivered by Voice of the Martyrs (VOM).

In addition to war, drought and famine have plagued the country since 1996. The government lifted a 14-month flight ban for humanitarian agencies in April. Now relief organizations such as World Vision are operating emergency food and distribution centers

in Bahr-el-Ghazal, the province of southern Sudan with the most suffering.

On July 15, the SPLA declared a three-month cease-fire in Bahr-el-Ghazal to allow for emergency food to be delivered.

But the region is still dangerous. Two dozen aid workers had to flee the Upper Nile region east of Bahr-el-Ghazal June 29 due to clashes between government-supported factions and the SPLA. War and starvation have resulted in 1.5 million deaths in the past 15 years. Another 4 million people have been displaced, and nearly a

million are depending on humanitarian food aid in order to survive.

FEEDING CAMP REFUGE: Despite bullets and bombs, starvation has become the chief threat to many civilians. In the community of Tonj, a crowd of about 600 people waits anxiously for food. Many are infected with skin and eye diseases. They look distraught, hungry, and gaunt.

Moses Adjuek Bec, a tall, lanky, devout Christian in his thirties, is a school teacher in Tonj and an Episcopal evangelist. He works side by side with evangelical Catholics, and the two denominations share a church building. "In our situation, only God can help us not preach denominations or traditions."

Bec has baptized 3,000 new believers in the past three years. However, the food shortage keeps many from attending church. "People spend the whole day searching for *akuol* leaves," Bec says. "Only during the feeding days do they come here and attend Scripture-reading services and worship." School attendance is also low.



"Mothers fear their children may be attacked, and the children are weak from hunger," Bec says.

Fighting had been commonplace in Tonj until the SPLA triumphed in May 1997—a result, Bec believes, of persistent Christian prayers. Today many of the buildings—the ones not destroyed by shelling—have holes in the walls.

CELEBRATING SUSTENANCE: In another camp in Thiet, 900 people are camped out waiting for food in a decaying primary school that no longer has a

roof. One tiny girl approaches and points to her dry mouth and sunken abdomen. A small boy displays his protruding ribs. Virtually all children under 15 are naked.

Garvase Yak, a Christian for 33 years, sits with a few other elderly men. His legs are infected by guinea worms, yet he is singing and dancing in gratitude to the Lord because of the food that will be distributed.

In the feeding center, a woman pacing around will occasionally scream. For months she has

Martyr: The late Deng had only one New Testament before VOM's May delivery.

led a nomadic life, ever since her village was devastated by war. Residents explain that she had a mental breakdown after all her children and husband were killed.

Outside the camp, small groups of people sit under trees. They have fled from war zones and have walked up to 50 miles seeking shelter and food.

LIVING WITH TERROR: At Panacrier, another 900 starving people, including many elderly disabled, wait at a food-distribution center. Morris Agany Wek explains that the area has endured sporadic raids by armed gangs who burn houses, kill men, rape women, and abduct children.

The current population consists of those who have dared to return or were too frail to flee in the first place. Danger is always lurking. Government planes dropped bombs only 220 yards from the feeding camp on June 10. All the churches in Panacrier have burned down, and residents are too weak—and scared—to rebuild.

In the past, Bahr-el-Ghazal has produced some of the country's best leaders, including politicians, pastors, and academicians. But how can Christians keep the faith in the face of starvation, homelessness, and war? Ironically, more people are converting to Christianity now than in the more peaceful times before the Muslim government expelled missionaries from the country 35 years ago.

"Tremendous growth has taken place during the last ten years of war and severe suffering," says Mike Wall, executive director of ACROSS (Association of Christian Resource Organizations Serving Sudan), a consortium of evangelical missions agencies.

Abe Enosa of the New Sudan Council of Churches says Christianity is growing

more rapidly in southern Sudan than anywhere else in Africa. Although they lack theological training, Enosa says, Christians in southern Sudan have gone forth with Bibles and a vision to evangelize their neighbors.

Omina Leo, an evangelical Catholic priest in the diocese of Torit, says that despite the church's limited resources, it can provide encouragement to those who are suffering. "People are firm in their beliefs," Leo says. "Even in hunger they hold on to faith and keep hoping."

"We in the church pray and work for

peace daily," says Paride Taban, overseer in the diocese. "While we are waiting for this to come about, though, long-term development must still go ahead."

The fighting notwithstanding, the diocese has opened schools and health centers, dug holes for wells, and assisted in agricultural development. Recently, the diocese completed preparing its five-year strategic plan. And in spite of the physical hardships they face daily, they have put pastoring their community as their highest priority.

By Connie Kisuke in southern Sudan.

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SAUDI ARABIA

Christians Jailed, Abused, Deported

Saudi Arabia began freeing a group of 20 imprisoned expatriate Christians in the capital of Riyadh on July 14. Some had been jailed for more than a month.

Arrests of the Christians, primarily Filipinos, began June 5 and continued for several weeks. Authorities also released them in stages, beginning with the expulsion and deportation of four Filipinos and a Dutch national.

The Christians had been suspected of distributing Christian materials or attending private worship meetings. Under Saudi Arabia's strict interpretation of Islamic law, any religious worship not Islamic is illegal.

Saudi authorities detained pregnant Yolanda Aguilar, 31,

after her husband, Rufino, fled to the Philippines June 11 to avoid arrest. She gave birth on June 17 after undergoing many hours of intense questioning. After the baby's delivery, police resumed questioning.

The four Filipino prisoners released first said they had no advance indications that they would be freed. They were deported to Manila without a formal trial.

Wim den Hertog, a 35-year-old Dutch businessman, returned to Amsterdam on July 14 after being held incommunicado from diplomatic access. He had been kept in solitary confinement for the first two days, and questioned for many hours during the initial 17 days of his detention. After his



Packed house: Christian assemblies, such as this one showing the *Jesus* film, are increasingly becoming stealth activities in many Middle Eastern countries.

transfer to another cell, one Muslim inmate tried to convert him so he could "preach Islam in the Netherlands."

Some of the prisoners had been tortured to reveal the names of other Filipinos living in Riyadh who are practicing Christians, the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines reported.

According to the Vatican news service Fides, Filipino prisoner Gaudencio Lorenzo "suffered several broken bones

and multiple wounds" after 14 days of interrogation and efforts to force him to convert to Islam.

"Freedom of religion does not exist," the U.S. State Department's 1997 Human Rights Report on Saudi Arabia states. "Islam is the official religion, and all citizens must be Muslims. The government prohibits the public practice of other religions."

By Barbara G. Baker,
Compass Direct news service.

THEOLOGY

Lutherans, Catholics Step Closer

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF), which represents 57 million Lutherans around the world, on June 16 adopted the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification in an attempt to bridge the 400-year-old rift with Roman Catholics (CT, June 15, 1998, p. 12).

The doctrine of justification teaches how sinful humanity is reconciled to a holy God. Historically, the dispute between Lutherans and Catholics has centered on the Lutheran assertion that God's justification of sinners is by faith alone and consists in his declaring them righteous. Catholics, on the other hand, have reasoned that when God justifies believers, he not only declares them righteous but makes them increasingly righteous by infusions of grace that

bring about meritorious good deeds.

In the joint declaration on justification, Lutherans clarify that while God's declaration of pardon is to be distinguished from humankind's subsequent renewed life of good works, it is not separate from it. Catholics make it clear that while God works in people to bring about good works, salvation is in no way merited by those works.

The 48-member LWF Council, the governing body for 124 international Lutheran groups, voted unanimously in Geneva to approve a 44-point statement that ends mutual condemnations.

"For the first time since the Reformation, the Roman Catholic Church and the Lutheran churches have responded at the highest inter-



Justification for celebration? Lutheran World Federation Council members sing "Now Thank We All Our God" after the vote in Geneva.

national levels to a commonly developed statement," said LWF General Secretary Ishmael Noko.

Pope John Paul II on June 28 called the declaration "an important ecumenical achievement" that he hopes will "encourage and reinforce the declared aim that Lutherans and Catholics pursue the achievement of visi-

ble full unity." A formal signing of the joint declaration is expected to occur this fall.

The agreement does not open the door for Catholics and Lutherans to take Communion together. And the two groups also remain far apart on issues such as papal authority, women's ordination, and a celibate clergy. [C]

Dalai Lama, Evangelical Leader Talk

In an effort to seek broader support for ending the religious persecution of Christians worldwide, Johan Candelin, director of the World Evangelical Fellowship's (WEF) Religious Liberty Commission, invited the Dalai Lama, the exiled leader of Tibet, to an unprecedented meeting in Helsinki on June 20.

The discussion focused on the persecution of Christians in Sri Lanka by Buddhists. The Dalai Lama said that any Buddhist who persecutes Christians "misunderstands the true nature of Buddhism," though he acknowledged his influence in Sri Lanka is limited because Buddhists there practice an earlier form of Buddhism from the Theravada school, while his followers are mostly from the Mahayana school.

Violence against Christians, including church arson, has increased by 230 percent this past year in Sri Lanka, an island nation south of India, where 70 percent of the 18.5 million inhabitants are Buddhists (CT, Feb. 9, 1998, p. 87). Candelin says Sri Lankans associate Christianity with the "religion

of the oppressor," stemming from the nation's 450-year history of colonial rule by the Portuguese, Dutch, and British.

Although agreeing on the principles of religious liberty, the two leaders disagreed on the role of evangelism. Instead of trying to convert Buddhists, the Dalai Lama said, "Christians should concentrate on truly living out their own faith."

In April, the Dalai Lama attended a conference in Japan with other Buddhist leaders to discuss ways to curb the conversion of Buddhists in Southeast Asia to Christianity and Islam. "Every day we are losing our youth to Christianity," says K. Sri Damanda Maha Thera, a Buddhist priest from Malaysia who attended the conference. Buddhism is on the rise worldwide, but its growth is primarily limited to the West and China.

Both Candelin and the Dalai Lama agreed to continue their dialogue on religious liberty and share information on countries where both Christians and Buddhists are threatened, such as China, Laos, and Vietnam.

By Christine J. Gardner.



Dalai Lama

News Briefs

◆ Despite the recent **Northern Ireland** peace agreement (CT, July 13, 1998, p. 18), three Catholic children burned to death in a July 12 arson attack on their Belfast home. Threats of violence marked the annual July parades of the Protestant fraternal organization, Orange Order, in Portadown. Several hundred marchers camped out at Drumcree Church in a standoff with British police, who blocked the parade from reaching the mostly Catholic Garvaghy Road. Protestant rioters in Belfast objected to the blockade by torching vehicles and throwing stones at police.



Protestant protest: Orange Order marchers are stopped by a barbed-wire barricade near Garvaghy Road July 5.

REUTERS/ANS

◆ The **British House of Commons** voted June 22 to lower the age of consent for homosexual acts from 18 to 16, the same as the age of consent for heterosexuals. Most Britons opposed the measure, according to opinion polls. Martyn Eden, public affairs director of the Evangelical Alliance, believes the government has ignored morality in the legislation. "The law may decide when is an age of consent for these acts, but that doesn't make it right," Eden says.

◆ Four missionaries with the Mennonite-affiliated Nueva Vida, or **New Life**, in Guatemala were released unharmed just hours after being abducted June 29 near Sayaxche, about 150 miles north of Guatemala City. The kidnappers, who demanded \$334,000 in ransom, released the Mennonite hostages, Otto Dueck, 19; Jenny Glick, 23; Barbara Stoltzfus, 57; and Stoltzfus Cosigua, 27, before escaping during a shootout with police.

◆ In a move to end weeks of racial and political violence (CT, April 27, 1998, p. 22), **Guyana** president Janet Jagan and opposition leader Desmond Hoyte signed an agreement July 2 calling for constitutional reforms as advocated by some of the country's top religious leaders. The changes will create a commission on race relations and provide a larger role for the opposition in the South American country's government. [CT]

MOROCCO

Four Convicted of Bible Smuggling

A Moroccan judge last month upheld the convictions of four Christians for smuggling Bibles into Morocco to avoid customs charges. On May 30, police arrested Graham Hutt, a 51-year-old British yachtsman, who has sailed to Morocco for more than 20 years, in M'diq near Tangier.

Earlier, authorities detained Kelly Viinikka, a Canadian who had transported Arabic Bibles by motorcycle from Hutt's

yacht to the apartment of French citizen Serge Dechoz. After searching Hutt's yacht and the apartment, police confiscated 1,200 New Testaments and 500 Bibles. They arrested Hutt, Dechoz, Viinikka, and another Canadian, Antero Ylikangas.

The four were subjected to lengthy interrogations during two days without food or water. They were not allowed to contact a lawyer, and were



Confiscated: Authorities seized Hutt's yacht.

COMPASS DIRECT

confined to a dank cell. Police released them after they each posted \$1,000 bails on June 1. At a June 5 trial, a Tetouan Court suspended two-month prison sentences, but fined the

defendants \$42,000 and impounded Hutt's yacht, valued at \$250,000.

Hutt told Compass Direct news service that Bibles can be imported and sold legally under Moroccan law, and that he and his friends had been charged only with a customs offense, amounting to a \$60 fine for importing Bibles without paying customs duties. However, the only document produced in court was a falsified police report accusing them of illegal entry into the country and endangering national security. [CT]

Religious Schools Make the Grade

Give Wisconsin an A for saying no to secularist nonsense.



Some very bad ideas about the relation of church and state have been hanging around schoolyards for many years. In June, the Wisconsin State Supreme Court had the courage to expel those ideas. In *Jackson v. Benson*, the court weighed complaints against a key experiment in school vouchers and declared that they flunked.

The original Milwaukee Parental Choice Program (MPCP) had allowed only 1.5 percent of the students in the Milwaukee Public Schools to attend a private "non-sectarian" school of their choice at taxpayer expense, as long as their family income did not exceed 1.75 times the federal poverty level. But the law was amended in 1995 to raise the ceiling to 15 percent of MPS students. It also shifts the flow of funds from direct-to-schools payments to vouchers that require parental endorsement, limits how much tuition the state will pay, and—here's the rub—no longer restricts the program to "nonsectarian" schools.

Entrenched school bureaucracies in urban centers will be opposed to any expansion of school choice that allows students and tax money to flow elsewhere. But striking the word *nonsectarian* from the law has moved them from just wagging their jaws to gnashing their teeth.

Opponents of the amended MPCP confronted the Court with two tired and hoary arguments: that any money that ultimately flows to religious schools constitutes an establishment of religion; that government neutrality toward

religion means dealing with secular schools only.

The Wisconsin court used criteria developed by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1971 to test these challenges. Those criteria, known as the *Lemon* test, include three questions: Does the law have a secular purpose? Will its principal effect neither enhance nor inhibit religion? Does it create excessive entanglement between government and religion? After a judicious look at the amended MPCP, the Wisconsin court found that the legislature had carefully designed the program to avoid constitutional problems.

Does the law have a secular purpose? Yes: "To provide low-income parents with an opportunity to have their children educated outside of the embattled Milwaukee Public School system."

Does the law's primary effect enhance religion? No. The Wisconsin court traced the development of this criterion in the thought of the U.S. Supreme Court, and found two key themes: *neutrality* and *indirection*. The Milwaukee voucher system was *neutral*, said the court, because all low-income parents (of whatever religion or no religion) and all private-sector schools (of whatever religion or no religion) were eligible. Besides, tax monies would reach religious schools *indirectly* because it was parental decisions that channeled the monies, not the decree of the government.

This is clearly different from what the U.S. Supreme Court objected to in the 1973 *Nyquist* case. Unlike the Milwaukee program, which excludes most students already in private schools, in *Nyquist* the state of New York sought to keep children in parochial schools by making tuition grants that would help relieve their parents' financial burden. The plan in *Nyquist* was clearly neither neutral nor indirect, and it had the primary effect of aiding religious schools. That was "parochialism." The Milwaukee program is "parent aid."

In deciding that parental choice was the key to neutrality in dealing with religious schools, the Wisconsin Court remarkably affirmed parental responsibility. Citing an 1899 decision, written long before the creation of the nanny state, the Court declared that parents are "the persons under natural conditions having the most effective motives and inclinations and being in the best position and under the strongest obligations to give to such children proper nurture, education, and training." This affirmation is a welcome tonic to parental confidence in an era when their competence is regularly undermined by "experts."

Does the law create an excessive entanglement of government and religion? While parochial schools (like all schools) would have to be monitored to make sure they met minimum safety, curricular, and instructional standards, the amended MPCP would not create an *excessive* entangle-

ment, said the court, because the state already monitors parochial schools in this way. Since the amended MPCP passed the three tests and the critics' objections failed, the court gave the law a clear two thumbs up.

Rich in experience

Besides sweeping away specious arguments, the Wisconsin court opened the door to a rich deposit of educational experience and wisdom. There is no history of experience to match that of churches—especially Lutherans, Adventists, and Catholics—in running elementary and high schools.

According to James Traub, writing in the *New York Times*, “impoverished minority children were significantly likelier to graduate, and to go on to college, if they attended Roman Catholic rather than comparable public schools.” Traub approvingly cites University of Michigan scholar Valerie Lee’s argument that it is not freedom from bureaucratic control (as economic conservatives often aver) that makes these schools more effective. Rather, it is “the ideology of Catholic schools”—“a communitarianism founded on a vision of the common

good.” Teachers caring and teaching others to work for the good of all make individual students successful.

Given this communitarian vision, it is indeed curious that voucher opponents often characterize choice programs as having “no apparent interest in building community out of diversity”—so says People for the American Way. Those critics must be confronted with facts: such as the fact that in one study of 13 New York City schools, the Catholic schools were found to be racially diverse (like the public schools), but they graduated 95 percent of their students compared to 50 percent in the public schools. To attack programs designed to help disadvantaged students for lack of diversity is sheer perversity!

Programs like Milwaukee’s won’t be able to serve all children who could benefit from them. And politicians should not use them as an excuse not to address the systemic problems of urban public schools. Yet, opening the door to successful schools is good news for children who would otherwise be trapped in failing school systems. Having a state supreme court approve a carefully thought-out way for religious schools to help foundering communities is good news for America. **CU**

Sentimentally Yours

In June, the American Film Institute released a list of the 100 best American movies. Quite apart from arguments over the comparative merits of this or that film, the list is valuable for what it reveals about the mindset of the entertainment industry and the public it serves. Beneath the surface variety, a clear pattern emerges. Two kinds of films dominate the list: the sentimental—for example, *Gone with the Wind* (4); and the nihilistic—*Pulp Fiction* (95). The nihilism provides a flattering thrill—“We’re giving it to you straight!”—and a warrant to ignore the inconvenient moral absolutes, which, the movies are telling us, are just a polite fiction anyway. The sentimentalism offers emotional, even kitschy, comforts at the expense of ethical and intellectual concerns.

As Christians, we are used to hearing jeremiads about the increasing depravity of the entertainment industry, and of movies in particular. We hear thundering denunciations of the “cultural elites” who are out of touch with the values of the American mainstream. And what happens? The next weekend, half the congregation heads to theaters to watch *Titanic* for the third time, while the other half goes to Blockbuster to pick out a video or three.

What is noteworthy about the AFI list is not only the heavy doses of violence and sex. No, it’s also that overpowering sentimentality: sweet, sometimes bittersweet, and oh so seductive—designed to paralyze the critical faculties. Certainly Christian leaders are right to point to the corrupting influence of violent and perverse entertainment. But equally pervasive, and just as destructive—if more subtle in its effects—is the influence of sentimentality.

Sentimentality is the unremarked common denominator between American popular culture and the evangelical subculture. Sentimentality offers powerful emotional satisfactions abstracted from genuine human context: abstracted from the relational and ethical complexities of

real life. So movies from *Doctor Zhivago* to *Titanic* offer illicit sex packaged like one of those flavored “European” coffees (“it tastes so good, it must be right”).

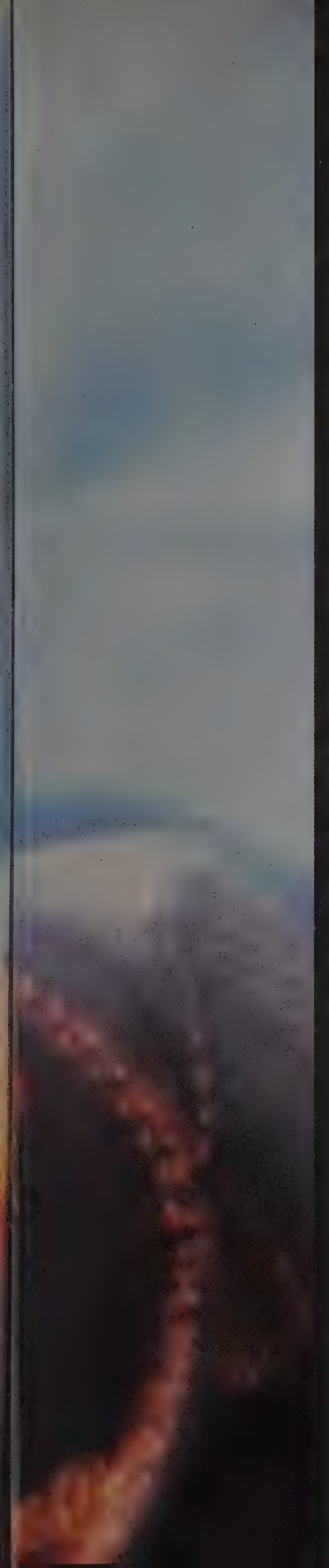
Sentimentality is destructive because it is unreal. It severs emotions from their holistic context. And the more it is indulged, the more it has the power to exploit and twist genuine feeling. Hymns and praise songs that speak of an intimacy with Jesus can be vehicles of worship, but when the congregation merely mouths the words dreamily, never testing the depth of their commitment to Jesus’ commands, worship becomes merely sentimental, with emotions savored for their own sake.

When you walk into a typical Christian bookstore, you won’t see a calendar featuring naked models. That’s good; there is a lot of slime that Christians are warned to avoid. But you will find products that exude a yucky, artificial “niceness” radically at odds with the life of Jesus. Sentimentalism is our blind spot, the largely unnoticed entry point where the world infiltrates the church.

Too often Christian books, music, radio, and TV serve to invite us to dwell in an artificial gated community. In this sentimental kingdom, where we regale each other about our battles with the world and savor stories about victories over our enemies “out there,” something else is missing too: the texture of everyday life in which Christians are to be salt and light to the world, as Jesus was, dining with tax collectors.

Christian media critics should begin rating movies (and books) with an S, connecting the sentimentality that scores big at the box office with a prevailing tone of the evangelical subculture. Maybe in the process they will provoke us to ask whether the comforts of fuzzy emotionalism should be what guides Christians rather than the hard edge of Scripture, the jarring example of Christ, and the deep wisdom of the Holy Spirit. **CU**





Trained to Kill

A military expert on the psychology of killing explains how today's media condition kids to pull the trigger.

DAVID GROSSMAN

Why are kids shooting their classmates?

David Grossman is a military psychologist who coined the term *killology* for a new interdisciplinary field: the study of the methods and psychological effects of training army recruits to circumvent their natural inhibitions to killing fellow human beings. Here he marshals unsettling evidence that the same tactics used in training soldiers are at work in our media and entertainment. CT thinks that parents, the church, scholars, and the government must come together to study this question more intensely:

Are we training our children to kill? ►

ROGER ALLEN LEE / SUPERSTOCK

I am from Jonesboro, Arkansas. I travel the world training medical, law enforcement, and U.S. military personnel about the realities of warfare. I try to make those who carry deadly force keenly aware of the magnitude of killing. Too many law enforcement and military personnel act like "cowboys," never stopping to think about who they are and what they are called to do. I hope I am able to give them a reality check.

So here I am, a world traveler and an expert in the field of "killology," and the largest school massacre in American history happens in my hometown of Jonesboro, Arkansas. That was the March 24 schoolyard shooting deaths of four girls and a teacher. Ten others were injured, and two boys, ages 11 and 13, are in jail, charged with murder.

My son goes to one of the middle schools in town, so my aunt in Florida called us that day and asked, "Was that Joe's school?" And we said, "We haven't heard about it." My aunt in Florida knew about the shootings before we did!

We turned on the television and discovered the shootings took place down the road from us but, thank goodness, not at Joe's school. I'm sure almost all parents in Jonesboro that night hugged their children and said, "Thank God it wasn't you," as they tucked them into bed. But there was also a lot of guilt because some parents in Jonesboro couldn't say that.

I spent the first three days after the tragedy at Westside Middle School, where the shootings took place, working with the counselors, teachers, students, and parents. None of us had ever done anything like this before. I train people how to react to trauma in the military; but how do you do it with kids after a massacre in their school?

I was the lead trainer for the counselors and clergy the night after the shootings, and the following day we debriefed the teachers in groups. Then the counselors and clergy, working with the teachers, debriefed the students, allowing them to work through everything that had happened. Only people who share a trauma can give each other the understanding, acceptance, and forgiveness needed to understand *what* happened, and then they can begin the long process of trying to understand *why* it happened.

Virus of violence

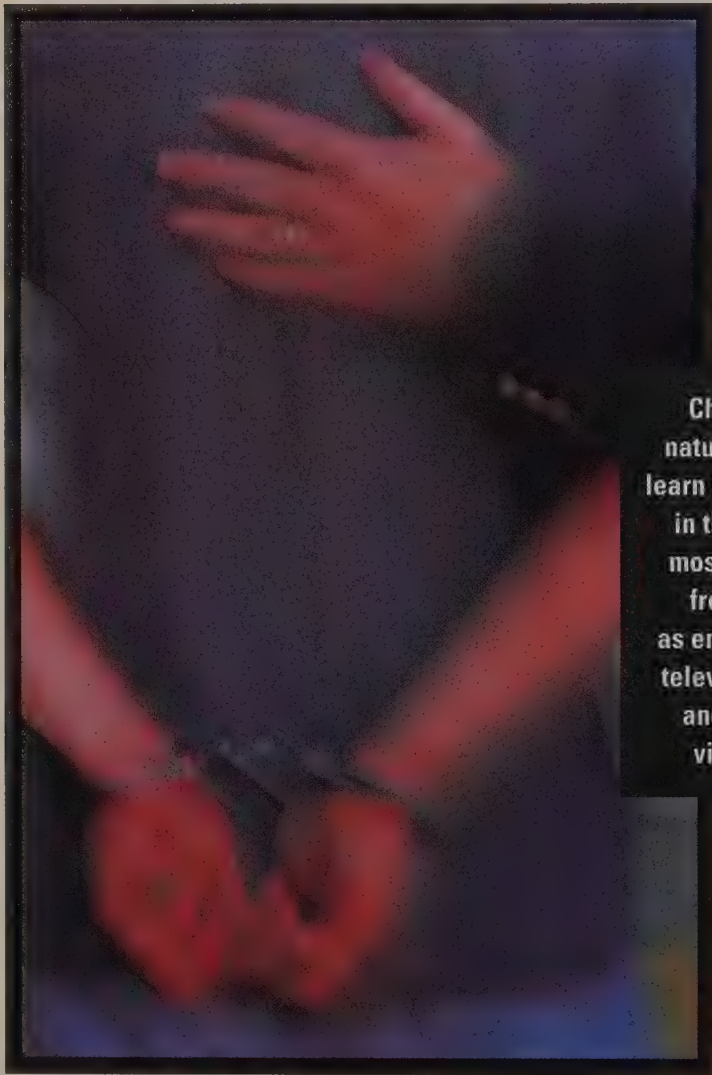
To understand the *why* behind Jonesboro and Springfield and Pearl and Paducah, and all the other outbreaks of this "virus of violence," we need to understand first the magnitude of the problem. The per capita murder rate doubled in this country between 1957—when the FBI started keeping track of the data—and 1992. A fuller picture of the problem, however, is indicated by the rate people are *attempting* to kill one another—the

aggravated assault rate. That rate in America has gone from around 60 per 100,000 in 1957 to over 440 per 100,000 by the middle of this decade. As bad as this is, it would be much worse were it not for two major factors.

First is the increase in the imprisonment rate of violent offenders. The prison population in America nearly quadrupled between 1975 and 1992. According to criminologist John J. Di-Iulio, "dozens of credible empirical analyses . . . leave

no doubt that the increased use of prisons averted millions of serious crimes." If it were not for our tremendous imprisonment rate (the highest of any industrialized nation), the aggravated assault rate and the murder rate would undoubtedly be even higher.

The second factor keeping the murder rate from being any worse is medical technology. According to the U.S. Army Medical Service Corps, a wound that would have killed nine out of



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ten soldiers in World War II, nine out of ten could have survived in Vietnam. Thus, by a very conservative estimate, if we had 1940-level medical technology today, the murder rate would be ten times higher than it is. The magnitude of the problem has been held down by the development of sophisticated lifesaving skills and techniques, such as helicopter medevacs, 911 operators, paramedics, CPR, trauma centers, and medicines.

However, the crime rate is still at a phenomenally high level, and this is true worldwide. In Canada, according to their Center for Justice, per capita assaults increased almost fivefold between 1964 and 1993, attempted murder increased nearly sevenfold, and murders doubled. Similar trends can be seen in other countries in the per capita violent crime rates reported to Interpol between 1977 and 1993. In Australia and New Zealand, the assault rate increased approximately fourfold, and the murder rate nearly doubled in both nations. The assault rate tripled in Sweden, and approximately doubled in Belgium, Denmark, England-Wales, France, Hungary, Netherlands, and Scotland, while all these nations had an associated (but smaller) increase in murder.

This virus of violence is occurring worldwide. The explanation for it has to be some new factor that is occurring in all of these countries. There are many factors involved, and none should be discounted: for example, the prevalence of guns in our society. But violence is rising in many nations with draconian gun laws. And though we should never downplay child abuse, poverty, or racism, there is only one new variable present in each of these countries, bearing the exact same fruit: media violence presented as entertainment for children.

Killing is unnatural

Before retiring from the military, I spent almost a quarter of a century as an army infantry officer and a psychologist, learning and studying how to enable people to kill. Believe me, we are very good at it. But it does not come naturally; you have to be taught to kill. And just as the army is conditioning people to kill, we are indiscriminately doing the same thing to our children, but without the safeguards.

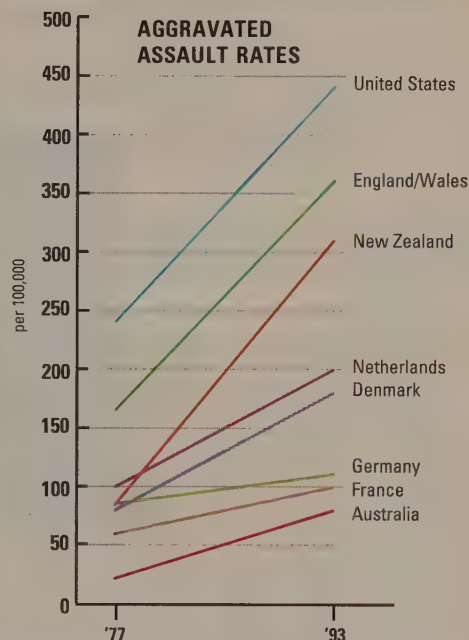
After the Jonesboro killings, the head of the American Academy of Pediatrics Task Force on Juvenile Violence came to town and said that children don't naturally kill. It is a learned skill. And they learn it from abuse and violence in the home and, most pervasively, from violence as entertainment in television, the movies, and interactive video games.

Killing requires training because there is a built-in aversion to killing one's own kind. I can best illustrate this from drawing on my own work in studying killing in the military.

We all know that you can't have an argument or a discussion with a frightened or angry human being. Vasoconstriction, the narrowing of the blood vessels, has literally closed down the forebrain—that great gob of gray matter that makes you a human being and distinguishes you from a dog. When those neurons close down, the midbrain takes over and your thought processes and reflexes are indistinguishable from your dog's. If you've worked with animals, you have some understanding of what happens to frightened human beings on the battlefield. The battlefield and violent crime are in the realm of midbrain responses.

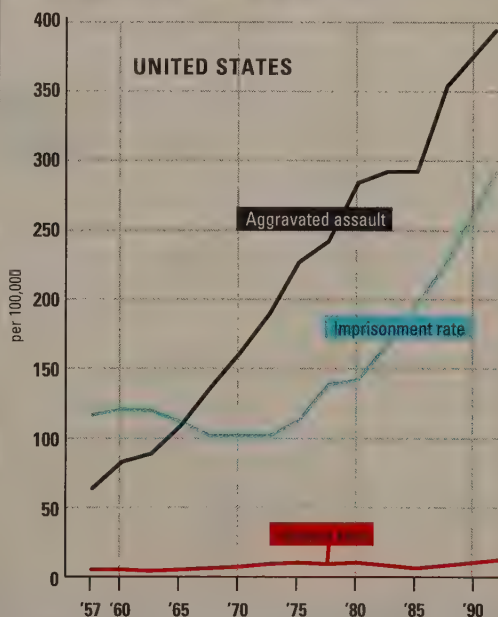
Within the midbrain there is a powerful, God-given resistance to killing your own kind. Every species, with a few exceptions, has a hardwired resistance to killing its own kind in terri-

While the U.S. is the most violent, all Western nations have experienced a significant increase in aggravated assault rate between 1977 and 1993.



© DAVE GROSSMAN (ADAPTED); USED WITH PERMISSION.

Murder rates in the U.S. between 1957 and 1992 have not risen as dramatically as aggravated assaults and the rate of imprisonment.



torial and mating battles. When animals with antlers and horns fight one another, they head butt in a harmless fashion. But when they fight any other species, they go to the side to gut and gore. Piranhas will turn their fangs on anything, but they fight one another with flicks of the tail. Rattlesnakes will bite anything, but they wrestle one another. Almost every species has this hardwired resistance to killing its own kind.

When we human beings are overwhelmed with anger and fear, we slam head-on into that midbrain resistance that generally prevents us from killing. Only socio-paths—who by definition don't have that resistance—lack this innate violence immune system.

Throughout human history, when humans fight each other, there is a lot of posturing. Adversaries make loud noises and puff themselves up, trying to daunt the enemy. There is a lot of fleeing and submission. Ancient battles were nothing more than great shoving matches. It was not until one side turned and ran that most of the killing happened, and most of that was stabbing people in the back. All of the ancient military historians report that the vast majority of killing happened in pursuit when one side was fleeing.

In more modern times, the average firing rate was incredibly low in Civil War battles. Patty Griffith demonstrates that the killing potential of the average Civil War regiment was anywhere from five hundred to a thousand men per minute. The actual killing rate was only one or two men per minute per regiment (*The Battle Tactics of the American Civil War*). At the Battle of Gettysburg, of the 27,000 muskets picked up from the dead and dying after the battle, 90 percent were loaded. This is an anomaly, because it took 95 percent of their time to load muskets and only 5 percent to fire. But even more amazingly, of the thousands of loaded muskets, over half had multiple loads in the barrel—one with 23 loads in the barrel.

In reality, the average man would load his musket and bring it to his shoulder, but he could not bring himself to kill. He would be brave, he would stand shoulder to shoulder, he would do what he was trained to do; but at the moment of truth, he could not bring himself to pull the trigger. And so he lowered the weapon and loaded it again. Of those who did fire, only a tiny percentage fired to hit. The vast majority fired over the enemy's head.

During World War II, U.S. Army Brig. Gen. S. L. A. Marshall had a team of researchers study what soldiers did in battle. For the first time in history, they asked individual soldiers what they did in battle. They discovered that only 15 to 20 percent of the individual riflemen could bring themselves to fire at an exposed enemy soldier.

That is the reality of the battlefield. Only a small percentage of soldiers are able and willing to participate. Men are willing to die, they are willing to sacrifice themselves for their nation; but they are not willing to kill. It is a phenomenal insight into human nature; but when the military became aware of that, they systematically went about the process of trying to fix this "problem." From the military perspective, a 15 percent firing rate among riflemen is like a 15 percent literacy rate among librarians. And fix it the military did. By the Korean War, around 55 percent of the soldiers were willing to fire to kill. And by Vietnam, the rate rose to over 90 percent.

The methods in this madness: Desensitization

How the military increases the killing rate of soldiers in combat is instructive, because our culture today is doing the same thing to our children. The training methods militaries use are brutalization, classical conditioning, operant conditioning, and role modeling. I will explain these in the military context and show how these same factors are contributing to the phenomenal increase of violence in our culture.

Brutalization and desensitization are what happens at boot camp. From the moment you step off the bus you are physically and verbally abused: countless pushups, endless hours at attention or running with heavy loads, while carefully trained professionals take turns screaming at you. Your head is shaved, you are herded together naked and dressed alike, losing all individuality. This brutalization is designed to break down your existing mores and norms and to accept a new set of values that embrace destruction, violence, and death as a way of life. In the end, you are desensitized to violence and accept it as a normal and essential survival skill in your brutal new world.

Something very similar to this desensitization toward violence is happening to our children through violence in the media—but instead of 18-year-olds, it begins at the age of 18 months when a child is first able to discern what is happening on television. At

that age, a child can watch something happening on television and mimic that action. But it isn't until children are six or seven years old that the part of the brain kicks in that lets them understand where information comes from. Even though young children have some understanding of what it means to pretend, they are developmentally unable to distinguish clearly between fantasy and reality.

When young children see somebody shot, stabbed, raped, brutalized, degraded, or murdered on TV, to them it is as though it were actually happening. To have a child of three, four, or five watch a "splatter" movie, learning to relate to a character for the first 90 minutes and then in the last 30 minutes watch helplessly as that new friend is hunted and brutally murdered is the moral and psychological equivalent of introducing your child to a friend, letting her play with that friend, and then butchering that friend in front of your child's eyes. And this happens to our children hundreds upon hundreds of times.

Sure, they are told: "Hey, it's all for fun. Look, this isn't real, it's just TV." And they nod their little heads and say *okay*. But they can't tell the difference. Can you remember a point in your life or in your children's lives when dreams, reality, and television were all jumbled together? That's what it is like to be at that level of psychological development. That's what the media are doing to them.

The *Journal of the American Medical Association* published the definitive epidemiological study on the impact of TV violence. The research demonstrated what happened in numerous nations after television made its appearance as compared to nations and regions without TV. The two nations or regions being compared are demographically and ethnically identical; only one variable is different: the presence of television. In every nation, region, or city with television, there is an immediate explosion of violence on the playground, and within 15 years there is a doubling of the murder rate. Why 15 years? That is how long it takes for the brutalization of a three- to five-year-old to reach the "prime crime age." That is how long it

"Few researchers bother any longer to dispute that bloodshed on TV and in the movies has an effect on kids who witness it."

(Time, April 6, 1998)

takes for you to reap what you have sown when you brutalize and desensitize a three-year-old.

Today the data linking violence in the media to violence in society are superior to those linking cancer and tobacco. Hundreds of sound scientific studies demonstrate the social impact of brutalization by the media. The *Journal of the American Medical Association* concluded that "the introduction of television in the 1950's caused a subsequent doubling of the homicide rate, i.e., long-term childhood exposure to television is a causal factor behind approximately one half of the homicides committed in the United States, or approximately 10,000 homicides annually." The

article went on to say that "... if, hypothetically, television technology had never been developed, there would today be 10,000 fewer homicides each year in the United States, 70,000 fewer rapes, and 700,000 fewer injurious assaults" (June 10, 1992).

Classical conditioning

Classical conditioning is like the famous case of Pavlov's dogs you learned about in Psychology 101: The dogs learned to associate the ringing of the bell with food, and, once conditioned, the dogs could not hear the bell without salivating.

The Japanese were masters at using classical conditioning

NEWS UPDATE

What a Jonesboro Youth Group Learned

While some of his 13-year-old friends are having fun this summer behind home plate in shorts and T-shirts, Mitchell Johnson is behind steel bars in an orange jump suit at the Craighead Juvenile Detention Center near Jonesboro, Arkansas. In jail since March 24, Johnson, accused along with an 11-year-old boy of shooting and killing four classmates and a teacher in the worst episode of schoolyard violence in American history, awaits trial on murder and weapons charges.

Johnson's youth pastor, Chris Perry, is one of the few outside the prison system granted access to him, even though it is limited to 30-minute intervals through a thick glass barrier. Last fall, Johnson attended the youth group at Central Baptist Church for about two months and showed a growing openness to Christian faith. But Perry saw no warning signs indicating that trouble lay ahead.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE: When Perry, 37, arrived at the scene after the shootings, he was welcomed as a familiar face, not as an outsider. For years, Perry has sought to be a visible presence as a youth pastor in all areas of the community. "It's very important to build meaningful relationships with the community, the police, the judicial community, the

schools," Perry says. "When a crisis strikes, a friend has access that a stranger doesn't."

Since the shooting, Perry has motivated his youth group attendees to see themselves as a buffer within the public-school system, encouraging them to break out of their church subculture and be more intimately involved in the life of their schools.

"I have a heightened sense of the responsibility of the youth group to be a spiritual immunity system on campus for when a little evil hops in," says Perry.

In the aftermath of the killings, the youth of Jonesboro found themselves preoccupied with life-and-death discussions. "The teenagers were concerned about their safety, asking, *Could it happen again?*" Perry says. "There was a sense of responsibility among some that they should have reported dialogue that they had heard before the shooting."

One especially sensitive area was how Perry's youth group would relate to Monte Johnson, Mitchell's 12-year-old younger brother. Monte Johnson told Perry that he had no friends and he feared returning to school. Perry says the youth group faced the matter head-on.

"We spent time talking about an emotional safety net," Perry says. "Could we be the kind of youth group



Youth Pastor Perry

that a hurting teen can come to and find comfort and hope and love?" At one of the youth group's meetings, 80 teens gathered around Monte to show their support and let him know they cared about his well-being.

Perry says Christian teens at school should focus on setting a good example for others as well as reporting to authorities behavior by their peers that might suggest serious underlying emotional problems.

In search of outside resources, Perry contacted Rick Lawrence, editor of *Group* magazine for youth ministry leaders. Lawrence says, "We don't recommend that youth ministers get in over their heads in counseling kids with serious problems." He believes that youth pastors are "incredibly resourceful people" who usually show good instincts in dealing with crisis situations.

But recognizing the need for outside assistance is critical. Lawrence says, "Perry had started a networking group with other youth ministers in the town so they were able to come together in the crisis. Perry was smart and wise about seeking help."

Perry told *Group* magazine, "I've tried to lead our students into what it means to be discerning in terms of immunity and protection. Our group is now realizing in light of what happened at Westside that they need to tangibly express their Christian faith by being safety nets and immunity systems."

By Mary Cagney.

with their soldiers. Early in World War II, Chinese prisoners were placed in a ditch on their knees with their hands bound behind them. And one by one, a select few Japanese soldiers would go into the ditch and bayonet "their" prisoner to death. This is a horrific way to kill another human being. Up on the bank, countless other young soldiers would cheer them on in their violence. Comparatively few soldiers actually killed in these situations, but by making the others watch and cheer, the Japanese were able to use these kinds of atrocities to classically condition a very large audience to associate pleasure with human death and suffering. Immediately afterwards, the soldiers who had been spectators were treated to sake, the best meal they had had in months, and to so-called comfort girls. The result? They learned to associate committing violent acts with pleasure.

The Japanese found these kinds of techniques to be extraordinarily effective at quickly enabling very large numbers of soldiers to commit atrocities in the years to come. Operant conditioning (which we will look at shortly) teaches you to kill, but classical conditioning is a subtle but powerful mechanism that

After the Jonesboro shootings, one of the high-school teachers told me how her students reacted when she told them about the shootings at the middle school. "They laughed," she told me with dismay. A similar reaction happens all the time in movie theaters when there is bloody violence. The young people laugh and cheer and keep right on eating popcorn and drinking pop. We have raised a generation of barbarians who have learned to associate violence with pleasure, like the Romans cheering and snacking as the Christians were slaughtered in the Colosseum.

The result is a phenomenon that functions much like AIDS, which I call AVIDS—Acquired Violence Immune Deficiency Syndrome. AIDS has never killed anybody. It destroys your immune system, and then other diseases that shouldn't kill you become fatal. Television violence by itself does not kill you. It destroys your violence immune system and conditions you to derive pleasure from violence. And once you are at close range with another human being, and it's time for you to pull that trigger, Acquired Violence Immune Deficiency Syndrome can destroy your midbrain resistance.

Operant conditioning

The third method the military uses is operant conditioning, a very powerful procedure of stimulus-response, stimulus-response. A benign example is the use of flight simulators to train pilots. An airline pilot in training sits in front of a flight simulator for endless hours; when a particular warning light goes on, he is taught to react in a certain way. When another warning light goes on, a different reaction is required. Stimulus-response, stimulus-response, stimulus-response. One day the pilot is actually flying a jumbo jet; the plane is going down, and 300 people are screaming behind him. He is wetting his seat cushion, and he is scared out of his wits; but he does the right thing. Why? Because he has been conditioned to respond reflexively to this particular crisis.

When people are frightened or angry, they will do what they have been conditioned to do. In fire drills, children learn to file out of the school in orderly fashion. One day there is a real fire, and they are frightened out of their wits; but they do exactly what they have been conditioned to do, and it saves their lives.

The military and law enforcement community have made killing a conditioned response. This has substantially raised the firing rate on the modern battlefield. Whereas infantry training in World War II used bull's-eye targets, now soldiers learn to fire at realistic, man-shaped silhouettes that pop into their field of view. That is the stimulus. The trainees have only a split second to engage the target. The conditioned response is to shoot the target, and then it drops. Stimulus-response, stimulus-response, stimulus-response—soldiers or police officers experience hundreds of repetitions. Later, when soldiers are on the battlefield or a police officer is walking a beat and somebody pops up with a gun, they will shoot reflexively and shoot to kill. We know that 75 to 80 percent of the shooting on the modern battlefield is the result of this kind of stimulus-response training.

Now, if you're a little troubled by that, how much more should we be troubled by the fact that every time a child plays an interactive point-and-shoot video game, he is learning the exact same conditioned reflex and motor skills.

I was an expert witness in a murder case in South Carolina offering mitigation for a kid who was facing the death penalty. I



Every time a child plays an interactive video game, he is learning the exact same conditioned reflex skills as a soldier or police officer in training.

teaches you to *like it*.

This technique is so morally reprehensible that there are very few examples of it in modern U.S. military training; but there are some clear-cut examples of it being done by the media to our children. What is happening to our children is the reverse of the aversion therapy portrayed in the movie *A Clockwork Orange*. In *A Clockwork Orange*, a brutal sociopath, a mass murderer, is strapped to a chair and forced to watch violent movies while he is injected with a drug that nauseates him. So he sits and gags and retches as he watches the movies. After hundreds of repetitions of this, he associates violence with nausea, and it limits his ability to be violent.

We are doing the exact opposite: Our children watch vivid pictures of human suffering and death, and they learn to associate it with their favorite soft drink and candy bar, or their girlfriend's perfume.

tried to explain to the jury that interactive video games had conditioned him to shoot a gun to kill. He had spent hundreds of dollars on video games learning to point and shoot, point and shoot. One day he and his buddy decided it would be fun to rob the local convenience store. They walked in, and he pointed a snub-nosed .38 pistol at the clerk's head. The clerk turned to look at him, and the defendant shot reflexively from about six feet. The bullet hit the clerk right between the eyes—which is a pretty remarkable shot with that weapon at that range—and killed this father of two. Afterward, we asked the boy what happened and why he did it. It clearly was not part of the plan to kill the guy—it was being videotaped from six different directions. He said, "I don't know. It was a mistake. It wasn't supposed to happen."

In the military and law-enforcement worlds, the right option is often not to shoot. But you never, never put your quarter in that video machine with the intention of not shooting. There is always some stimulus that sets you off. And when he was excited, and his heart rate went up, and vasoconstriction closed his forebrain down, this young man did exactly what he was conditioned to do: he reflexively pulled the trigger, shooting accurately just like all those times he played video games.

This process is extraordinarily powerful and frightening. The result is ever more homemade pseudosociopaths who kill reflexively and show no remorse. Our children are learning to kill and learning to like it; and then we have the audacity to say, "Oh my goodness, what's wrong?"

One of the boys allegedly involved in the Jonesboro shootings (and they are just boys) had a fair amount of experience shooting real guns. The other one was a nonshooter and, to the best of our knowledge, had almost no experience shooting. Between them, those two boys fired 27 shots from a range of over 100 yards, and they hit 15 people. That's pretty remarkable shooting. We run into these situations often—kids who have never picked up a gun in their lives pick up a real gun and are incredibly accurate. Why? Video games.

Role models

In the military, you are immediately confronted with a role model: your drill sergeant. He personifies violence and aggression. Along with military heroes, these violent role models have always been used to influence young, impressionable minds.

Today the media are providing our children with role models, and this can be seen not just in the lawless sociopaths in movies and TV shows, but it can also be seen in the media-inspired, copycat aspects of the Jonesboro murders. This is the part of these juvenile crimes that the TV networks would much rather not talk about.

Research in the 1970s demonstrated the existence of "cluster suicides" in which the local TV reporting of teen suicides directly caused numerous copycat suicides of impressionable teenagers. Somewhere in every population there are potentially suicidal kids who will say to themselves, "Well, I'll show all those people who have been mean to me. I know how to get my picture on TV, too." Because of this research, television stations today generally do not cover suicides. But when the pictures of teenage killers appear on TV, the effect is the same: Somewhere there is a potentially violent little boy who says to himself, "Well, I'll show all those people who have been mean to me. I know how to get my picture on TV, too."

Thus we get copycat, cluster murders that work their way across America like a virus spread by the six o'clock news. No matter what someone has done, if you put his picture on TV, you have

REALITY CHECK

Sixty percent of men on TV are involved in violence; 11 percent are killers. Unlike actual rates, in the media the majority of homicide victims are women. (Gerbner 1994)

In a Canadian town in which TV was first introduced in 1973, a 160 percent increase in aggression, hitting, shoving, and biting was documented in first- and second-grade students after exposure, with no change in behavior in children in two control communities. (Centerwall 1992)

Fifteen years after the introduction of TV, homicides, rapes and assaults doubled in the United States. (American Medical Association)

Twenty percent of suburban high schoolers endorse shooting someone "who has stolen something from you." (Toch and Silver 1993)

In the United States, approximately two million teenagers carry knives, guns, clubs or razors. As many as 135,000 take them to school. (America by the Numbers)

Americans spend over \$100 million on toy guns every year. (*What Counts: The Complete Harper's Index* © 1991)

TOP 10 NONVIOLENT VIDEO GAMES

The following list of nonviolent video games has been developed by The Games Project. These games are ranked high for their social and play value and technical merit.

1. **Bust a Move**
2. **Tetris**
3. **Theme Park**
4. **Absolute Pinball**
5. **Myst**
6. **NASCAR**
7. **SimCity**
8. **The Incredible Machine**
9. **Front Page Sports: Golf**
10. **Earthworm Jim**

For descriptions, publishers, and prices for these games, including a searchable database for additional recommendations, check The Games Project Web site at: <http://www.sentex.net/games/>. This list is updated periodically. Others are encouraged to make recommendations in their "Add your favorites" section.

made him a celebrity, and someone, somewhere, will emulate him.

The lineage of the Jonesboro shootings began at Pearl, Mississippi, fewer than six months before. In Pearl, a 16-year-old boy was accused of killing his mother and then going to his school and shooting nine students, two of whom died, including his ex-girlfriend. Two months later, this virus spread to Paducah, Kentucky, where a 14-year-old boy was arrested for killing three students and wounding five others.

A very important step in the spread of this copycat crime virus occurred in Stamps, Arkansas, 15 days after Pearl and just a little over 90 days before Jonesboro. In Stamps, a 14-year-old boy, who was angry at his schoolmates, hid in the woods and fired at children as they came out of school. Sound familiar? Only two children were injured in this crime, so most of the world didn't hear about it; but it got great regional coverage on TV, and two little boys in Jonesboro, Arkansas, probably did hear about it.

And then there was Springfield, Oregon, and so many others. Is this a reasonable price to pay for the TV networks' "right" to turn juvenile defendants into celebrities and role models by playing up their pictures on TV?

Our society needs to be informed about these crimes, but when the images of the young killers are broadcast on television, they become role models. The average preschooler in America watches 27 hours of television a week. The average child gets more one-on-one communication from TV than from all her parents and teachers combined. The ultimate achievement for our children is to get their picture on TV. The solution is simple, and it comes straight out of the suicidology literature: The media have every right and responsibility to tell the story, but they have no right to glorify the killers by presenting their images on TV.

Unlearning violence

What is the road home from the dark and lonely place to which we have traveled? One route infringes on civil liberties. The city of New York has made remarkable progress in recent years in bringing down crime rates, but they may have done so at the expense of some civil liberties. People who are fearful say that is a price they are willing to pay.

Another route would be to "just turn it off"; if you don't like what is on television, use the "off" button. Yet, if all the parents of the 15 shooting victims in Jonesboro had protected their children from TV violence, it wouldn't have done a bit of good. Because somewhere there were two little boys whose parents didn't "just turn it off."

On the night of the Jonesboro shootings, clergy and counselors were working in small groups in the hospital waiting room, comforting the groups of relatives and friends of the victims. Then they noticed one woman sitting alone silently.

A counselor went over to the woman and discovered that she was the mother of one of the girls who had been killed. She had no friends, no husband, no family with her as she sat in the hospital, stunned by her loss. "I just came to find out how to get my little girl's body back," she said. But the body had been taken to Little Rock, 100 miles away, for an autopsy. Her very

next concern was, "I just don't know how I'm going to pay for the funeral. I don't know how I can afford it." That little girl was truly all she had in all the world. Come to Jonesboro, friend, and tell this mother she should "just turn it off."

Another route to reduced violence is gun control. I don't want to downplay that option, but America is trapped in a vicious cycle when we talk about gun control. Americans don't trust the government; they believe that each of us should be responsible for taking care of ourselves and our families. That's one of our great strengths—but it is also a great weakness. When the media foster fear and perpetuate a milieu of violence, Americans arm themselves in order to deal with that violence. And the more guns there are out there, the more violence there is. And the more violence there is, the greater the desire for guns.

We are trapped in this spiral of self-dependence and lack of trust. Real progress will never be made until we reduce this level of fear. As a historian, I tell you it will take decades—maybe even a century—before we wean Americans off their guns. And until we reduce the level of fear and of violent crime, Americans would sooner die than give up their guns.

Fighting back

We need to make progress in the fight against child abuse, racism, and poverty, and in rebuilding our families. No one is denying that the breakdown of the family is a factor. But nations without our divorce rates are also having increases in violence. Besides, research demonstrates that one major source of harm associated with single-parent families occurs when the TV becomes both the nanny and the second parent.

Work is needed in all these areas, but there is a new front—taking on the producers and purveyors of media violence. Simply put, we ought to work toward legislation that outlaws violent video games for children. There is *no* constitutional right for a child to play an interactive video game that teaches him weapons-handling skills or that simulates destruction of God's creatures.

The day may also be coming when we are able to seat juries in America who are willing to sock it to the networks in the only place they really understand—their wallets. After the Jonesboro shootings, *Time* magazine said: "As for media violence, the debate there is fast approaching the same point that discussions about the health impact of tobacco reached some time ago—it's over. Few researchers bother any longer to dispute that bloodshed on TV and in the movies has an effect on kids who witness it" (April 6, 1998).

Most of all, the American people need to learn the lesson of Jonesboro: Violence is not a game; it's not fun, it's not something that we do for entertainment. Violence kills.

Every parent in America desperately needs to be warned of the impact of TV and other violent media on children, just as we would warn them of some widespread carcinogen. The problem is that the TV networks, which use the public airwaves we have licensed to them, are our key means of public education in America. And they are stonewalling.

In the days after the Jonesboro shootings, I was interviewed on Canadian national TV, the British Broadcasting Company, and many U.S. and international radio shows and newspapers. But the American television networks simply would not touch this aspect of the story. Never in my experience as a historian and a psychologist have I seen any institution in America so clearly responsible for so very many deaths, and so clearly abusing their publicly licensed authority and power to cover up their guilt.

Time after time, idealistic young network producers contacted

Reprints of this article may be obtained by writing to CT Reprints, Attn.: Paulette DePaul, 465 Gundersen Drive, Carol Stream, IL 60188, or by e-mailing PDePaul@aol.com and requesting "Trained to Kill." The cost (including postage and handling) is \$8 for 10 copies, \$18 for 25 copies, \$32 for 50 copies, \$57 for 100 copies, \$105 for 500 copies, \$165 for 1,000 copies. Prices good for one year from the date of this issue.

me from one of the networks, fascinated by the irony that an expert in the field of violence and aggression was living in Jonesboro and was at the school almost from the beginning. But unlike all the other media, these network news stories always died a sudden, silent death when the network's powers-that-be said, "Yeah, we need this story like we need a hole in the head."

Many times since the shooting I have been asked, "Why weren't you on TV talking about the stuff in your book?" And every time my answer had to be, "The TV networks are burying this story. They know they are guilty, and they want to delay the retribution as long as they can."

As an author and expert on killing, I believe I have spoken on the subject at every Rotary, Kiwanis, and Lions Club in a 50-mile radius of Jonesboro. So when the plague of satellite dishes descended upon us like huge locusts, many people here were aware of the scientific data linking TV violence and violent crime.

The networks will stick their lenses anywhere and courageously expose anything. Like flies on open wounds, they find nothing too private or shameful for their probing lenses—except themselves, and their share of guilt in the terrible, tragic crime that happened here.

A CBS executive told me his plan. He knows all about the link between media and violence. His own in-house people have advised him to protect his child from the poison his industry is bringing to America's children. He is not going to expose his child to TV until she's old enough to learn how to read. And then he will select very carefully what she sees. He and his wife plan to send her to a daycare center that has no television, and he plans to show her only age-appropriate videos.

That should be the bare minimum with children: Show them only age-appropriate videos, and think hard about what is age appropriate.

The most benign product you are going to get from the networks are 22-minute sitcoms or cartoons providing instant solutions for all of life's problems, interlaced with commercials telling you what a slug you are if you don't ingest the right sugary substances and don't wear the right shoes.

The worst product your child is going to get from the networks is represented by one TV commentator who told me, "Well, we only have one really violent show on our network, and that is *NYPD Blue*. I'll admit that that is bad, but it is only one night a week."

I wondered at the time how she would feel if someone said, "Well, I only beat my wife in front of the kids one night a week." The effect is the same.

"You're not supposed to know who I am!" said *NYPD Blue* star Kim Delaney, in response to young children who recognized her from her role on that show. According to *USA Weekend*, she was shocked that underage viewers watch her show, which is rated TV-14 for gruesome crimes, raw language, and explicit sex scenes. But they do watch, don't they?

Education about media and violence does make a difference. I was on a radio call-in show in San Antonio, Texas. A woman called and said, "I would never have had the courage to do this two years ago. But let me tell you what happened. You tell me if I was right."

"My 13-year-old boy spent the night with a neighbor boy. After that night, he started having nightmares. I got him to

admit what the nightmares were about. While he was at the neighbor's house, they watched splatter movies all night: people cutting people up with chain saws and stuff like that.

"I called the neighbors and told them, 'Listen: you are sick people. I wouldn't feel any different about you if you had given my son pornography or alcohol. And I'm not going to have anything further to do with you or your son—and neither is anybody else in this neighborhood, if I have anything to do with it—until you stop what you're doing.'"

That's powerful. That's censure, not censorship. We ought to have the moral courage to censure people who think that violence is legitimate entertainment.

One of the most effective ways for Christians to be salt and light is by simply confronting the culture of violence as entertainment. A friend of mine, a retired army officer who teaches at a nearby middle school, uses the movie *Gettysburg* to teach his students about the Civil War. A scene in that movie very dramatically depicts the tragedy of Pickett's Charge. As the Confederate troops charge into the Union lines, the cannons fire into their masses at point-blank range, and there is nothing but a red mist that comes up from the smoke and flames. He told me that when he first showed this heart-wrenching, tragic scene to his students, they laughed.

He began to confront this behavior ahead of time by saying: "In the past, students have laughed at this scene, and I want to tell you that this is completely unacceptable behavior. This movie depicts a tragedy in American history, a tragedy that happened to our ancestors, and I

will not tolerate any laughing." From then on, when he played that scene to his students, over the years, he says there was no laughter. Instead, many of them wept.

What the media teach is unnatural, and if confronted in love and assurance, the house they have built on the sand will crumble. But our house is built on the rock. If we don't actively present our values, then the media will most assuredly inflict theirs on our children, and the children, like those in that class watching *Gettysburg*, simply won't know any better.

There are many other things that the Christian community can do to help change our culture. Youth activities can provide alternatives to television, and churches can lead the way in providing alternative locations for latchkey children. Fellowship groups can provide guidance and support to young parents as they strive to raise their children without the destructive influences of the media. Mentoring programs can pair mature, educated adults with young parents to help them through the preschool ages without using the TV as a babysitter. And most of all, the churches can provide the clarion call of decency and love and peace as an alternative to death and destruction—not just for the sake of the church, but for the transformation of our culture. **CI**

Lt. Col. Dave Grossman, an expert on the psychology of killing, retired from the U.S. Army in February. He now teaches psychology at Arkansas State University, directs the Killology Research Group in Jonesboro, Arkansas, and has written On Killing: The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society (Little, Brown and Co., 1996). This article was adapted from a lecture he gave at Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas, in April.

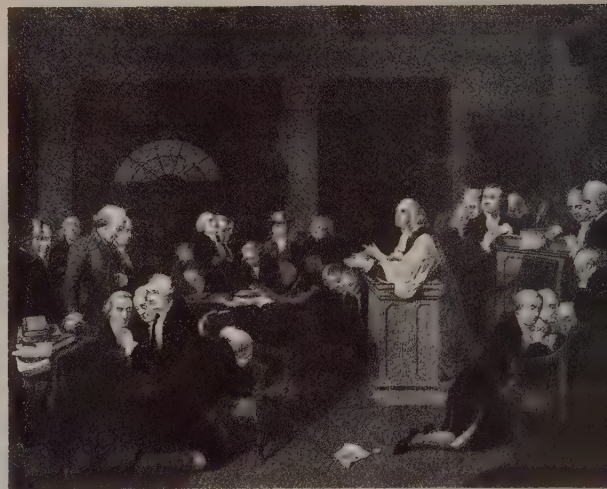
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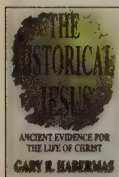
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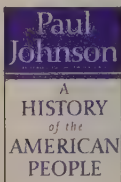
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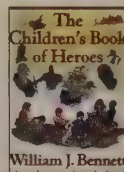
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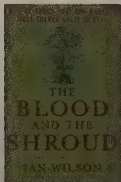
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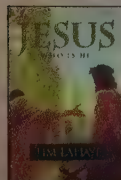
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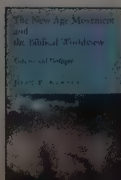
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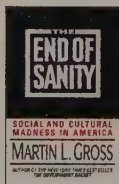
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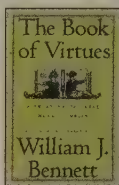
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Christian ghosts: The ruins of Pisidian Antioch bear witness to Turkey's Christian past (top), while an Orthodox priest keeps the tradition alive in Istanbul. Santa Claus greets tourists in Saint Nicholas's hometown (left).

WENDY MURRAY ZOBA

In Search of the Lost Churches of Paul

*Turkey is inviting Christians to discover
its biblical legacy.*

“**W**hen local merchants wanted to meet Saint Paul, they asked the Christians where to find him,” recounted our tour guide during a recent trip to Turkey. “The Christians said, ‘Go out on the way to Lystra and look for a man of short stature, with a crooked nose, hollow eyes, and a face like an angel.’”

We were also “on the way” to see Paul. Not to Lystra, but to modern-day Konya (formerly Iconium, near Lystra)—another of the apostle’s haunts. And the Christians on our tour, like those first-century merchants, wanted a glimpse of Paul’s world. That’s not easily done in this country where minarets pierce the skyline in places where Paul’s footprints have long since disappeared.

Paul and Barnabas fled to Konya after a successful ministry tour in Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13). They “spent considerable time there, speaking boldly for the Lord” and performed “miraculous signs and wonders” (Acts 14:3, NIV). But you’d never know it from the tourist’s point of view: The main attraction in Konya is the *sema*—the mystical trance-inducing dance of the “whirling dervishes,” an Islamic sect. But the Christians on our tour wanted to see *something* related to Paul in Konya, so with a coveted free hour we made a spontaneous visit to the Church of Saint Paul.

We arrived unannounced in the early evening (the first building we had seen enclosed behind a security gate).

Mass, we learned, was being held inside for the five Christians who attended the church, but the overseeing nun was so pleased we had come that she invited us to hold our impromptu service in the garden. (The fact that this was a Catholic church was beside the point for us Protestants; we were thankful for any sort of a Christian presence.)

Withering marigolds and snapdragons served as our stained-glass windows, and tomatoes left too long unharvested, our greeters. Father Michele (from the Vatican) gathered us around the plastic patio table and read from the Psalms. Father Luis (from Spain) read in Spanish from Hebrews, and Father Jean Claude (from France) read in French from Genesis. Pastor Bob (my husband)—the Baptist—read in English from Mark.

Our worship, strained as it was by the language barriers, competed with the roar of motorbikes and the blaring of horns from the streets of Konya. As we stood outside this rundown church—the only Christian presence in Konya—struggling to understand and be understood above the din of the traffic, under the arbor where dead grapes dangled on the vine, we proclaimed the cross of Jesus in this land of Muhammad’s sword. My heart ached that Paul’s labors had come to this: one small, deteriorating building, an unkempt garden, shriveled grapes, five worshipers. We held forth the name of Christ, but I stood there for Paul, too. I wanted to call to him in heaven and say (as he once exhort-

Photographs by Dave Bartruff



A checkered past: The "fairy chimneys" in Cappadocia saved Christians fleeing persecution in early centuries. Icons, minarets, and little girls with veils (or without) reflect Turkey's complicated history. Pilgrims stand where Paul stood in Pisidian Antioch, reading his word from Acts (below).



ed the Corinthians): "Your labors were not in vain!"

How could so rich a Christian heritage be so strikingly disenfranchised? Turkey is second only to Israel in the number of biblical sites it offers to Christian pilgrims. Noah's ark landed here! (Mount Ararat commands pride of place in the mountains of eastern Turkey.) Turkey was once the land of the Hittites, which the Lord promised to Joshua (1:4). Many who gathered in Jerusalem for Pentecost when the Spirit gave birth to the church had traveled from what is today Turkey ("Cappadocia, Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia," Acts 2:9-10). Peter's first epistle—addressing the suffering Christians "scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia"—went to Turkey. Paul was born here; he spent the majority of his active ministry here. The apostle John lived the latter part of his life here and, tradition says, buried Jesus' mother here in Ephesus. When the Lord gave him the vision in Revelation, with a message for the "seven churches" (Rev. 1:11) exhorting them to "overcome," all of these congregations were located in what is now Turkey.

Beyond the biblical heritage, the early church fathers bequeathed a rich Christian legacy to Turkey. Polycarp, a direct link to the apostle John, became bishop of Smyrna (modern Izmir) in the early second century; Irenaeus, probably a native of Smyrna, sat under Polycarp and emigrated to Lyons where he became bishop in the late second century. In the third century, Gregory the Wonder Worker was appointed bishop of Pontus (northern Turkey); in A.D. 325 the Nicene Creed was fashioned in Nicea (present-day Iznik); in A.D. 330 Constantine moved the seat of the empire to Constantinople (Istanbul); in the late fourth century Basil of Caesarea, his brother Gregory of Nyssa, and friend Gregory of Nazianzus (a.k.a. "the Cappadocian fathers") brought final shape to the doctrine of the Trinity (helping to overthrow the Arian heresy); in A.D. 398 John Chrysostom was reluctantly consecrated archbishop of Constantinople; and the original "Santa Claus"—Bishop Nicholas of Myra—made his home on Turkey's southern Mediterranean coast, also during the fourth century.

Christians fleeing persecution in these early centuries found shelter in the rugged Cappadocian "fairy chimneys" in central Turkey. Inside these bizarre jutting rock formations—eroded tufa and volcanic ash enveloped in basalt that look like something out of *Star Wars*—magical frescoes, carved archways, baptismal pools, dining tables, and living quarters have been cut out of the rock. Christians also set up house in "the underground city" elsewhere in Cappadocia, a seven-story inverted "skyscraper" where they lived during some of the worst seasons of persecution.

But the present-day abundance of Turkish carpets, minarets, and Qur'anic calligraphy that I saw everywhere compelled me to conclude painfully that Paul's congregations, the seven churches in Revelation, and the suffering Christians in hiding evidently did not "overcome."

Secular versus religious

The Turkish government is offering Paul's lost legacy a chance for resurrection. It has been posturing itself for admission into the European Union (EU) and trying to win acceptance in the West generally. Turkey's leaders recognized the importance of projecting their society as fully democratic,

tolerant, and embracing of all forms of belief—particularly those identified with the West, which includes Christianity. Their hopes were dashed last December when the EU blocked Turkey's admittance, citing (among other things) its inability "to overcome serious human rights problems."

Despite rejection by the EU, Turkey is still a virtual gold mine for tourist dollars. Europeans have long indulged themselves vacationing along the country's still pristine Mediterranean coastline. But the Turkish government has only recently tapped the tourist potential their biblical sites promise. As the Israel Government Tourist Office will attest, Christians make great tourists in the land of the Bible. And as Turkey's ministry of tourism is waking up to that fact, Christians are being *beckoned* to come to Turkey and recover their lost legacy. Ertuğrul Dokuzoğlu, the governor of Isparta, where the ruins of Pisidian Antioch are found, asked us as we left the ruins of the synagogue where Paul preached: "What do you feel, being here where Saint Paul was?"

One woman had been so overcome with emotion when my husband read from Acts amidst the ruins of the synagogue that she burst into tears. Father Michele expressed frustration that, after being so overtaken by emotion, Christians had no place to go where they could respond in worship.

The governor seemed genuinely affected. "We agree that there is no building for the Christians to pray. That is because no Christians live here. But there are two churches [nearby] waiting to be rebuilt. I want them to be rebuilt and used and visited." (He then invited and challenged us to come back to do so.) Ibrahim Gürdal, the Turkish government's minister of tourism, echoed the governor's sentiment: "We want you [Christians] to see your past. You are our brothers and sisters."

But this is where Turkey's ideological war with itself asserts itself and betrays its contradictions. Prospective Christian tourists are assured, says Gürdal, that people of faith are welcome and have complete freedom. They are "brothers and sisters." Yet Christianity still makes many squirm. The government's aggressive commitment to secularization has resulted in policies outlawing "propaganda" and "missionary" activity of a religious nature. Christians (and fundamentalist Muslims) have acutely felt this pressure. The government has resisted the pleas of the Ecumenical Patriarch (Bartholomew I, archbishop of Constantinople, New Rome) to reopen the only Orthodox seminary (closed in 1971). In January, a second violent assault against Eastern Orthodox holy sites occurred in Istanbul, this time involving the murder of a custodian. Since then, some Orthodox Christians, including the archbishop, are questioning the government's commitment to protect their presence. And beyond this, save for a single administration in Turkey's modern history, that of Damad Ferit Pasha, the government has yet to acknowledge the Armenian genocide (1915-16), which remains a bitter point of hostility between them and their Armenian Christian "brothers and sisters."

Turkey's premier historical monument, Hagia Sophia, serves as a metaphor for this country's conflicted identity. The 1,460-year-old "crowning glory"—at one time the central church in the Byzantine empire and later a great mosque where the Ottoman sultans were crowned—is now listed by the World Monument Watch on the list of "the world's most

endangered heritage sites." Its dome and pillars and priceless mosaics remain in a state of steady deterioration, due either to a lack of funds or a lack of will to restore it (admission fees go straight to Turkey's capital, Ankara, for general expenses). Says Stephen Kinzer in the *New York Times*, the Hagia Sophia "is at the heart of battle that . . . still burns in the minds of many people in the eastern Mediterranean: Who owns Istanbul, Christians or Muslims?"

The road to secularization

This cultural schizophrenia has arisen, as noted, out of the country's wrenching history. A museum on Turkey's southern Mediterranean coast offers a visible lesson in this conflicted history. The first room yields rustic pots and jars, pins and coins from the Old Stone Age and the Hittite period. This quickly gives way to expansive galleries of armless, sometimes headless, marble ghosts of Greece and Rome. Beyond this, and off to the side, there is a small darkened room where the relics of Saint Nicholas, from nearby Myra, are housed along with Byzantine icons and ornate Bibles. Then everything changes when the visitor enters room upon room of carpets, Qur'anic calligraphy, sultans' gowns, and swords. (You could almost hear the hoofbeats of the Seljuk and Ottoman Turks.)

The defeat of the Ottoman Empire at the end of World War I meant that the proud, fierce Ottomans were forced to relinquish portions of their territory (including Istanbul) to the British, French, Italians, and Greeks. This excited the dormant nationalist impulse in Turkey, which military hero Mustafa Kemal ("the only hero the Turks had left") seized upon. General Kemal, recognizing his country's weakened and demeaned position, gathered a cohort of like-minded thinkers, aroused nationalistic sentiment, consolidated military support, and renounced rank and titles to set up his makeshift government in Ankara. He was determined to secularize the nation and break Islam's stranglehold on the culture.

He convened the first meeting of the Grand National Assembly (GNA) in April 1920. After solidifying his standing as the new leader (sending the last of the sultans into exile) and eventually wresting the territories from their foreign occupants, Kemal secured Turkey's sovereignty in a peace treaty signed in Lausanne in July 1923. (The event was covered by a *Toronto Star* journalist named Ernest Hemingway.)

A few months later the GNA unanimously endorsed the proclamation for the Republic of Turkey, and Kemal began the herculean task of dismantling the *Umma* (the strict Muslim identity) and building a new, secular nation.

This required a "new interpretation" of Islam. Kemal abolished the caliphate (the sultans) and banished all males of the royal family; secularized education, banning convents run by religious sects (including "the whirling dervishes"); discarded the Arabic script for the Roman alphabet; banned the turban and the fez (the headgear of officials); encouraged women to enter the professional class; and made the adoption of surnames obligatory. The GNA gave him the surname "Atatürk" (father of Turks).

Turkey has followed the trajectory toward modernization ever since, though Atatürk's methods have been modified over time. (His one-party government made strides toward a more democratic system in the 1950s when a multiparty system was introduced.) But they are still experiencing "grow-

ing pains." In elections in 1996, the extreme right-wing Muslim Welfare party candidate, Necmettin Erbakan, won with only a 21.3 percent plurality. Fearing a resurgence of Islamic fundamentalism, the military quickly forced him from office, and Mesut Yilmaz of the Motherland party now serves as prime minister.

This intentional secularization has resulted in a strange concoction of moderate Islam mingled with fierce Islamic nationalism (not to be confused with "fundamentalism"). From a *religious* vantage point, the more developed areas of the country embrace Islam nominally—more culturally than religiously. Our guide said (to my shock), "Islam means nothing." And in its effort to keep modernization on track, the government encourages this nominalism and, in fact, limits certain religious expressions. Last March the government proposed legislation that would curb radical Islam by limiting the building of mosques and creating harsher penalties for violating the secular dress code.

This has resulted in a surprising show of force and solidarity by progressive Islamic women, many of whom are professionals and would be considered "modern," but who are demanding the right to wear—of all things—their headcoverings (presently forbidden in many public places, like the university). "Instead of a symbol of subservience to men, many Islamic feminists view the scarf or the veil as a guard against the intruding eyes of men and as a sign that their first allegiance is to God—not to their husbands or fathers," writes Philip Smucker in *U.S. News & World Report*.

The first principle of the Turkish government is to maintain internal stability at all costs. This has meant that there remains a fierce unwillingness to allow any "extreme" religious expressions to flourish for fear of introducing *political* instability. In that sense, "the Kurds, the communists, the Islamic fundamentalists, and the Christians are often all lumped together," notes Andy Jackson, founder of the International Turkey Network of Phoenix, Arizona. All threaten internal stability.

The lukewarm religiosity has also incited the fervor of the traditional, or "extreme," Muslims, who compose 5 to 6 percent of the population (another source puts them closer to 10 or 20 percent). As the 1996 elections demonstrated, they are a force to be reckoned with.

All of this has conspired to keep the Christian population negligible. The Greek, Armenian, Syrian, and Arab Christian populations together make up less than 1 percent of the population (maybe 50,000 out of more than 65 million people). The number of "evangelical" Christians is even harder to calculate. Roger Maldsted, who has worked in Turkey since 1961, estimates that there have been about 750 Turkish converts to Christ in the 30-plus years he has been there, with 500 of those conversions occurring within the last five or six years. Andy Jackson estimates that the number of Turkish believers who belong to some form of regular indigenous fellowship (where Turks with Muslim backgrounds, not missionaries, are the leaders) hovers around 600. He estimates there are approximately 14 indigenous Turkish fellowships, with 50 to 60 members each. The "secretive" believers who have not publicly affiliated themselves with a church number anywhere from 1,000 to 3,000.

Small as these numbers are, it is a vast improvement over the number of converts 30 years ago when there was only a



Time marches on:

Travel in Turkey promises a lesson in one country's conflicted history and exotic identity—and time to reflect upon Christian churches that did not overcome. The author sits amid the ruins of the synagogue where Paul preached in Pisidian Antioch.



Traveling in Turkey

Hoş geldiniz! ("Welcome to Turkey")—"the dividing line between the Orient and Occident." Since the dawn of civilization, this land mass of mountains, plateaus, and river valleys has been integral to the rise and fall of many nations. The scope of touring possibilities in this mysterious and multifaceted landscape is endless, especially for the Christian pilgrim. Below are some helpful travel tips.

- *Language.* Thanks to Atatürk's reforms, the Turkish language uses the Roman alphabet (with an abundance of Ks, Zs, and curious additional markings), so reading signs and navigating roadways can be managed with the help of a phrasebook or dictionary. Many Turks have undertaken an independent study of English, but an English-speaking guide is a must.

- *Money.* Exchanging American dollars for Turkish lira (TL) can be a formidable challenge. The exchange rate (at the time of publication) is 270,000TL to the dollar. You can't get by without a calculator—and even then your head will spin at the first several attempts at purchasing.

- *Size.* Turkey encompasses 300,000 square miles, 3 percent in Europe and 97 percent in Asia. The Black Sea lies to the north, with the Mediterranean to the south. Greece and Bulgaria border Turkey to the northwest, Georgia and Armenia to the northeast, Iran to the east, and Iraq and Syria to the southeast.

- *Biblical and historical sites.* Istanbul (still called Constantinople by the Orthodox Christians) once stood as the center for Christendom under Constantine. The seven churches of Revelation (in the western and central portions) include modern-day Bergama (Pergamum), Akhisar (Thyatira), Alaşehir (Philadelphia); Sart (Sardis); Pamukkale (Hierapolis, which is near Laodicea); Efes (Ephesus); and Izmir (Smyrna). Mount Ararat is in the east, Paul's birthplace of Tarsus, along with Myra and Patara (the birthplace and home of Saint Nicholas), are on the Mediterranean coast. Pisidian Antioch and Iconium, two haunts of Paul's, are found in central Turkey (Yalvaç and Konya, respectively), and the Cappadocian fairy chimneys, also in central Turkey, offer a glimpse into the life and struggles of the early church.

- *Be warned.* The cliché "He smokes like a Turk" is well-deserved. "No Smoking" sections seem not to exist in Turkey—or on Turkish Airlines.

handful of evangelical Christians (some estimates put it between 10 and 50). The first Protestant church was registered in 1988, and in 1995 the government officially recognized evangelical churches. So the gospel is making inroads, even if at a tortuously slow pace.

At the same time, many younger, more modernized Turks are looking for spiritual answers. One young Turk told me: "Nominal Islam is pervasive because Arabic is used in the mosques and most young people can't read it. Our Qur'an is in Arabic, but young people want to learn it in Turkish." Nevertheless, many of the younger Turks who want to learn the Qur'an in Turkish are not interested in a strict interpretation of Islam: "We don't have this kind of Islamic concept," he said. "I believe in God, but I do not have much sympathy for Islam."

Western ideas are also infiltrating the culture (for better or worse), which is similarly eroding Islamic allegiances. Our guide told us about his sister, who was studying at Bryn Mawr College in Pennsylvania. He lamented (shaking his head): "All that women's liberation stuff has made her very tough."

The disillusionment with nominal Islam, the encroaching Western ideas, and general spiritual hunger have given the up-and-coming generation of Turks new ears with which to hear the good news of the gospel. The religious orientation they have been reared in, nominal though it may be, has aroused, but not satisfied, their search for spiritual answers.

Where from here?

Christian tourism will not provide answers to all their questions. In fact, as Turkey awakens to the economic gold mine that Christian pilgrims can generate, there is the potential for harm to the efforts of some long-termers. Andy Jackson says that "tourism will draw in a lot of Christian crackpots who will not be incarnating the gospel" and who could adversely affect those Christians already in Turkey who are struggling to plant churches and nurture spiritual maturity in these young believers. Our guide told me he was baptized during one tour simply to allay the zealous Christians' unrelenting badgering.

But encouraging Christian tourism, says Jackson, will ultimately help the struggling church in Turkey. It will create a less hostile, more welcoming environment to Christians generally and will put the government on the record as celebrating Christians as "brothers and sisters" (such as Minister Grdal did before our group). In addition, it will mean more and more tour guides will have to study the New Testament in order to know the history their guests are interested in, and the Turkish government will have to produce Christian materials for pilgrims. So, on that level, Christian tourism can be God's tool to break up the hardened ground of Turkey's anti-Christian ethos and to prepare for seeds of the gospel to be planted and nourished by indigenous believers.

Paul reborn

The Reconciliation Walk project, sponsored by Youth with a Mission, has inaugurated a four-year international effort to seek forgiveness for atrocities committed in the name of Christ during the Crusades. Representatives have been surprisingly well received in Turkey. Says Matthew Hand in

Charisma, who drafted the written apology that is read to any who will listen: "We accept the blame for something we didn't do, just like Jesus did." Many Turks find that hard to fathom.

One person recounts that, after speaking for 45 minutes with a Turk named Rafad and reading him the document of confession, he said, "Please don't touch my heart. It is very thin, and it will break. I want to go cry in the mosque."

The Walk is an example of the Turkish government's willingness to welcome Christians as part of their larger desire to become a welcomed partner in the West. Perhaps, too, it could serve as a model to help them overcome aspects of their history that have inhibited their acceptance by the West—like their less-than-sparkling human-rights record (particularly with regard to Kurds in the east) and the lingering cloud of the Armenian genocide.

Christian worker George Bellas, who has ministered to the Turkish Kurds for nine years, thinks that a public confession and corporate repentance for past sins such as has been exhibited in the Reconciliation Walk may be beyond the scope of possibility at this stage of Turkey's evolution as a modern nation. "The Muslims do not have the basic Judeo-Christian concept of making restitution," says Bellas. The Turks do not understand the notion of accepting blame for something they themselves didn't do and certainly not based on doing something "just like Jesus did."

That is because they are only just beginning to hear about what Jesus did—an irony, since so many of the New Testament churches were born here and so much of the theological foundation of the faith was established here.

But hearing it all over again for the very first time is better than not hearing it at all. Regardless of their profit motive, the Turkish government wants Christians to come. And for all its potential complications and theological hazards, Christian tourism is helping to create an environment for this country—with its checkered history and fragmented identity—to rediscover its Christian heritage.

I thought of Paul another time when I was in Konya as I talked with a young Turk in a spot not far from where Paul himself stood when he "preached boldly about the grace of the Lord" (Acts 14:3). The young man was assailing me with a battery of questions about Christianity.

"Do Christians believe in reincarnation?" he asked.

I told him about the Christian belief in resurrection.

"How is this possible?" he asked.

I explained how Jesus made it possible for everyone.

"How did he do this?" he asked.

"Well," I said, "after he was executed his friends buried him in a cave, but they had to rush because the Sabbath was about to start. So they waited another day, and then went back to the grave on the third day, to finish the burial preparations.

"When they approached, they noticed that the grave entrance was open. So they went in and saw that the body was gone."

"Where was it?" he asked.

"He came back to life," I said. "He wanted everyone to understand that he, alone, was sent by God. He appeared to hundreds of people."

The young man's eyes burned with astonishment.

"Did this really happen?" he said.

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PRAY THE LORD MY

[Jesus] said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind."

—MATTHEW 22:37

CORNELIUS PLANTINGA, JR.

Bruno Walter was once rehearsing a choir for a performance of Bach's *Saint Matthew Passion*. He was trying to get the choir to sing the main chorale a certain way. (Think of the hymn "O Sacred Head, Now Wounded," and you'll have the music.) Walter kept rehearsing the choir, and they kept trying; but they weren't giving him the sound he wanted.

So he called a halt and said something like this: "Your singing is talented, but it's not right for this music. You need to sound more like a congregation. You've got to sing this chorale more simply and deeply." Walter told some of his boyhood memories of going to church in Germany and the way people sang there. Then he said to the choir: "Now sing this chorale as if you were back in my childhood church."

So they sang again. They sang with simple depth, with deep simplicity. Of course, they didn't sound exactly like a congregation. They probably couldn't have sounded like that if they had tried. They brought all their musical understanding to the singing of the chorale and thus sang it with an educated simplicity, with a second simplicity, with a simplicity that lay *beyond* complexity.

We all know this phenomenon. According to a famous story, the great Swiss theologian Karl Barth was once asked to sum up the thousands of pages of his dense theology in one sentence. He paused. Then he said, "Jesus loves me! this I know, for the Bible tells me so."

It's one thing for a child to recite these words and quite another for Barth to say them. It's one thing to fool around at a piano by plunking out the notes of "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" with your index finger; it's another thing to hear that tune as a reprise, as a recap just after a fine pianist has played Mozart's variations on it. As a reprise, the tune seems loaded.

Second simplicities lie beyond complexities and incorporate them.

And so it is with loving God. A child can love God. In some ways, a child can become our teacher in doing it. But there are also adult ways to love God, and these take some time to learn. Adults learn to love God considerably. Adults learn to love God with all the powers of an educated mind. Adults bring to God a love that has all the law and the prophets compacted in it.

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind," says our Lord (Matt. 22:37). In other words, you shall love God with everything you have and everything you are. Everything. Every longing, every endowment, each of your intellectual gifts, any athletic talent or computer skill, all capacity for delight, every good thing that has your fingerprints on it—take all this, says Jesus, and refer it to God. Take your longing, and long for God; take your creaturely riches, and endow God; take your eye for beauty and appreciate God. With your heart and soul and mind, with all your needs and splendors, make a full turn toward God.

That is the great commandment, and

Deuteronomy and Matthew give it to us in two versions. In Matthew's gospel a lawyer asks Jesus what may have been a trick question, "Which is the greatest commandment?" Jesus replies by quoting Deuteronomy 6:5, words that were on the lips of pious Jews morning and evening, words as familiar as "Now I lay me down to sleep."

Jesus responds, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your *mind*" —not with all your *strength* (that's Deuteronomy), but with all your *mind* (that's Jesus).

Here is a change worth a little gasp. What if a four-year-old prayed one night: "Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my brain to keep"? You would notice.

Love God with all your mind, says our Lord. Take it as a charter for Christian intellectual life. What is the project for Christians engaged in this pursuit? What is the big idea within it? The simple answer is that we are trying to become better lovers. We want to love God with all our mind. Of course we want to offer our hearts to God, and we want to do it promptly and sincerely. And the same with our souls. But we are also intellectual beings, and Jesus Christ calls us to mindful love; he calls us to intellectual love.

Love with all your mind. The command sounds simple, but it requires from us a second simplicity, a simplicity that incorporates a good deal of complexity.

So what does the command mean? To love God intellectually is to become a student of God—a student who really takes an interest in God. Have you ever noticed that a fair number of Christians are not particularly interested in God? Some of them are ministers. These are people who don't ask about God, don't talk about God, and maybe don't even think about God unless they

MIND TO KEEP

really have to. Their interest in God seems merely professional.

Isn't this strange? Shouldn't we be somewhat *preoccupied* with God? Lovers get preoccupied with their beloved, they notice things about the one they love.

And isn't there quite a lot to notice about God? Isn't God remarkable, after all—so surprisingly fierce, so surprisingly tender? The Scriptures give us a portrait of God we would never have guessed. Sometimes the portrait makes us squirm. Think of some of the biblical images for God: God is lion and lamb, church and home, fire and water. God is not only a leopard, eagle, and bear, but also a moth; not only a parent, but also a child; not only a king and a warrior, but also a barber and a whistler (Isa. 7).

To love God with all one's mind means taking an interest in God and in the peculiarities of God. It means letting God be *God*. This is mere courtesy toward God, and you cannot have love without it. The idea is that God gets to write his own autobiography. God gets to write his own drama of life with us, including his own character description. Our calling is not to rewrite the script, but to find our role there and fill it.

Mindful love of God means other things, too. Dietrich von Hildebrand once observed that lovers give their beloved a good-sized benefit of the doubt. Thus, if our beloved acts well, we look upon the action as typical. If our beloved acts badly, we look upon the action as an aberration. To love somebody is to give that person a big line of moral and spiritual credit.

So with our love of God. God does not act badly, and if we really thought he did, then we ought to give up our religion. But it sometimes *looks* as if God acts badly. It looks as if God goes off duty while children in Romania become hookers and while masses of Africans starve so wretchedly. It looks as if God blesses



GIRAUDON/ART RESOURCE, NY. REMBRANDT. THE PHILOSOPHER IN MEDITATION. 1632.

many of the wrong people and ignores many of the right ones. It looks for all the world as if God has a lot of explaining to do. That's what Job thought, and Job is in the Bible.

How do you love God when, for a while, you can't make any sense out of God? This question is bigger than I am, but I think we have to trust Jesus Christ.

Even before his crucifixion Jesus suffered a lot more than most of us, and *he* says we ought to love God with everything we have. *He* clears the way to love God with a second simplicity. Doesn't God deserve at least the same benefit of the doubt that we give to anyone we love? It's a matter of faithfulness, of intellectual humility, of mere loyalty.

CHRISTIANITY TODAY

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oving God intellectually means taking an interest not only in God, and in the peculiarities of God, but also in the works of God. I'm thinking of creation in all its strength and majesty; creation in all its stupendous variety; creation in all its unguessable particularity. I'm thinking of humanity itself in all its multi-cultural riches. For, of course, God loves not only humankind, but also human kinds, and it's our delight to love what God loves.

To respect creation is to show love for its Creator. How do you respect creation? You give it room to be itself. You let it unfold before your watchful eye. You search it and know it with the preoccupation of a lover. Then you tell the truth about the actual state of creation, includ-

ing not only its bird songs, but also its terrible carnivorousness; including not only the way purple and coral impatiens thicken into great mounds of color in a cool September, but also the way lions in Kenya beard themselves with the blood of fawns. You tell the truth even when you have to tell it about us—human creatures who look so much like God, and act so little like God, and have fallen so far from God.

To hear in the world both the song of God and the groaning of all creation, to prize what is lovely and to suffer over what is corrupt—to ponder these things and to struggle to understand them and God's redeeming ways with them—these are ways of loving God with all our minds. Becoming a real student of God and of the works of God—becoming alert, respectful, and honest in your studies—is an act of flagrant intellectual obedience because it is an act of flagrant intellectual love.

Where must all this love lead? Intellectual love must lead us out into the lives and habitats of other human beings in order to do them some good. Even that—doing people some good—sounds simpler than it is, of course. It's another of those second simplicities. Isaiah 1 tells us that we have to *learn* to do good, suggesting that good in a fouled-up world is often elusive and ambiguous. The point is that we need to think and reflect lest we unwittingly do a half-cooked good, a dangerous good, a ruthless good.

Love the Lord your God with all your mind. This is our job. Our job is to become better lovers. Taking into account all the questions and complexities, all the obstacles and ambigu-

ities, all our growing pains, we have to love God with the second simplicity of grownup children—a deep simplicity, an educated simplicity, a simplicity that lies beyond complexity.

Love the Lord your God with all your mind. Let this command defeat every anti-intellectualism. What a sin this is, and how much of the Christian church happily commits it! Anti-intellectualism is anti-Christian. Never give in to it. Never concede anything to it. Never quit fighting against it. Anti-intellectualism is

*Anti-intellectualism
is anti-Christian. Never
give in to it.*

the sin of lazy people or of fearful people who content themselves with first simplicities and who resist the pain it takes to grow beyond them.

Love the Lord your God with all your mind. Let this command also defeat every selfish intellectualism, every worldly intellectualism, every idolatrous intellectualism. Let it remind us that the life of the mind has nothing to do with carving a niche for ourselves, or making a name for ourselves, or conquering some field of study as if it were an enemy. The life of the mind is an act of love, an act of reverence. It is an act in which we get pulled out of our nervous little egoisms and combine together in a kingdom project so much bigger than any of us, so much grander than all of us that we cannot help getting stretched by this move.

Intellectual love of God is thus the antidote to proud, envious, and angry scholarship—and to all the other deadly sins of scholarship. Intellectual love sets us free from anxious striving and opens the way for intellectual joy, the kind of joy that you can see in a fresh-faced nine-year-old.

Love the Lord your God with all your mind. Whether we are nine years old or ninety, whether students or professors or lifelong students, our job is to think more deeply, observe more alertly, research more thoroughly, and write more clearly—all in the service of loving God. It's a matter of mere obedience.

Let us begin.

CT

Cornelius Plantinga, Jr., is dean of the chapel at Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

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Can Foster Care Be Fixed?

Churches partner with parents to care for at-risk children.

ART MOORE

Angelica Hubbard's six-year odyssey—from a Los Angeles emergency room, where she arrived eight weeks after birth with broken bones and brain damage, to the security and nurture of her adoptive family—reveals in stark detail how the foster-care system can harm as much as it helps.

"Over the past 20 years a whole state of limbo has come into existence where no judgment is made, where the child is neither fish nor fowl," says Patrick Fagan, senior fellow in family and cultural issues at the Heritage Foundation in Washington, D.C. "He's neither, as it were, the proper child of his parents who are raising him well, nor has he become the adoptive child of somebody else who is going to raise him well. Instead he's the ward of the courts, and he's bounced frequently from one foster home to another to another."

In 1991, Los Angeles County placed Angelica through a private agency in the home of Doug and Kathy Hubbard, an American Baptist youth minister and his wife. The couple gingerly embraced Angelica for the first time in a hospital room, where tests revealed bone fractures and neurological damage. For the next five years, Angelica was at the mercy of a state system, which put the rights of her birth parents ahead of her needs.

Eventually, Angelica's Hispanic birth parents satisfied state requirements and she returned to her original home at age two. But six months later, Angelica was back in a hospital, malnourished and with bruises and bite marks. From jail, her birth mother telephoned her case worker and pleaded for Angelica to be sent to the Hubbards. The agency rejected her appeal and placed the child with another Hispanic family. "To Angelica we were Mommy and Daddy, but their answer was, *She's already been placed; we can't tell you any more*," Kathy Hubbard says.

Yet the Hubbards were determined and contacted the new foster family, offering free baby-sitting. Within four months, Angelica returned to them. And last year, they adopted Angelica, ending her bruising journey through the foster-care system.

KIDS' NEEDS FIRST: New federal legislation has changed the way states are supposed to handle foster care and adoption so that what is best for children is to be uppermost in the minds of case workers.

The federal Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA), enacted in January, aims to double the number of adoptions by 2002. The new law speeds up the procedure to place foster children into adoptive families, giving states, placement agencies, and ministries strong incentives to put the needs of children first.

Although Angelica's story has an upbeat ending, the same cannot be said for



many of the other 500,000 foster children in America. Historically, the foster-care system has focused on keeping families together, even if children pay the price physically and emotionally.

Foster-care adoptions are up sharply where aggressive community outreach programs have been initiated. Churches are increasingly viewed as a prized asset in that effort. Christians have cared for orphans since the first century. But the contemporary breakdown of the nation's foster-care system, burdened by bureaucracy, politics, and underfunding, has given church leaders fresh opportunities to care for foster children and to stimulate adoption in innovative ways.

"Foster parenting is more appealing when it's the responsibility of a community rather than just the two parents," says Ted Kulik, assistant director of the Institute for Children in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

While there is no conclusive research on what motivates people to care for a foster child, according to University of California at Berkeley researcher Richard Barth, it is

very clear "that foster and adoptive parents have very high degrees of religiosity."

Kulik points to Child Share of Glendale, California, as an example of a small but growing number of Christian organizations working within the system. They have an enviable track record for introducing stability into troubled young lives. Two out of three Child Share children stay with the same family until they are either reunited or adopted. The average foster child lives in four different homes.

Child Share links public and private agencies with foster and adoptive families. Some 250 congregations representing 20 denominations participate. Church members may serve with varying degrees of commitment, from baby-sitting and respite care to foster and adoptive parenting.

Nationwide, about 200,000 foster children are either presently or potentially available for adoption, though each year only about 20,000 are placed in permanent homes. Increasingly, private and public workers alike acknowledge that without community involvement the new federal

law will not achieve its goal of dramatically increasing resolution of foster-care cases.

BLACK CHURCH INVOLVEMENT:

Minority children make up 64 percent of the foster-care population and remain in care longer than any other group. African Americans have always adopted children of their own race at a higher rate than white families, according to Rita Simon of American University in Washington, D.C.

African-American churches and the state of Texas are successfully partnering in the recruitment of families for foster care and adoption. Project Hustle, a program to place hard-to-adopt children, develops teams from community groups who use their networks to find families and provide them with support.

"The use of the churches was critical because of the history of the relationship between the black church and the black community," says Helen Grape, regional placement program director for the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services in Fort Worth. The response from churches is greater than from other organizations.

"Businesses usually must offer an incentive, such as time off or insurance, to recruit people," Grape says. "The ministers say, *There is a need, so come and do it*, and people will more than likely follow through."

Each community group is assigned 20 to 25 children for whom they have the responsibility to help guide through the process to, ideally, a permanent, safe home.

It is a multidimensional process that Grape helps orchestrate. "You have to forget this sequential kind of planning," Grape says. "It has to be concurrent; you have to work with the family at the same time that you identify options, support systems, judges, and court people who have to be ready to do what is necessary to free kids or get kids where they need to be."

Cooperation is essential to make the new legislation effective, Grape says. "Now, more than at any other time, public and private agencies must work together to identify families, to train together, recruit together."

A similar recruiting effort that started in Chicago has been in place since 1980. One Church, One Child is a special program designed to connect African-American families, churches, and needy kids.

Peaceful environment: With the help of Child Share's Joanne Feldmeth (far left), the Hubbards have given Angelica (far right) a more stable home.



One Church, One Child identifies adoptive families and single parents for children in need of permanent homes and has now placed 90,000 children nationwide. The vision of One Church, One Child was to recruit at least one African-American family or single parent per church to adopt at least one child.

RACIAL TENSIONS: Transracial adoption remains a highly sensitive issue, exposing ongoing ethnic tensions within American culture. In 1972, the National Association of Black Social Workers condemned transracial adoption as "cultural genocide." But laws enacted in 1994 and 1997 prohibit using race as a determining factor in adoption. Nevertheless, bias against transracial adoption remains.

"There is a very aggressive movement within the social services system that a black child in need of adoptive parents will not be permitted to be adopted by white couples," Fagan says. "That is their putting a race-cultural issue ahead of the actual needs of a particular child."

Critics claim that children lose their identity and become "spiritual and cultural orphans." But a 20-year study of Midwest families by Simon challenges that notion. Most parents work hard—perhaps even too hard—she says, at teaching their children about their cultural heritage.

"The joke among these children was that not every dinner conversation has to be a discussion of black history or whether Jesse Jackson is going to run for public office," says Simon. Children were more interested in discussing basketball or dating.

As the parents of three mixed-race children, James and Karen Stobaugh of Downingtown, Pennsylvania, have more of a personal stake than most in the debate. James Stobaugh says, "At times we've struggled with our society's subtle and not-so-subtle racism." The Stobaughs relocated after racists burned crosses at a nighttime rally on the edge of their property. A firm supporter of transracial adoption, Stobaugh says, "The U.S. is home to nearly 200 people groups. To think they can or should be kept separate is totally untenable. And the people who end up paying the price are innocent children."

MORE HOMES NEEDED: Regardless of the number of foster children available for adoption, there are still not enough adults signed up to be foster or adoptive parents. A common belief is that the most needy children are not adopted from foster care because adoptive white parents are interested only in healthy newborns. That is a myth, according to Conna Craig, di-

rector of the Institute for Children. She points to the Children with AIDS Project in Phoenix, which has recruited more than 1,000 parents to adopt AIDS orphans and HIV-positive babies.

Craig concedes that the longer a child is in the system, the more the likelihood of adoption dwindles. But Craig emphasizes that the notion that nobody wants older children or children with emotional and physical problems is untrue. Research indicates that no child is unadoptable, says Craig. Her organization commissioned a study by the Polling Company, which found that 71 percent of adults would, if deciding to adopt, consider a child who had spent time in foster care.

Fagan says, "We have no major national efforts going on in adoption, and there are potentially up to 2 million who would be willing to adopt if asked."

To increase adoptions, one public perception in need of change is the belief that the foster-care system is too intimidating. Don Simkovich, director of church relations for Child Share, says, "This system walks into your living room—attorney, birth parents, birth parents' attorney, judge, social workers, social worker's supervisor. It takes an adventurous spirit to work through the system."

As foster parents, Richard and Lisa Pferdner of Chatsworth, California, have placed themselves in the crossfire between parents and the state. The casualty rate for foster parents is extremely high. Many drop out within a year when they witness the painful battle over children in the system. Most important to the Pferdners now is the support their faith and Christian community provides in their demanding role as foster parents to Taylor, who came to them one year ago at the age of six months.

Even though Taylor's birth mother said from the beginning that she does not want to work toward reunification, Taylor remains in a holding pattern while the court gives a legitimate opportunity for blood relatives to seek custody.

Meanwhile, the Pferdners' dual task is to work toward family reunification even as they hold themselves out as Taylor's potential adoptive parents. Once a week they take Taylor to his birth mother, who the Pferdners say loves her son. But she has drug-related problems that make her an unreliable parent. Parental abuse of alcohol and other drugs is a factor in the placement of more than 75 percent of all children in care, according to the U.S. General Accounting Office. "It's so easy to look at the dysfunctional parents and

say, 'I could give this person a better home,'" Richard Pferdner says.

Pferdner compares foster parenting to foreign missionary work. "Being a foster parent is on that level of intensity, being in the trenches in direct spiritual warfare, having your faith completely tested."

Under the new federal law, foster parents are being given greater powers in determining the fate of foster children in their care. Foster parents must now be notified every time the court schedules a hearing and be given the opportunity to voice their opinion on the child's status.

Child Share executive director Joanne Feldmeth believes that new legislation will take time to be applied at the local level. "It's an enormous change, and because people aren't ready, because social workers have been schooled in the old line of thought that family reunification was the only way to go, it's going to take a long time for it to filter out."

CUTTING THE COST OF WAITING: Foster care has the reputation for being the kiss of death for an at-risk child's mental and emotional well-being.

Connecticut officials estimate that 75 percent of youths in the state's criminal justice system have been in foster care at some point in their lives. Experts say that placement in three or more foster families is the highest risk factor for a child who ultimately ends up in prison.

Studies also show that former foster-care wards make up a substantial portion of the nation's homeless. A 1991 national study found that 25 percent of foster-care wards had been homeless at some point.

Fagan says that too many foster children are needlessly delayed in being permanently placed into adoptive families. National statistics show that the number of foster children has increased by 65 percent over the past decade. Fagan calls delay of permanent placement "child abuse by the child protective services."

Until the ASFA legislation, states had a disincentive to place children in adoptive homes, in part because budgets were based on the number of foster children under state care. This disincentive results in children bouncing in and out of multiple foster homes, triggering many educational and emotional problems.

The ASFA plan to make foster care temporary gives federal money to each state that places more children into adoption. It aims to double—to 54,000 annually, within the next four years—the number of children adopted out of foster care and to reduce status hearings from a maxi-

mum of 18 months to 12 months.

NEW MINISTRY MODELS: As churches have partnered with families, agencies, and governments, new models of ministry are emerging.

There is a new willingness by churches and some of their never-married single members to open their homes to needy kids. Gale Parker, 39, of Canoga Park, California, quickly lost her naïve optimism about ministry to troubled children when she became a single foster parent. "Before I became a foster parent, I was idealistic," Parker says. "I thought, *I'm going to take them in, they're going to love me. It's going to be great.*"

She sees it as a calling and understands why some two-parent families in her church say they would not consider foster parenting until after their kids are grown. "You have to have your life and your family in order, because the demands are so great that it could tear your family apart," she says. "You need to have your strength from the Lord—and to have the time."

Another attempt to expand care for foster children is a small, but growing back-to-orphanage movement. Most American orphanages closed more than 30 years ago due to high costs and the perception that institutional life is psychologically damaging.

But today's orphanages tend to be smaller and based on a homelike atmosphere. Advocates say they provide a sense of permanence, security, structure, and camaraderie that is superior to being bounced from family to family through the foster-care system. Many of the new orphanages, as with their predecessors, have been founded by Christians.

"If the church really responded, we would solve the problem in our county," says JoAnne Morris, who, with her husband, runs Mission to Children at Risk, which places foster children in Santa Clara County, California, through a network of 700 churches.

Morris says she encounters many Christians who find the cost in dealing with the state and a troubled family too high.

"I see Christians saying, *I'm going to go through a private agency, because I'm not interested in dealing with the kids that come with all that baggage.*"

Some church leaders are reluctant to

Empty Nesters Undertake Second Parenthood

Child-rearing is but a distant memory to most married couples well into their retirement years. But Nathaniel Odom, 83, and his wife, Zady, 73, are busy attending Boy Scout meetings, participating in parent-teacher conferences, and leading vacation Bible school.

Seven years ago, Nathaniel, a retired Chicago-area builder, and Zady, who worked as a school-bus driver for 20 years, adopted three siblings: Sable, 5; Ronald, 2; and Theo, two months. By that time, they had already raised six sons, then between ages 26 and 36, all of whom had married and had children of their own. Three years later, the Odoms adopted two-year-old Diamond.

The Odoms' interest in adoption began after they had been unable to have children their first eight years of marriage. The couple adopted a four-month-old boy from the Chicago Foundlings Home in 1955. They then had four biological sons, followed by another adopted son.

"After they were grown up, the nest was pretty empty," says Zady Odom, who, like her husband, had seven siblings.

By the time Sable, Ronald, and Theo joined the Odoms in their Glen Ellyn, Illinois, home, the couple had raised ten foster children in addition to their six sons. They did not intend to adopt the trio of siblings, but after nearly three years of providing foster care, they decided to make it permanent when no other families came forward. "It's so sad to see children begging to be adopted," says Odom. "It's something about us, when we get a child, we just can't let go."

Odom says she and her husband are simply trying to live out their faith by caring for children who have no other caregivers. "It's our way of paying back some of the blessings God has given us," she says.

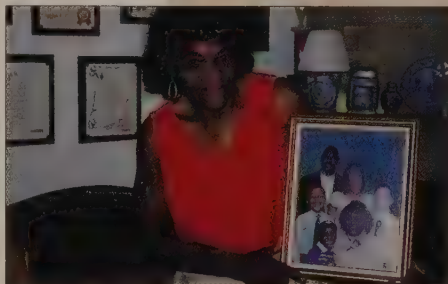
"Some people think because you are old, you don't have anything to offer a child," says Odom. Federal law does not limit older adults from becoming foster or adoptive parents, but states are allowed to set their own standards regarding age. State agencies agreed to the Odoms' latest round of adoptions with no qualms, but their grown children expressed reservations because of their parents' ages. Now, says Odom, her older children believe adoptive parenting is helping her stay young.

Keeping up with four young children and 15 grandchildren who all live in the Chicago metropolitan area is a challenge. But Odom adds they would adopt more children if they had a larger house. "I cannot say no when I've asked the Lord to be able to help," she says.

Odom wishes more Christians, especially retirees, would consider foster and adoptive care. She sees age as an advantage because senior adults are home during the day and can spend more time dealing with children's needs.

"There are so many children out there who need the love of anyone," she says. "You could be old, young, single. We need to see children as a blessing, not a burden."

By Christine J. Gardner in Glen Ellyn.



No time to retire: Odom and her younger family.

become involved because they are afraid of the negative impact on their congregation. "One church told us that they were sorry, but they didn't want to expose their families to the kind of sin that these kids have come from," Morris says. "When you bring these children into your church, they're going to teach the other kids

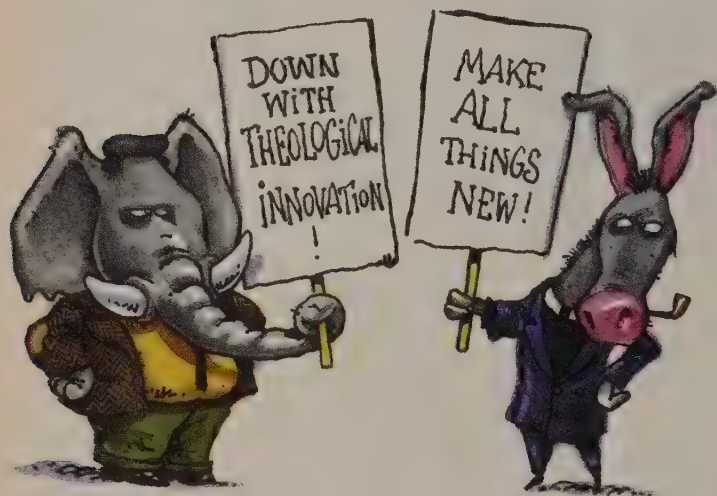
things that they've never heard of before."

Yet, families such as the Pferdnerns are eager to learn and respond to the needs that Christians are uniquely poised to meet. "It takes tremendous grace to be a foster parent," says Richard Pferdnern. "I don't understand how non-Christians can do it without the resources of the Lord." **CT**

The Perils of *Left* and *Right*

Evangelical theology is much bigger and richer than our two-party labels.

John G. Stackhouse, Jr.



There are two kinds of people in the world: those who divide the world into two kinds of people, and those who do not. In his new book, *Postmodernizing the Faith: Evangelical Responses to the Challenge of Postmodernism* (Baker, 160 pp.; \$14.99, paper), Millard J. Erickson divides contemporary evangelical theologians into two kinds of people: those who resist postmodernism and those who are more positive toward it.

In a recent article in these pages (CT, Feb. 9, 1998, p. 40), Roger Olson writes that he is willing to risk "gross oversimplification" in order to undertake a similar task. He argues that there are two kinds of contemporary evangelical theologians: traditionalists and reformists. The former are those who "value traditional interpretations and formulations as binding and normative and [look] with suspicion upon doctrinal revisions and new proposals." The latter are those who value "the continuing process of constructive theology seeking new light breaking forth from God's Word."

Olson says he means nothing pejorative by these labels; his concern, he insists, is to make peace between these two types. Erickson also writes with an evident desire to analyze his colleagues fairly and give credit where it may be due all round. His new book

does present a spectrum of opinion on postmodernism. Still, the spectrum is divided into two discrete halves, and it is hard to see such dividing as anything other than divisive.

Erickson's new book follows his slim volume *The Evangelical Left: Encountering Postconservative Evangelical Theology* (Baker). Here again he is in harmony with a Roger Olson article, this one appearing in the *Christian Century* (May 3, 1995) on so-called postconservatives. The term is virtually synonymous with Olson's "reformist" label and carries an unhappy resonance, as "postconservative" sounds a lot like "postliberal."

Erickson compounds the terminological difficulties in the earlier book by lumping in Clark Pinnock, Stanley Grenz, Bernard Ramm, and Gregory Boyd, among others, into what he calls simply the evangelical Left. In the more recent book, Erickson discusses evangelicals who have responded negatively to postmodernism in contrast to those who have made a positive response. In both books, David Wells and Thomas Oden are cited as representative of those who have resisted the sirens of the Left and the blandishments of postmodernism.

The trouble with such typologies is that they presuppose a uniform conservative theology against which postconservatives can define themselves; a traditional theology that reformists want to alter; and an evangelical center or Right in comparison with which all of the theologians in question are definitely to the Left. It is this general assumption, as well as the questionable grouping of quite disparate theologians onto one side or the other of a divide, that mars such maps of contemporary evangelical thought.

Two crucial misunderstandings afflict such schemes. The first is a caricature of the Enlightenment and the modernity it is said to embody; the second is an ahistorical narrowing of the evangelical tradition.

According to this caricature, the Enlightenment placed reason above every other route to knowledge; believed that knowledge gained through reason was objective and certain; and held that the rational, free individual was ideally capable of coming to such truth.

Reformists/postmodernists, so the story goes, reject these convictions in favor of the following: a championing of experience as well as reason (and

perhaps revelation as well); an appreciation of knowledge as personal, subjective, and provisional; and a recognition that we each do our investigating and thinking in communities, coming up with what one might call "tribal" narratives and ideologies to understand the world. Once we recognize our situation as postmoderns, we no longer should claim the status of absolute and comprehensive truth for our ideas.

The problem with this scenario is that it is overly simple and so misconstrues our intellectual history. When we speak of the Enlightenment, we need to specify which one. According to American historian Henry May's oft-cited typology, there were actually several Enlightenment varieties. Indeed, few Enlightenment figures subscribed strictly to the definition offered above. For one thing, even rationalist thinkers such as Descartes and Kant made room for experience in their thought, and the empiricist stream associated with Bacon and Locke prized it greatly. Furthermore, John Wesley and Jonathan Edwards were demonstrably Enlightenment figures who valued reason and experience as gifts of God that nonetheless were to be subjected to the light of God's revelation in the Spirit-illuminated Scriptures.

Enlightenment confidence, moreover, did not lie in the conviction that reason provided certainty here and now, but rather in the conviction that the project of investigating the world in this way would yield progressively better results. And this project was a public one engaged in by the community of fellow thinkers, not a private one for the enlightened individual (Descartes in his closet and Kant on his afternoon walks notwithstanding). The whole point of founding a Royal Society, the whole point of publishing one's ideas, was to submit hypotheses to one's peers for their testing. The scientific method was, after all, a major inspiration for the Enlightenment and includes in its basic premises that knowledge is achieved by the independent confirmation of others.

Postmodernists, then, are more accurately characterized as those who do not share this confidence in the Enlightenment project, who see human perception and theorizing as so limited and distorted by our individual and corporate qualities that we can only tell our own stories, perhaps listen to those of others for what additional insight they can offer, and muddle through as best we can.

So where does evangelicalism figure in this more nuanced historical narrative? Evangelicalism indeed developed in the Enlightenment context, but that was a context in which Wesley and Edwards could preach, not just one in which Voltaire and Jefferson could declaim. Moreover, evangelicalism as we encounter it today is the multifarious product of more than two centuries of cultural change and adaptation (as David Bebbington has brilliantly shown in his history of British evangelicalism), not a "flash-frozen" specimen of the Enlightenment that merely requires thawing out in each successive generation.

There are many types of evangelical: some still marked deeply by Enlightenment qualities; some more in a confessional Reformational, or historic Puritan, or Romantic style; some expressing the historical consciousness of nineteenth-century movements; and still others articulating the gospel in a bewildering range of twentieth-century modes, whether process, liberation, feminist, or charismatic—not to mention increasing varieties of theology arising beyond the developed West.

It does not help us to understand each other, much less work theologically together, if traditional evangelical theology is seen in terms of a simplistic sketch of the Enlightenment. Evangelical theology has indeed been scholastic and rigid at times, but it has also been supple, experiential, vital, and humbly open to God's revelation. Indeed, it seems that what many of Olson's reformists—and many of Erickson's postmodernists—are reacting against is not modernity but dogmatism, a nasty trait that appears in every age.

Nor is the diversity of evangelical theology adequately represented by schemas such as those proposed by Olson and Erickson. It is simply arbitrary, for instance, to place Donald Bloesch—a fan of Barth's and yet an opponent of gender egalitarianism—on one "side" or the other of the Olson/Erickson line. And Stan Grenz, who is indeed open to some aspects of postmodernism, cannot be grouped easily with Clark Pinnock and others who are exploring the so-called openness of God. The theological landscape is too variegated for a "two-party system," as Olson puts it—which encourages this Canadian to wonder how much American binary politics lies behind this sort of typologizing!

There are not just two kinds of culture: modern and postmodern. There are not just two kinds of evangelical theologian. Perhaps in God's imaginative and adaptive Providence, in fact, he has led different theologians to different conclusions (on nonessential matters) in order to reach different kinds of people evangelistically, instruct them theologically, guide them ethically, and motivate them spiritually. Some of us benefit more from Lewis Sperry Chafer than Francis Schaeffer, some more from C. S. Lewis than B. B. War-

field, and some more from postmodern theology than modern theology. At the core of evangelical commitment and identity is neither "a theology to die for" (as some traditionalists might put it) nor personal experience of Jesus (as some postconservatives are saying), as if these two were separable things, but the good news of knowing God in Christ, a gospel

primarily transmitted via the Scriptures by the Holy Spirit. Evangelicals past and present have agreed on this fundamental.

Instead of trying to sort out who is on whose side, then, let's continue to affirm that evangelicalism is much bigger and richer than any of our schemes—because our God is bigger and richer. By no means should we abandon theology and the disputation that is necessarily a part of it. Many of these issues matter, and argument can be mutually beneficial to all who engage in it rigorously and respectfully—as both Erickson and Olson do. Let us beware, however, of fixing great gulfs between us, which we suppose no one can cross. For there are many who do cross them.

To pick up an image from historian Martin Marty, such divides in evangelicalism are, in fact, wonderfully crisscrossed with alliances on other matters: opposition to abortion, support of evangelism, opposition to religious persecution, support of justice for the poor. These are blessed ties that bind us to each other and to our common Lord. What God has joined together, therefore, let no theological scheme, however well meant, put asunder. **CT**

John G. Stackhouse, Jr., is Sangwoo Youtong Chee Professor of Theology at Regent College in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. He is the author most recently of Can God Be Trusted? Faith and the Challenge of Evil (Oxford University Press).

It is hard
to see such
dividing
as anything
other than
divisive.

The Politics of Patience

Retiring senator Dan Coats explains why Christians aren't getting their way in Washington.

In 1952, when Dwight Eisenhower swung through Jackson, Michigan, on a campaign tour, a nine-year-old boy waited in the crowd at the railroad station, hoping to meet the general. When Ike finally walked by, the boy thrust his hand through the line and touched the coat of the man who would soon be President. It was Dan Coats's first brush with politics.

Today Coats is a seasoned U.S. senator from Indiana, a post he has held since 1988 when he fulfilled the term left vacant by the election of Dan Quayle to the vice presidency. A graduate of Wheaton College (where he met his wife, Marcia), Coats was first elected to the House in 1980. This followed a stint in the military and a law practice in Fort Wayne, Indiana. During this time, he heard a talk by Chuck Colson that changed the direction of his life. "It was as if the other people in the room melted away," Coats says of the effect of the talk. He went home and, with Marcia at his side, dedicated himself to serving God fully in his career.

During the two decades of public service that followed, Coats, a Republican, has supported such conservative goals as a balanced budget, low taxes, a robust military, and strong families. He also authored a set of bills called "The Project for American Renewal." These initiatives emphasize what Coats calls a compassionate "shifting of power, money, and influence out of Washington" back to private organizations and religious charities.

Coats surprised the political world last year when he announced he would not seek re-election when his term expires in January of 1999. Instead, he would seek to further his goals through nonprofit and faith-based organizations. Robert Schwarzwald, a member of the senator's staff from 1991 to 1994, talked with Coats at his Capitol Hill office about his inside view on issues ranging from Clinton and China to evangelicals, abortion, and the Supreme Court.

How has your faith influenced your conduct in office?

Pretty dramatically. When you go into a situation where so much of what you do is critiqued by your political opponents and the press, it's important that you understand the role your faith is going to play. You have to have a solid foundation of faith, because this is a tough business. You're subject to so many pressures. The public and press are fickle. You can be liked or disliked from one day to the next. It's easy for people to misinterpret your votes. It makes you realize faith is the only real constant in your life.

You have been a pro-life leader in Congress. What lessons have you learned in the fight for unborn life?

All of my training and study—at Wheaton, in church, in my personal study of Scripture—has led me to an unshakable conviction that all of life

is God's creation, and so the sanctity of life should be one of the unalienable truths of our system. Still, Christians have often confused principle with strategy. I have tried to express my convictions while developing an effective strategy to translate my convictions into reality.

Sometimes we have to use incremental approaches. Sometimes we have to recast the debate. In the early eighties, the entire debate was on the Human Life Amendment. It just simply was not possible to gain the necessary two-thirds majority in the House or Senate to pass the amendment. We then focused our strategy on taxpayer-funded abortion, which had some success. Now we are working on banning partial-birth abortion.

Some people would have said this was a compromise, that we should accept nothing but a constitutional amendment banning abortion. If we ban partial-birth abortion, will that eliminate abortions? No, it would only limit a tiny fraction of them, but this issue has helped us refocus the debate and has put the pro-choice people on the defensive.

Some Christians have concluded that I've not been true to the faith. That's been difficult, one of the greatest challenges I've had to face.

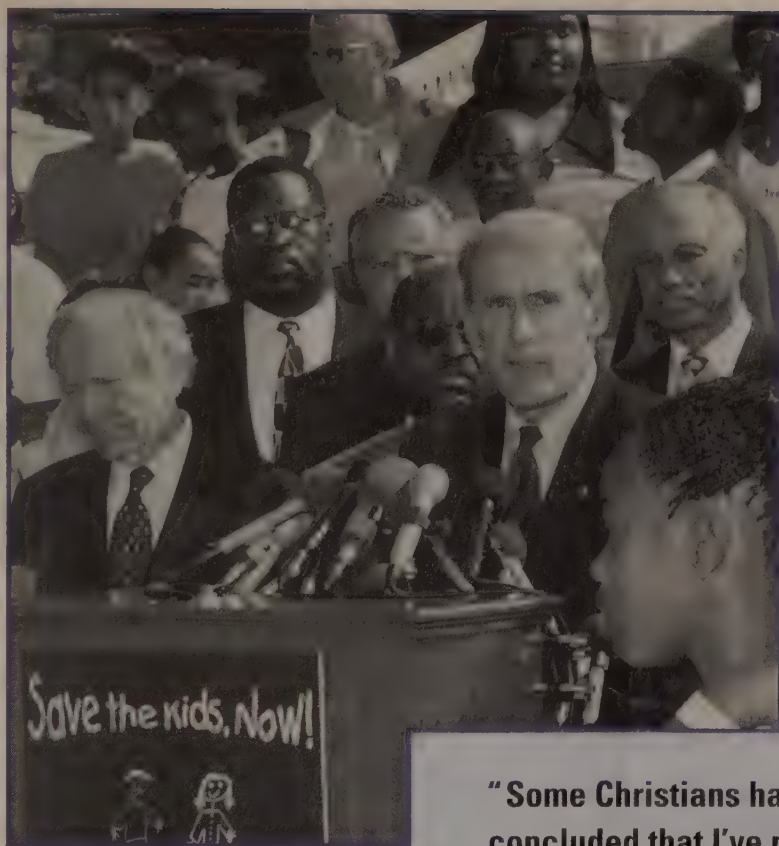
How do you respond to attacks from other Christians as well as from political opponents?

On occasion, I've had some sharp exchanges in the Senate with some of my colleagues. There is a temptation to label someone a personal, not just a political, enemy. My goal is to maintain my position, to state my convictions without personalizing my criticisms, to have a relationship with my opponent based on respect. Christ's teaching and his conduct set the example.

Sometimes it makes people uncomfortable when you raise the moral side of the issue. But I think we're not here just to always avoid the difficult issues.

How have you used moral arguments to advance legislation?

Scripture—God's Word—is the source of all truth. But approaching public policy from an explicitly Christian perspective is counterproductive. It is wiser to approach it from the stand-



point of the moral foundation that undergirds our society—the moral framework found in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. The principles in these documents show how to relate moral truth to the issues at hand.

Not every issue has a moral foundation. But foreign policy, issues of war and peace, life and health—all have profound moral implications. On many issues there is less clarity. Consider Most Favored Nation [MFN] trade status for China. Persecution of Christians in China is real, and it is wrong. But I've received letters from Christians within China saying that if MFN is rescinded, they'll experience repression. If we stay engaged with China, we can promote democratization.

Recently, Focus on the Family's James Dobson has threatened, in his words, to take as many of his listeners away from the Republican party as he can unless there is greater progress on social issues. Other conservative Christian leaders, like Richard D. Land of the Southern Baptist Convention's Ethics and Relig-

"Some Christians have concluded that I've not been true to the faith. That's been difficult, one of the greatest challenges I've had to face."

—Dan Coats

ious Liberty Commission, echo these sentiments. How do you respond?

I understand a little of their frustration. They and the people they represent have invested a great amount of energy, finances, and other resources to address through the political process serious social and cultural issues they think are having an extraordinarily negative effect on the country. They are frustrated that the Congress hasn't been as responsive and successful as they would like.

But often that frustration has translated into criticizing and condemning the very people who share the same goals and who often are as frustrated as they are but, because of the nature of the political process, haven't been

able to succeed in a way that those people want to succeed. This doesn't mean that they're not on the same team. It means that they're facing hurdles and obstacles I'm not sure people outside the system have an appreciation for. Bombastic rhetoric from people in elective office may please people outside, but it doesn't accomplish the goal and often makes achievement of our goals more difficult.

The response of some Christian activists is, "We gave you a majority in 1994." No, they didn't. Even though we have a Republican Senate, there is not a majority of Republican senators who agree with every issue that the Christian Right advocates, and even if there were, in the Senate it takes 60 to pass laws, and we have only 55 Republican senators. The country re-elected Bill Clinton President, so it takes 67 votes to override the President's veto.

Social conservatives are frustrated we've been able to score only some first downs, but we haven't been able to score all the touchdowns we'd like.

But that doesn't mean that we have walked off the field. We're out there sweating and bleeding. To capsize the issue, it's a matter of rhetoric versus results. Just going to the floor doesn't translate into legislative success.

Though there are serious questions about the President's personal life, many voters seem to feel that if he fulfills his official duties well, his private conduct is secondary and should, per-

haps, even be ignored.

Character counts, integrity matters, and personal responsibility is important. Leaders need to model these, but we're not getting any of those qualities out of this President. I think it sets a terrible example for the American people, particularly for future generations. It is a reflection of decades of relativism that defines truth as whatever the individual thinks it is. We're not paying an economic price right now, and that seems to be, unfortunately, dominating public opinion about the President's performance. But we're paying a terrible moral and spiritual price that is more destructive than any economic recession could impose on our nation. I'm very concerned

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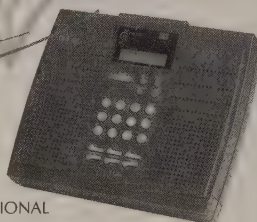
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about the implications for our society and the implications particularly for the next generation.

You're already president of Big Brothers/Big Sisters, a civic organization that is not explicitly Christian or religious. What message are you sending by filling this position?

Big Brothers/Big Sisters is an organization that helps children without fathers. It promotes mentoring and operates on volunteerism, one on one, bringing an adult into a child's life. We continue to see positive results from that approach.

But that's only one of the things I'm going to do. I intend to create a foundation for American renewal basically for the purpose of promoting nongovernmental, nonprofit, and primarily faith-based volunteer organizations that will address some of our most fundamental social issues. I'm doing so because I believe the root of the solution is spiritual. These institutions, as opposed to government, are constituted to bring the spiritual renewal I believe will transform society by transforming individuals from the inside out rather than from the outside in.

You've been in public service for more than two decades. What counsel do you have for evangelicals as they approach politics?

I encourage evangelicals to be involved in the political process, to be involved in community affairs, whether that be the PTA or neighborhood associations or city council. I think we can bring a perspective that's very important.

I'm concerned about individuals and organizations that, while they wouldn't profess this, behave as if our salvation lies in the election of a certain President, a certain Congress, or passage of a certain law. Their energies, efforts, and even their beliefs are directed more substantially to that rather than fulfilling Christ's commands to love God and love others as ourselves.

We should never lose sight of a higher calling that transcends politics and all human endeavors. That higher calling is a commitment to serve God and to share the good news of the gospel. That ought always to be our number-one priority. CI

Robert Schwarzwaldner is communication director for a business association in Springfield, Virginia.

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Did Paul Baptize for the Dead?

Q: I've heard Mormons criticized for getting "baptized for the dead," but in 1 Corinthians 15:29, Paul writes: "Now if there is no resurrection, what will those do who are baptized for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized for them?" (NIV). Did Jews or early Christians practice this? Why do we believe it's wrong to practice it today?

—Janice Showalter
Flint, Michigan

The most plausible interpretation is that some in Corinth were getting baptized vicariously for the dead.

A: In Mormon doctrine, no one can enter the "celestial" heaven without being baptized. But those who have died can gain admittance if others are baptized for them. Today, Mormon doctrine requires that the dead person for whom someone else is baptized must be named (hence their interest in genealogical research), and proxy baptism is considered one of the most important elements of Mormon "temple work." So it is surprising to discover that the Book of Mormon never mentions the doctrine—even more so knowing that the Bible and the Book of Mormon are between them believed to contain "the fullness of the gospel" and that the Book of Mormon ostensibly contains "the fullness of the everlasting gospel." Still, this does not prevent the Mormon's *Doctrines of Salvation* from boldly asserting, "The Prophet Joseph Smith declared, 'The greatest . . . commandment given us, and made obligatory, is the temple work in our own behalf and in behalf of our dead.'" Presumably, this is the biblical basis for 1 Corinthians 15:29.

Mormon teaching aside, how should we understand this verse? Christian leaders have long been leery of imposing on the consciences of believers as being crucial what is mentioned in only one verse. It's not that something becomes "truer" or more binding if it is repeated many times. Rather, when something is mentioned only once, it cannot be given the same weight of importance as the central themes of Scripture. (One of the marks of heterodoxy is that, while central truths are skirted, relatively peripheral matters become life-and-death issues.) More important, when something is mentioned only once, there is more likelihood of misinterpreting it, whereas matters repeatedly discussed are clarified by their repetition in various contexts.

We can see this problem in the more than 40 interpretations of 1 Corinthians 15:29 that B. M. Foschini catalogued 50 years ago in *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*. They included that Christians in Corinth were being

"baptized into the ranks of the dead" by martyrdom (thinking of "baptism" in the light of Mark 10:38; Luke 12:50), that this was ordinary Christian baptism that took place "over" the grave of the dead, or that new Christians were baptized to "replace" Christians who had died. Though interesting, these proposals lack credibility. The most plausible interpretation is that some in Corinth were getting baptized vicariously for the dead. Several factors, however, put this into perspective. Although Paul does not explicitly condemn the practice, neither does he endorse it. Several writers have offered the following analogy. Imagine a Protestant writing, "Why do they then pray for the dead, if the dead do not rise at all?" No one would take this as an endorsement of the practice of praying for the dead; it is a criticism of the inconsistency of praying for the dead while holding that the dead do not rise. To make this rhetorical question an endorsement of the practice of praying for the dead, one would expect, "Why do *we* then pray for the dead?" Likewise, in 1 Corinthians 15:29 Paul preserves the more distant *they*. After all, his primary concern in 1 Corinthians 15 is the defense of the Christian doctrine of resurrection. His rhetorical question in verse 29 may simply be pointing out the inconsistency of those who deny the final resurrection, granted their rather strange baptismal practices.

And they were strange. There is no good evidence for vicarious baptism anywhere in the New Testament or among the earliest apostolic fathers. By the same token, there is no hint that this vicarious baptism (if that is what it was) was intended by the Corinthian believer to cover as many deceased people as could be named. If the practice existed at all, it may have been tied to a few people or special cases—for example, when a relative died after trusting the gospel but before being baptized. We really do not know. If it were something like that, one could understand why Paul does not make a federal case of it.

In any case, Paul's clear emphasis is that people are justified by grace *through faith*, which demands a personal response. Christian baptism is part of that personal response, even as it is a convenantal pledge. In contrast, baptism on behalf of someone who has not exercised such faith sounds like magic—of something far from Pauline thought. **CT**

By D. A. Carson, research professor of New Testament at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, Illinois. Send questions to be answered by evangelical scholars to Directions, at CTedit@aol.com or Christianity Today, 465 Gundersen Dr., Carol Stream, IL 60188.

Why Hollywood Doesn't Like You

As a Christian and a Hollywood screenwriter who has lived in Los Angeles since the 1970s, Coleman Luck understands both sides of the cultural clashes between evangelicals and Hollywood—and he tries to bridge these unfriendly worlds as he communicates spiritual concepts in his television productions. Luck was co-executive producer for the action/adventure series *The Equalizer* on CBS from 1985 to 1989, cocreator and executive producer of *Gabriel's Fire* in 1991–92, and executive producer for the more recent television adventure series *The Burning Zone* (United Paramount Network). His latest screenplay,

The Touch, is based on Charles Williams's concept of Christians bearing one another's burdens. Luck, 52, talked with *CHRISTIANITY TODAY's* Mary Cagney while attending an ethics conference at Wheaton College in Illinois.

Why is there such a standoff between Hollywood and evangelicals?

Both groups underestimate the importance the other places in its system of faith. Hollywood's faith is in the First Amendment right to free speech. I think evangelicals cannot believe Hollywood is motivated by anything other than money.

While money is a factor, most people in Hollywood believe passionately in the films and television they make.

Does Hollywood particularly dislike Christianity?

I would rather say Christianity is to some degree feared in Hollywood. The only forms of Christianity Hollywood understands are Catholicism and right-wing conservative politics dressed in religious terminology. Also, there is a large Jewish community in Hollywood, and Christians don't have a spotless record when it comes to anti-Semitism. These Jewish filmmakers have understandable reasons to be afraid of institutionalized Christianity. This fear influences the attitudes of Hollywood.

Did evangelicals overreact to the film *The Last Temptation of Christ* a number of years ago?

It's too easy simply to criticize Hollywood for producing films that aren't culturally or spiritually sensitive. For example, consider how Bill Bright's organization, Campus Crusade for Christ, uses the *Jesus* film in cultures that have never seen films before. I've watched video footage of little children

viewing the *Jesus* film. We may say, "Look at the emotion in these children and look how the film is moving them." But just remove the religious context of Jesus being nailed to the cross and you're left with a film about a man being tortured—something we are appalled at if Hollywood shows our children. I am not saying we should never use the *Jesus* film. The point is it's easy to be insensitive when crossing cultures, whether from Christian America to Pakistan or from Hollywood to the evangelical community.

The much-publicized attempt by Bill Bright to buy the negatives for *Last Temptation* was interpreted by folks in Hollywood as a slap in the face to their integrity. To them it implied: "You people are just whores, and the only thing you care about is money—so here's the money."

What do you think of Christians boycotting Disney?

I think boycotts like this have very little long-term effect. Disney is having a very successful year, even with the current boycott. Furthermore, I know from experience that heavy-handed techniques build resistance in Hollywood. They feel they will lose their integrity if they bow to that kind of pressure.

On a more personal level, they also wonder what the Bible has to do with such arm-twisting. Our theologians may justify it, but the nuances are lost on the executives of the entertainment industry. I remember during *The Last Temptation of Christ* I was working with Universal Television, and thousands of people began picketing outside our studios. For us inside, it was frightening. I remember driving with a friend through a crowd of people who were shoving placards with "John 3:16" written on them in front of our car. These were Christians, but believe me, they didn't look very loving. My friend, who was not a Christian and was a producer for *Equalizer*, turned to me and said, "I would hate these people if I didn't know you."

What are Hollywood's faults?

Hollywood is guilty of ugly and cheap stereotypes of people of faith. If they tried those stereotypes with sexual orientation or gender or race, they would be justifiably castigated. It goes all the way back to *Elmer Gantry* (1960), which was a watershed film of that sort. There's a current example of this in the movie *Contact*. It's a very good film overall, but who is it that's destroying all the scientific work that has been built up in order to contact this civilization in Vega? A Christian fanatic. These are cheap, easy villains for Hollywood to deal with. It is unconscionable for them to stereotype us in this way.



Screenwriter Coleman Luck: "The only forms of Christianity Hollywood understands are Catholicism and right-wing conservative politics dressed in religious terminology."

DAVID JOHANSON



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You Are Who You Eat With

A kosher keeper teaches us about the religious meaning of food.



Miriam's Kitchen: A Memoir, by Elizabeth Ehrlich (Viking, 370 pp.; \$24.95, hardcover). Reviewed by Lauren F. Winner, Kellett Scholar at Clare College, Cambridge University.

On occasion, I have joked to my boyfriend Andrew that our grandchildren will do things—culinary things—that they will not understand. They will have long forgotten—if in fact they ever knew—why they make braided whole wheat loaves every Friday, and why they eat meringues around Easter. For although I have, in becoming Christian, put aside most of the symbols and accouterments of my Jewish childhood, the ones that will not go are related to the kitchen. I have folded up and tucked away my prayer shawl, donated my *Mikraot Gedolot* to a local synagogue, taken to driving on Saturdays, removed the *mezuzah* from my doorpost. But I still bake challah every Friday afternoon, and I still concoct the crisp, unleavened cookies every Passover. It does not make any sense. Often I am not even home on Friday night to eat this challah, and it gets turned into French toast for

Sunday brunch after church. But baking that bread is almost as automatic as brushing my teeth.

I have given Andrew *Miriam's Kitchen* to read. In fact, whatever the book's weaknesses, I felt as if it were a godsend. Literally. I have been praying that Andrew will somehow come to understand something he does not: not just why I continue to bake challah, but why my father, a good cultural Jew, is so distraught that I have become an Anglican and that therefore his descendants will not be Jewish. Why he is so troubled that his daughter is dating the son of a priest. Why I quietly fumble with the clasp at my neck and slip my cross into the pocket of my jeans when I pull into my father's driveway.

"But he doesn't believe any of it," wails Andrew. "So why does he care?" I cannot really explain why he cares any better than I can explain why I insist on eating mediocre cookies that send my cholesterol skyrocketing every spring. *Miriam's Kitchen* will explain it.

Elizabeth Ehrlich will probably be surprised that among her most vociferous cheerleaders is a *mumar*, the rabbinic term for Jews turned apostates. For her book is not a story about a movement away from Judaism, but about just the opposite. *Miriam's Kitchen* chronicles Ehrlich's struggles to keep a kosher kitchen. Along the way, she enrolls her children in Jewish day school, begins attending synagogue, and goes to the *mikvah*, the ritual bath that observant Jewish women go to every month, a week after their period ends. So keeping a kosher kitchen is the metaphor that conveys Ehrlich's growing—if at times ambivalent—commitment to observant Judaism, but it is also an end in itself.

To observe *kashrut*—the Jewish dietary laws—is to be reminded every day that the mundane mingles with the sacred. Keeping kosher, you really do sometimes feel as though you've sanctified this most basic aspect of daily life in a way that no brief grace

before meals can manage to accomplish. But keeping kosher is also a colossal pain in the neck.

The dietary laws find their origins in the Old Testament, in Leviticus and Deuteronomy. Fish must have fins and scales, otherwise they are *tref*—not kosher. No scallops, shrimp, lobster, mussels, or crabs. Land animals must have cloven hooves and chew their cud. No pigs or rabbits. Also no birds of prey, no snails, no creepy-crawly insects.

"You shall not boil a kid in its mother's milk," says Deuteronomy 14:21, and through the centuries of rabbinic exegesis that verse came to dictate a complete separation of all dairy products from all meat products. No cheeseburgers or chicken parmesan—but also no eating a steak on a plate that once held a grilled cheese sandwich.

The four best pages in *Miriam's Kitchen* come early on, where Ehrlich tells us "How to Keep a Kosher Kitchen":



You need a lot of things. Meat dishes, dairy dishes, coffee cups two ways. You need ladles for cream soup and ladles for beef stew, knives for steak and knives for butter. A cutting board for cheese, and a different one for turkey. You need a lot of cupboards if you're going to have a kosher kitchen. . . . The pots have their essences. These cannot be denied. Cook vegetable soup in a meat pot, and that soup itself becomes practically *fleyschik*, a thing of flesh. You must eat it with a *fleyschik* spoon. You may not dust it with grated cheese. That soup is branded by its provenance, until the end, the moldy end two weeks from now in a plastic container marked MEAT. If you want a soup to be neutral, neither dairy nor meat, you'd better have a separate pot that you call *pareve*, and a ladle and a stirrer and containers to match. It's not utensils only. You need distinctive tools to clean with. You can't use the sponge that wiped out sour cream at luncheon to scrub beef drippings from the broiler pan that night. You need a separate meat sponge for the broiler pan. While you're at it, get another broiler pan.

Does Ehrlich really want to do all this? "It's a lot of work," she notes. "Who wants a kosher kitchen? I do. I mean I might. I'm thinking maybe I'll try."

Food, and rituals surrounding its preparation and consumption, are central to most religions. I was not surprised when, a few weeks before I was baptized,

my priest told me that in the early church nonbaptized folks could attend church but had to leave before the Eucharist. And although in 1997 I was permitted to stay in the church while my baptized neighbors received Holy Communion, it is still the act of eating that separates the

insiders from the outsiders: eating the bread that makes all believers one body.

For food is not merely about nourishment, nor about delighting in a favorite salmon mousse or chocolate torte. The Jewish dietary laws regulate not only what goes into your body, but, de facto, who else you put it in with. The most strict observers of *kashrut*

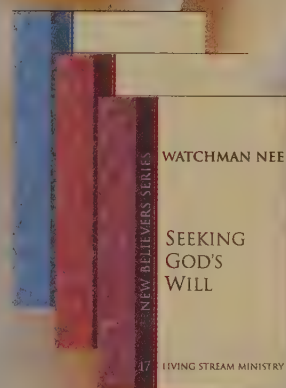
would not eat at any nonkosher restaurant, nor would they do more than sip a glass of water or maybe munch an apple in the home of someone whose observance of the dietary laws did not meet their standards.

Elizabeth Ehrlich knows that it is this, and not the annoyance of having three sets of dishes, that is the hardest part of keeping kosher. "I want to be of the world," she says. She does not want to make a nuisance of herself at her friends' dinner parties, asking only for a salad. She is somewhat gratified and somewhat disconcerted when, at a Christmas fete, her five-year-old son pipes up, "Is the chicken kosher?"

On the day that she is helping her parents pack to move, the neighbor, Mrs. Henderson, prepares for Elizabeth's family a pot roast, some stringed beans and mashed potatoes, and peach cobbler. "I thought you folks would be starving," Mrs. Henderson says. "Probably nothing to eat at home. . . . Moving day is like that." The roast, of course, is *tref*. The peach cobbler probably contains butter and was baked in a dish that once held shepherd's pie. The string beans might have been cooked with a bit of bacon for flavor. "I don't want the burden of a Jewish palate," writes Ehrlich, "if this drives a wedge between . . . me" and Mrs. Henderson.

I have always thought that of all Jesus' shockingly radical acts, the most radical was breaking bread with those people he should not have been eating with. Ehrlich agrees:

Kashrut, I believe, gave Jesus his great opening. He ate with the common people in their homes, when other learned teachers wouldn't. Poor folk might not have had enough



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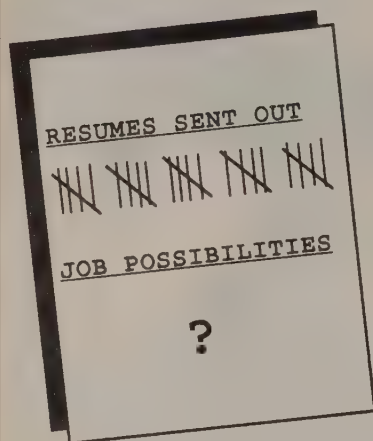
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wooden bowls, ceramic vessels, and cooking implements to adhere perfectly to dietary laws. They might not have enough knowledge or resources to make their kitchens kosher enough for the standards of a truly learned man. Jesus swallowed his own squeamishness, perhaps, sat down and broke bread. You can get to heaven without all of this, he taught. I can see the appeal.

Memoirs have begun to run together a bit these days, and Ehrlich's bears the marks of the newly popular genre. Those writing memoirs about religious journeys are handed a very useful way to structure their books: the calendar. It was according to rhythms of the church calendar that Kathleen Norris structured *The Cloister Walk*, as did Frederica Mathewes-Green in *Facing East*. So too Elizabeth Ehrlich in writing *Miriam's Kitchen*, which starts and ends in September, the month in which Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, usually falls.

Miriam's Kitchen could also be placed in the subgenre of literary food writing. Ehrlich is no M. F. K. Fisher, but we do get treated to a few recipes in each chapter—her grandmother's chocolate sour cream cake, her mother-in-law's *lukshn mit leybern* (chicken liver with noodles), fried cauliflower, and apple cake. (Ehrlich wisely leaves off those hallmarks of contemporary recipes, the notations of calories and fat content, knowing that Miriam's pineapple chocolate-chip cake and potato latkes probably wouldn't make the cut.)

This isn't a book to read straight through at one sitting. It is episodic, each chapter comprising a series of shorter reflections (again, like Norris's *Cloister Walk*). Every kitchen I have ever been in in Ehrlich's Westchester County is equipped with a modest telephone desk in the kitchen, and one can envision Ehrlich sitting down at her kitchen desk in between kashering her silverware and stirring a great pot of soup to jot down her reflections on whether or not it really matters that her knives and spoons have been scrubbed clean and then boiled, whether it was worth the bright red burn she had just acquired on her thumb from handling those too-hot forks, whether the rabbis who dreamed up all of these rules and regulations ever themselves set foot in a kitchen.

But *Miriam's Kitchen* is not merely a gathering of loosely connected reflections. It is the record of a quest. Elizabeth Ehrlich is different from most of the

kosher-keeping Jews I know. She is doing it neither because she grew up doing it and therefore feels guilty every time she's tempted to eat a piece of pepperoni pizza, nor because she believes that God revealed the commandments, and their rabbinically elaborated minutiae, to Moses on Mount Sinai.

In fact, Ehrlich is not even sure she believes in God, period. She waffles. She hopes her friends, who "serve secular humanism at mealtime," will not ask. She would be a little embarrassed to admit that she, sophisticated daughter of a solidly Marxist, atheist Jewish father, might, maybe, believe in God.

And Ehrlich certainly does not experience herself as being in a commanded, covenantal relationship with this God who may or may not exist. She conveniently translates *mitzvah*—commandment—as "good deed," which makes the whole thing more palatable: God's commands become those that make sense to us, like tithing, and we neglect those that don't make as much sense, such as refraining from flicking light switches on the Sabbath.

Ehrlich even found a way to transform the dietary laws from commandments that are *prima facie* inexplicable into good deeds that make sense in the nineties:

If you are going to slaughter an animal for food, respect it. Never forget that it lived and breathed, a mammal like yourself. Here is a way of reminding, respecting—eat the animal separate from the milk. Thus the tradition comes to terms with human appetite, but demands consciousness. And I had come of age in vegetarian times.

She will try observing these laws, she says. A trial run of keeping her meat dishes separate from her dairies. "So far with no sense of obligation, no sense of commandment. I will recite prayers, but to What or Whom?"

So if Elizabeth Ehrlich is not motivated by guilt, and she is not motivated by a sense of being commanded, then what pushes her forward in this quest to go to synagogue and light Friday night candles and root out clams from her kitchen?

It was, initially, symbolic. The thought of feeding her "new, pristine" babies hamburger and milk just didn't sit well. Then, as Ehrlich learned that keeping kosher involved a lot more than merely serving her kids juice when they ate burgers, she learned that her motives went beyond the aesthetic. "It wasn't about dishes, or law, or a way of life. It was only

a way of feeling. Without any particular sense of obligation, I felt Jewish, I felt a valuable if occasional differentness, and I wanted to pass that on. I wanted my children to eat stuffed cabbage, then yearn for strudel, not ice cream or flan."

That is what *Miriam's Kitchen* will ex-

plain to my boyfriend. Along the way, it might also explain to him why my father is sad. And it will challenge even those of us, secure in our faith, who think we may not have very much to learn from a Jewish woman in Westchester and her "wishy-washy version of deism." **CI**

There's More to Church than Proclamation

Wolfhart Pannenberg's sacramental theology.

Systematic Theology, Vol. 3, by Wolfhart Pannenberg (Eerdmans, 640 pp.; \$49, hardcover). Reviewed by Donald G. Bloesch, emeritus professor of theology, University of Dubuque Theological Seminary. His book *Jesus Christ: Savior and Lord (InterVarsity)* is the fourth volume in a projected seven-volume systematic theology.

In this third volume of his much-acclaimed *Systematic Theology*, Wolfhart Pannenberg gives an in-depth treatment of the doctrines of the church, the sacraments, and the kingdom of God. He presents a high view of the church, regarding it as the locus of the Holy Spirit's action in relating those who believe to Jesus Christ, but he is adamant that the church not be confounded with the kingdom of God. The church is an anticipation and sign of the perfect fellowship of love that belongs to the eschatological consummation. The church does not build the kingdom, nor does the church control the salvific action of the Spirit in the preaching of the Word and the celebration of the sacraments. In a

Barthian manner, Pannenberg steadfastly holds that God alone builds his kingdom, but the church can witness to this fact. He is deeply critical of liberation theology for calling Christians to bring in the kingdom through revolutionary political action.

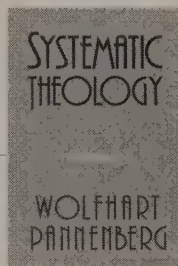
The catholic side of Pannenberg's thought is particularly prominent in his discussion of the sacraments. He vigorously defends baptismal regeneration and the real presence of Christ in Communion. "In baptism there takes place our regeneration by the Holy Spirit." He also contends in a way that will invite criticism from evangelicals that, without baptism, faith in the gospel "is not yet saving faith in the full sense." At the same time, he is convinced that baptism without faith cannot effect salvation and that personal confession belongs to the act of baptism. He is also insistent that conversion to Christ is a prerequisite for sharing in the Lord's Supper.

Throughout this work Pannenberg engages in dialogue with Roman Catholi-

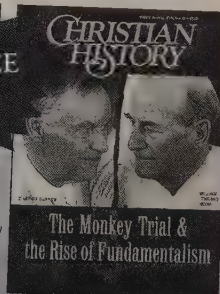
cism and tries to build bridges wherever he can. He acknowledges that the doctrine of justification as enunciated in the Council of Trent, where justification becomes a lifelong process of inward purification, is in basic conflict with the Reformation discovery of justification as the gratuitous act by which God grants us remission of sins. Yet he commends Trent for associating justification with baptism, since baptism effects our entry into the mystical body of Christ. He is willing to make a

place for apostolic succession and papal leadership among Christians. He entertains the possibility that the Petrine office of the bishop of Rome could become "a visible sign of the unity of the whole church to the degree that by theological reinterpretation and practical restructuring the office is subordinated to the primacy of the gospel."

In the area of eschatology, he sees no guarantee of an ultimate universal reconciliation, though he is firm in his hope of a cosmic renewal of the world that will include the vast mass of humanity. He



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allows for the threat of eternal damnation and hell and even makes a place for purgatory, though not as an intermediate state for departed souls whose fate is partly in the hands of the church. He strives to hold together an open future in which real decisions can be made and confidence in the God who moves and guides history toward its final destination. He rejects the millennial idea of a special lordship of Christ in salvation history that will be superseded by the lordship of the Father.

Pannenberg is critical of the idea prevalent in Catholic mysticism that Christian love primarily concerns our relationship to God and only secondarily our relationship to our neighbor insofar as that person reflects God's love. Agape love means that God loves us for our own sakes and we love our neighbors for their own sakes. Yet Pannenberg wishes also to allow a positive role for eros love, maintaining that such love can lead to the worship of the Creator. There is no antithesis between eros and agape, for we can assume that Christian love is present in many forms of eros.

One can discern a rationalizing thrust in Pannenberg, though at the same time a

respect for mystery and transcendence. He is critical of those who describe faith as the sacrifice of the intellect since real faith is based on knowledge of the gospel and assent to the fact of the resurrection. Faith involves both belief and trust (*fidelucia*), but the essence of faith is the latter. Pannenberg's conversation partners in this book from the side of philosophy are Hegel and Kant. There is scant mention of Pascal and Kierkegaard, who are decidedly more reserved concerning the role of philosophy in theology.

Pannenberg can be appreciated for seeking to maintain the biblical and historical moorings of the faith. He is committed to the faith affirmations of the Reformation, yet he is ready to subject these affirmations to the higher criterion of Holy Scripture. He is remarkably open to the wisdom of the Catholic church through the ages but makes clear that his loyalty is to the church of the Reformation so long as that church remains open to reform in the light of Scripture. He sees the church as a creation of the Spirit as well as of the Word, claiming that an emphasis on the Word alone can lead to "a theocracy of proclamation." He rightly stands against current theological eude-

monism in his contention that faith frees us from a striving for our own happiness.

Some evangelicals, including this author, will raise the question whether Pannenberg's theology could lead to a new sacramentalism and ritualism that would subordinate the Word to the sacraments. Is the spiritual reality present in the sign, as he maintains, or does not the transcendent reality break into the sign and the sacramental celebration from the beyond? Does the sacrament effect what it signifies, or does not the Spirit of God reach out to us through the sacramental sign?

Pannenberg can say that in baptism and the Lord's Supper the sign is not distinct from what it signifies, but this is to bind the freedom of God to the rites of the church in a way that compromises the biblical doctrine of divine sovereignty. It also denies the infinite qualitative difference between the divine and the creaturely.

Such questions need to be pursued in depth, and Pannenberg's work clearly merits that level of engagement. Its publication in English translation is particularly timely, given the ecumenical dialogue that is now going on in evangelical circles as well as in the mainline churches. **CI**

Romero Outside the Box

The archbishop's homilies reveal a heroic biblical witness rather than the poster boy of liberation theology.

The Violence of Love, by Oscar Romero; compiled and translated by James R. Brockman; foreword by Henri Nouwen (Plough, 216 pp.; \$14, paper). Reviewed by John Wilson.

On April 26, 1998, Bishop Juan José Gerardi was murdered in Guatemala, beaten to death with a concrete block, his head smashed in. Gerardi had just released a massive report on human-rights abuses during Guatemala's 36-year-long civil war.

Bishop Gerardi's death brings to mind another killing in Central America: the murder of Archbishop Oscar Romero of San Salvador on March 24, 1980. Romero, like Gerardi, was compelled by his faith to speak the truth, even at the cost of his life. Named as archbishop in 1977,

Romero often denounced the selfishness of El Salvador's wealthy elite and the wanton brutality of its death squads. He defended the right of the poor to rise up against their oppressors—but he was also quick to condemn the excesses of the leftist guerrillas and their materialistic, Marxist dogmas. Above all, he was a witness to the love of Christ.

The Violence of Love, drawn mostly from Romero's homilies, is not a book of fully developed sermons but rather a gathering of pithy exhortations. Romero's words are simple but powerful, and the compiler and translator, James Brockman, has arranged many of the entries like poems on the page:

There can be no true liberation
until people are freed from sin.

All the liberationist groups that spring
up in our land
should bear this in mind.
The first liberation to be proposed
by a political group
that truly wants the people's
liberation
must be to free oneself from sin.
While one is a slave of sin—
of selfishness, violence, cruelty,
and hatred—
one is not fitted for the people's
liberation.
MARCH 2, 1980

As this passage suggests, those who portray Romero as a convert to liberation theology are guilty of distorting his witness. The Romero who is a hero to many on the Left is a Romero created in their own image. But that does not give the Right an excuse to gloat. Why is it that we virtually never hear Romero mentioned in "conservative" quarters? Could it be that his message is simply too uncomfortable for many American Christians? For Christians of every stripe, whatever our political instincts, whatever our faith community, *The Violence of Love* is a challenge to be attentive to the Spirit's leading. **CI**

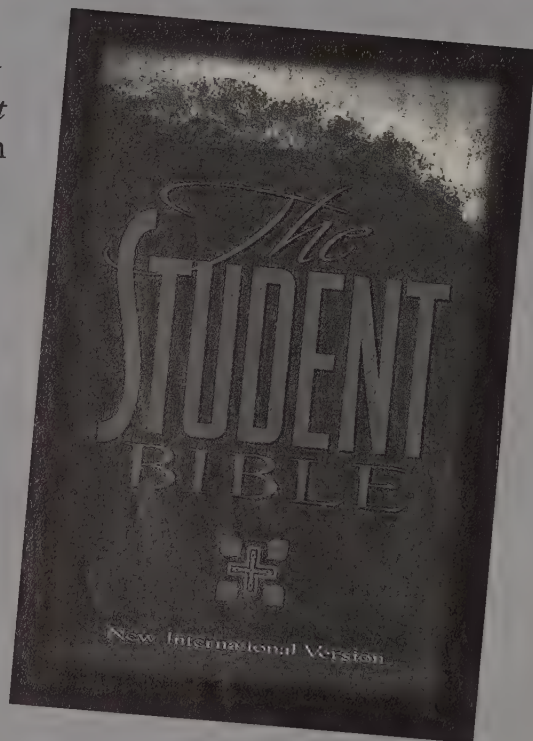


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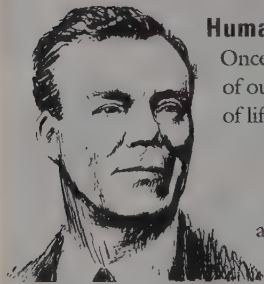
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Human "Rights"

Once and for all, we must put out of our minds that the purpose of life here is to enjoy ourselves to have a good time to be happy to make money and to live in ease and comfort. That is not what life is all about.

You were put here for a purpose, and that purpose is not related to superficial pleasures.

No one owes you a living—not your parents, not your government, not life itself.

You do not have a right to happiness.

You have a right to nothing.

I believe that God wants us to be happy—but it is not a matter of our *right*, but of His *love and mercy*.

—Peter Marshall in John Doe, Disciple

Living Faith

It is your living faith in the adequacy of the One who is *in you*, which releases His divine action *through you*.

—W. Ian Thomas in
The Saving Life of Christ

Too Much of a Good Thing

Vanity is a subtle temptation to all of us. At first we may be ever so humble and unobtrusive, but success and substance can replace lowliness of heart with a lofty lordliness; when life becomes sweet with some honey of honor or harvest we are to take heed lest we take too much for ourselves.

—V. Raymond Edman in
Sweeter Than Honey

Worse Than Ignorance

[T]hough one may be a competent art critic without ever having handled a brush or a chisel, and may legitimately

pass judgment upon a book which one could not have written oneself, in the life of the soul there are no such privileges: there is no knowledge at all unless it is also and equally action, and if it is not that, then it is worse than ignorance.

—John Baillis in
A Diary of Ressling

Opposing Agendas

Our agenda is to fix the world until it can properly take care of us. God's agenda is to bring all things together in Christ until every knee bows before him.

—Larry Crabb in
Finding God

Cooperation with God

If God has left some things contingent on man's *thinking* and *working* why may he not have left some things contingent on man's *praying*? The testimony of the great souls is

a clear affirmative to this: some things never without thinking; some things never without working; some things never without praying! Prayer is one of the *three forms of man's cooperation with God*.

—Harry Emerson Fosdick in
The Meaning of Prayer

Just Ask

Heaven is full of answers to prayers for which no one ever bothered to ask.

—Billy Graham, quoted in
Encounter Weekly online

God's Dwelling

Do you wish to pray in the temple? Pray in your own heart. But begin by being God's temple, for He will listen to those who invoke Him in His temple.

—Saint Augustine in
Johann. Evang., tract XV.6

I'm Okay? You're Okay?

We sit at the piano of life and insist that every note we strike is right—because we struck it.

We justify want of faith by saying, "I don't go to church, but I am better than those who do"; as one might say, "I don't pay taxes or serve the

nation, but I am better than those who do."

If each man is his own judge and standard, then who shall say he is wrong?

—Fulton Sheen in
Peace of Soul

Still in School

Our growth in prayer may be to us the test of our growth in all other respects. "Lord, teach us to pray," is a prayer for the young beginner and for the more advanced disciple; it is a suitable petition for us all, for we have none of us yet learned to the full the sacred art of supplication.

—Charles H. Spurgeon in
Let It Begin with Me

Old Math

God is not found in the soul by adding anything, but by a process of subtraction.

—Meister Eckhart, quoted in
Sacred Moments

God's View

Delight is keener, suffering is richer, thought is more exciting, love and friendship are deeper, steadier in the long perspective of God.

—Barbara Spofford Morgan in
Skeptics' Search for God



"They put it in after your sermon on temptation."

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EAGLE BOOK CLUBS, INC., a division of Eagle Publishing, owns and operates three negative-option book clubs: Conservative Book Club, Christian Family Book Club, and Movie/Entertainment Book Club. We are looking for a number of talented individuals to join our team and help us continue our dramatic growth. We are located on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC, near Union Station. Marketing Director: We are looking for a hard-charging, experienced direct marketer to lead our marketing efforts for the Christian Family Book Club. Direct marketing (8+ years), book club, and Christian market experience are required. Duties will include: managing the marketing staff, all acquisition marketing activity, including results analysis, back-end marketing programs that maximize lifetime value, and meeting budgeted goals. Position reports to the general manager of Eagle Book Clubs, Inc. Please send or fax résumé and salary history to: Eagle Book Clubs, Attn: B. Lewis, One Massachusetts Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20001, or fax: (202) 216-0614.

THRIVING EVANGELICAL CHURCH, over 2,000 in attendance in eight years, looking for energetic, spirit-led worship director. Our emphasis is on Bible teaching and participatory singing. We want to sing as though we are at Promise Keepers. If you have the proven ability to lead a congregation in worshiping exuberantly, please apply. If you can demonstrate this, please send videotape. Contact Steve Evisz at (513) 459-0800 ext. 317 or email: steve@hope-church.org

WE ARE AN EVANGELICAL and conservatively charismatic church of 250+ people who seek a well-qualified individual for a full-time position as Pastor of Youth. This person should have a passion for ministry to youth and a vision for enabling them to grow toward mature Christian adulthood. This person must meet the qualifications of an elder and work well with a "team approach" to ministry. Interested individuals should send inquiries and résumés to: Youth Pastor Search Committee, Grace Covenant Church, 4502 Starkey Road, Suite 5, Roanoke, VA 24014.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

PASTOR OF CELL MINISTRIES

Northern Indianapolis C&MA church is transitioning to a purpose-driven cell paradigm. Area is 78% unchurched, state's fastest growing and highest per capita income. Candidate must have experience in cell-group ministry, strong relational and outreach skills, and be a team player. Send résumé to Pastor Tom Brunner, Hope Church, 2500 E. 98th St., Indianapolis, IN 46280; fax: (317) 846-6836; www.hopechurchindy.com

DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S EDUCATION The Church of the Holy Spirit, located in Virginia's Roanoke Valley, is a growing 500+ member evangelical Episcopal church with a young congregation and a plethora of children. We are in search of an experienced individual who can take our children's ministry to the highest level possible. A master's degree in Christian education or a related field is preferable. Must be a born-again believer with proven leadership and organizational skills coupled with superior creativity. Send résumé to DCE Search Committee, The Church of the Holy Spirit, P.O. Box 21038, Roanoke, VA 24018 prior to August 31.

FULL-TIME CHILDREN'S PASTOR

First Baptist Church of Everett, WA, a multi-staffed, evangelical congregation, is seeking a person with gifts and passion to oversee a ministry to children in nursery through 5th grade. Send résumé to: Search Committee, 1616 Pacific Ave., Everett, WA 98201 or e-mail: bharpell@fbc-everett.org

CHURCH BUSINESS MANAGER

Noroton Presbyterian Church, a large, vibrant congregation in western Connecticut, seeks business manager for financial and properties management. Must live in the greater New York/CT area. Send résumé to: Dr. George Cladis, Noroton Presbyterian Church, P.O. Box 3401, Darien, CT 06820.

CHRISTIAN WEB SITE design company seeks independent acct. reps to sell our Internet services. High commission, flex hrs. Box 8022, Saddle Brook, NJ 07663.

SENIOR PASTOR

Far Hills Baptist Church is the largest Southern Baptist Church in Ohio with 8 full-time ministers and a weekly attendance of over 1,500. Our vision is to build a church that makes a difference in the lives of individuals, the community, and the world by using the most effective traditional and innovative approaches for making disciples. Having purchased 40 acres in a prime location, we are preparing to grow into the 21st century. We are seeking a senior pastor who is a gifted biblical preacher with strong communication skills and a proven leader with a passion for reaching the unchurched. Please send résumé to: Far Hills Baptist Church, Attn: Pastor Search Committee, 5200 Far Hills Ave., Dayton, OH 45429.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

SENIOR PASTOR

Pastor needed for Pacific-Islands Bible Church. (Nondenominational, evangelical, 200 people.) Send résumé, pictures, and audio/video tapes to: 95-075 Waikalani Drive, Mililani, HI 96789.

FACULTY POSITION

Evangelism and Global Mission Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary is seeking a faculty member to teach in the areas of evangelism and global mission. This person will occupy the William A. Benfield Professorship of Evangelism and Global Mission. Applicants should have a Ph.D. or comparable degree in missiology or another appropriate field of theological study. Applications will also be considered from degree candidates who are in the final stages of their work. Applications from women and from minority racial-ethnic candidates are especially encouraged. This person will be expected to teach M.Div., M.A., M.A.C.E., M.A.M.F.T., Th.M., and D.Min. students. This faculty member should be able to relate the history and theology of evangelism and global mission to contemporary issues confronting the church's witness in the United States and other parts of the world. Parish experience in this country and/or in other countries is strongly desirable. This person should have a strong interest in preparing candidates for the Christian ministry. This person should be committed to helping students understand the church's evangelical and ecumenical calling and to relating evangelism and global mission with other areas of theological curriculum. Rank is negotiable on the basis of experience; appointment will begin in the fall of 1999. Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary follows EEO guidelines and affirmative action procedures. Send dossiers and a list of references to President John M. Mulder, 1044 Alta Vista Road, Louisville, KY 40205. Deadline: October 1, 1998.

MINISTRY POSITION AVAILABLE. Associate Pastor of Music and Ministry Development, Mansfield Baptist Church, Port Murray, NJ; (908) 689-3272, fax: (908) 689-3280. Call for job description.

PASTOR OF COMMUNITY LIFE

Village Church of Gurnee, a fast-growing church of 1,300+, is looking for an experienced pastor who has a vision and passion for developing community through small groups and for developing a biblically based lay counseling ministry. We are an evangelical church in a growing far northern suburb of Chicago that is making a conscious shift to become a church "of" small groups. Skills needed: Proven ministry experience; strong leader who is gifted in shepherding, training, team building, vision casting, counseling, and equipping lay counselors. M.Div. and five years ministry experience preferred. Send résumé to: Village Church of Gurnee, Box 110, 1319 N. Hunt Club Road, Gurnee, IL 60031.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

FACULTY POSITION

Westminster Theological Seminary, Box 27009, Philadelphia, PA 19118. Westminster Theological Seminary announces an opening in the Department of Practical Theology with a specialty in missions. This is a full-time, tenure-track position that begins July 1, 1999. Responsibilities include teaching M.Div., M.A.R., and graduate-level (D.Min.) courses (14-16 semester hours per academic year), and various committee assignments. Applicants should have an earned doctoral degree and show strong evidence of scholarly writing and quality teaching. Commitment to biblical inerrancy, Reformed theology, and Presbyterian church government, as shown by subscription to the Westminster Standards and significant involvement in the life of a Presbyterian or Reformed church, is required. All qualified applicants are urged to apply. Salary will be commensurate with rank. Candidates are urged to send curriculum vitae with name and address of two references immediately. Contact Dr. William Barker, Vice President for Academic Affairs.

PRIEST ASSOCIATE

Lively, loving Episcopal church seeks FT priest associate to equip congregation for ministry, especially youth, eventually adults also. Oversight responsible for youth and education, assist rector in worship. Must be ordained or soon to be. Life experience desirable. Send app. letter & résumé to: D. McKnight, Messiah Episcopal, 1631 Ford Pkwy., St. Paul, MN 55116.

SENIOR PASTOR

Small, independent evangelical church seeks a senior pastor. Primary doctrinal statement is the Baptist Confession of 1689. Amillennial, contemporary worship style, noncessationist with respect to the gifts of the Spirit. Compensation package very competitive and based on experience. Send résumé to: Search Committee, 104 Leicester Terrace, Hampton, VA 23666.

BOOKSTORE MANAGER

Covenant Bookstore, Chicago, IL. Combination Christian retail and university bookstore seeks manager with experience in book buying and returns, gift buying, inventory management, marketing and promotions, motivating and training employees, and excellent customer service. Medical insurance and other benefits. Compensation commensurate with skill level and experience. Direct letter of application and résumé to: Don Meyer, Evangelical Covenant Church, 5101 N. Francisco Avenue, Chicago, IL 60625; fax: (773) 784-4366.

PASTOR OF CHILDREN & FAMILY MINISTRIES

Do you have a heart for children and a strong vision for developing ministries for children and families? Do you have a passion to shepherd, train, and develop children's ministry leaders and workers? Village Church of Gurnee, a fast-growing church of 1,300+, is looking for an experienced pastor to give overall leadership to our children's ministry directors and shepherd 160+ leaders and workers. We are an evangelical church in a growing northern Illinois community that ministers to many young families. Skills needed: proven ministry experience; strong leader who is gifted in shepherding, team building, and teaching. M.Div. and five years ministry experience preferred. Send résumé to: Village Church of Gurnee, Box 310, 1319 N. Hunt Club Road, Gurnee, IL 60031.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

DIRECTOR OF CELEBRATION MINISTRIES sought for a growing, nondenominational, evangelical church in Albany, NY. Qualified applicants should have keen administrative abilities, an ability and a desire to create and mobilize multiple teams of lead worshipers, be highly relational in leadership style, and have proven experience as a worship leader. Will need to recruit, train, and oversee volunteer personnel, coordinate and be involved in multiple subministries while planning and implementing expansion of celebration ministries. Negotiable salary. Please send a video sample of your worship leading along with a résumé to: Dave Triller, c/o Grace Fellowship, 3 Cerone Commercial Dr., Albany, NY 12205.

DIRECTOR OF YOUTH MINISTRIES

Village Seven Presbyterian Church, Colorado Springs, CO, is seeking an energetic, visionary, committed, and highly motivated person as Director of Youth Ministries to guide and aid young people in growing and developing mentally, physically, and spiritually. Ministry program will support the purpose statement of the church: "We envision Village Seven Presbyterian Church to be a life-giving and reproducing church according to the Word of God and for His glory." Elements of this vision are worshiping, teaching, nurturing, praying, and reaching. Candidates must have a strong Reformed faith with previous experience in a successful youth program. This is an exciting opportunity in a large growing church at the foot of Pikes Peak in the Colorado Rockies. Send résumé and ministry data form to: Mr. William C. Stephens, Director of Administration, Village Seven Presbyterian Church, 4050 Nonchalant Circle S., Colorado Springs, CO 80917.

FACULTY POSITION

Westminster Theological Seminary, Box 27009, Philadelphia, PA 19118. Westminster Theological Seminary announces an opening in the Department of Systematic Theology. This is a full-time, tenure-track position that begins July 1, 1999. Responsibilities include teaching M.Div., M.A.R., and graduate-level (Th.M, Ph.D.) courses (14-16 semester hours per academic year), and various committee assignments. Applicants must hold the Ph.D./Th.D. or be in the final stages of doctoral work and show strong evidence of scholarly writing and quality teaching. Commitment to biblical inerrancy, Reformed theology and Presbyterian church government, as shown by subscription to the Westminster Standards and significant involvement in the life of a Presbyterian or Reformed church, is required. All qualified applicants are urged to apply. Salary will be commensurate with rank. Candidates are urged to send curriculum vitae with name and address of two references immediately. Contact Dr. William Barker, Vice President for Academic Affairs.

ACADEMIC BOOK MARKETING SPECIALIST

One of the world's largest Christian publishers is seeking a Marketing Specialist responsible for developing, implementing, and managing the overall marketing promotion and sales strategies for all Broadman & Holman academic books. Bachelor's degree required with a specialization in marketing, advertising, or communications. Seminary degree a plus. If qualified and interested, mail or fax your résumé to: LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention, Human Resources Dept., MSN 121, 127 9th Ave. North, Nashville, TN 37234-0121; fax: (615) 251-5017.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

DIRECTOR OF YOUTH sought for 1,700+ member Lutheran congregation in near west suburban Chicago to serve teens through relational ministry. Please send letter of inquiry and résumé to: Youth Director Search Committee, Grace Lutheran Church, 7300 W. Division, River Forest, IL 60305.

FACULTY POSITION

Westminster Theological Seminary, Box 27009, Philadelphia, PA 19118. Westminster Theological Seminary announces an opening in the Department of Old Testament. This is a full-time, tenure-track position that begins July 1, 1999. Responsibilities include teaching M.Div., M.A.R., Th.M., and Ph.D. courses and various committee assignments. Applicants must hold the Ph.D./Th.D. or be in the final stages of doctoral work and show strong evidence of scholarly writing and quality teaching. Commitment to biblical inerrancy, Reformed theology and Presbyterian church government, as shown by subscription to the Westminster Standards and significant involvement in the life of a Presbyterian or Reformed church, is required. All qualified applicants are urged to apply. Salary will be commensurate with rank. Candidates are urged to send curriculum vitae with name and address of two references immediately. Contact Dr. William Barker, Vice President for Academic Affairs.

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PASTOR OF ADULT EDUCATION

Village Church of Gurnee, a fast-growing church of 1,300+, is committed to developing an intentional process for discipleship, opportunities for spiritual gift discovery, various adult educational opportunities, and programs for leadership development. We are looking for an experienced pastor with an exceptional passion for developing mature Christians and effective leaders. He will build and lead teams of ministry directors who will develop these areas. Skills needed: Proven ministry experience; strong leader who is gifted in teaching and administration; solid theological understanding of Christian growth and ministry. M.Div. and five years ministry experience preferred. We are an evangelical church in a growing northern suburb of Chicago. Send résumé to: Village Church of Gurnee, Box 210, 1319 N. Hunt Club Road, Gurnee, IL 60031.

SEEK ENERGETIC, enthusiastic, creative, proven leader to pastor a visionary congregation with a challenging opportunity to expand with a booming community. Send PIF to Phil Carmack, Big Cove PC, Camp Ground Road, Brownsboro, AL 35741.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

YOUTH MINISTER

Help Jr. High, Sr. High, and college students develop faith in Jesus, a growing understanding of Scripture, and healthy relationships. Applicant needs relational, communication, teaching, and organizational skills. Contact First Baptist Church, 1340 K St., Lincoln, NE 68508; phone: (402) 477-4198 or e-mail: LincolnFBC@aol.com

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 - Theatre Department Chair (MFA required)
- Send vita to Daniel C. Fredericks, Provost, 1500 Peachtree St., Jackson, MS 39202. Minorities are encouraged to apply.

ACMC PRESIDENT

ACMC (Advancing Churches in Missions Commitment) is an organization with a vision to increase the passion of the American church for world evangelization. We are looking for a godly servant leader with ten years of progressive management experience and a desire to stimulate local churches to reach across cultures with the gospel. Previous experience in working with and/or through local churches regarding missions is essential. Demonstrated skills in these areas are desired: supervision, strategic/tactical/financial planning, resource development. Fax résumés to: Dale Folsom at (316) 265-2052; e-mail: DaleFolsom@aol.com or mail to: 501 Springlake Lane, Wichita, KS 67230.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

NEW MAJOR GIFTS PROGRAM

The Salvation Army offers a superb opportunity for the right mission-driven development professionals. We are looking for nine such candidates in the Southeastern United States. Candidates will have a record of successful major donor work, be responsible to develop an annual plan, have strong written and verbal skills, and be self-motivated. The focus of these positions is to develop long-term relationships with key individuals, foundations, and corporate donors while representing the mission of The Salvation Army. EOE. Please send a cover letter, résumé, and salary requirements to: Paul Curnow, The Salvation Army, 1424 Northeast Expressway, Atlanta, GA 30329-2088.

SENIOR PASTOR

Independent evangelical church seeks experienced pastor to serve as senior pastor with a diverse congregation. The candidate must have the passion and ability to preach the entire Word of God. Applicants must have college and seminary degrees. Duties include: preaching and leading Bible studies, expanding missions and outreach programs, visitation, and developing church growth. Inquiries to Northside Congregational Church, 820 W. Mt. Pleasant Rd., Evansville, IN 47711, Attn: Pulpit Committee.

DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT for Pioneer Clubs, dedicated to Christian education of children. Need experienced professional to manage total fundraising program. Must have experience with various acquisition techniques and planned giving. Experience with Pioneer Clubs a plus! Salaried with benefits. Send résumé to Mary Hackman, Pioneer Clubs, Box 788, Wheaton, IL 60189.

CHILDREN'S MINISTER

Casas Adobes Baptist Church, a large, contemporary Southern Baptist church in Tucson, AZ, needs a Minister to Children. Administrative gifts and leadership skills required to oversee programs serving 700 1st to 5th graders. Résumés to: Gary Siefers, 2131 W. Ina Rd., Tucson, AZ 85741.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES: Advent Group Ministries, a Christian social service agency located in San Jose, CA, seeks resident counselors, night counselors, summer interns for adolescent residential treatment programs. Competitive salary, benefits. Residential positions provide room & board. Contact Deborah Norris: (408) 281-0708; (1-800) 98ADVENT; fax: (408) 281-2658.

MINISTRY PLACEMENT for pastors & associates or churches. Call (503) 357-7830 or Believer's Dynamics, POB 596, Forest Grove, OR 97116. Since 1977.

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ASSOCIATE PASTOR FOR ADULT MINISTRIES sought for dynamic 560+-member Evangelical Covenant church for ministry with small groups, singles, adult education, discipleship, and family life. Responsive, visionary, and enthusiastic pastoral staff and congregation; strong lay leadership. Prefer broad church-based experience with strong leadership, organizational, and people skills. Require master's degree and eligibility for Covenant ordination. Reply to: Search Committee, Hillside Covenant Church, 2060 Magnolia Way, Walnut Creek, CA 94596.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

DIRECTOR OF MARKETING for Pioneer Clubs, dedicated to Christian education of children. Need marketing professional with 5 years experience, including sales, direct mail, and telemarketing, proven management abilities, with a broad-based understanding of the protestant evangelical church. Christian education background and club experience a plus. Submit cover letter and résumé to Mary Hackman, Pioneer Clubs, Box 788, Wheaton, IL 60189.

NEW TESTAMENT STUDIES

Fuller Theological Seminary's School of Theology invites nominations and applications for a tenure-track faculty appointment in New Testament Studies, at the rank of assistant or beginning associate professor, available beginning September 1, 1999. Requirements: Ph.D. in New Testament; strong interest in New Testament exegesis and theology; promise in research, publication and teaching; commitment to theological education in the service of the church. M.Div. desirable. Responsibilities include: teaching New Testament core and elective courses at the M.A./M.Div. level. Applications, including letter of intent and curriculum vita, should be addressed to: Dean William A. Dyrness, School of Theology, Fuller Theological Seminary, 135 N. Oakland Ave., Pasadena, CA 91182 or e-mail: <theology@fuller.edu>

MISSION PASTOR/DIRECTOR

Energetic, 2,400-member suburban congregation in Seattle area seeks a person with demonstrated ability in promoting, developing, and leading mission efforts. Clear commitment to Christ and biblical mission mandate required. Significant leadership experience with local community and cross-cultural outreach activity important. Send résumé to: Jack Roos, APNC chair, First Presbyterian Church of Bellevue, 1717 Bellevue Way NE, Bellevue, WA 98004.

DEVELOPMENT/DIRECTOR

Experienced professional to head young department in growing 50 year-old ministry to disabled. Great opportunity to build own department. Minimum 2 to 5 years professional development experience. Create department vision, utilize every appropriate method, take department to next level, capital campaign experience helpful. Competitive salary, benefits. Résumé to Dave Rowland, Christian League for the Handicapped, Box 948, Walworth, WI 53184.

MAKE A CHANGE! Teach English, business, or computers in China, Russia, Muslim Asia, or C. Europe. Call ESI at: (1-800) 895-7955. All college majors/degrees welcome.

WORSHIP/MUSIC PASTOR WANTED

St. Louis suburban area Baptist (CBA) mid-sized church, looking for a full-time minister of worship and music. Candidates must appreciate various music styles and have a pastor's heart. This multi-staffed church is located in a small community in the metro area, a wonderful place for raising a family. To learn more, please send résumés to Mr. Wally Fedder at 723 St. Louis Rd., Collinsville, IL 62234 or fax to (618) 344-0831 or e-mail to: fbc_collinsville@juno.com

TEACH IN JAPAN: Reach Asians for Christ. Teach in English. Several K-12 & ESL teacher openings. Mission school of 400; 2-year contracts. Must raise partial support. Write Dr. Bob Greninger, Okinawa Christian School, P.O. Box 14250, Gainesville, FL 32604; (1-800) 446-6423.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

An Evangelical Free Church in northwest suburban Chicago seeks Pastor of Worship and Music to provide leadership in worship, to direct the music program of the entire church, and to shepherd those involved in worship and music ministries. Music degree with advanced training preferred. Previous experience in worship and music ministry required. We are a growing body of over 600 with a diverse age and interests profile. This is a senior level staff position and compensation will include commensurate salary, health care, vacation, continuing education and retirement benefits. For an information packet and application, please reply to Worship and Music Pastor Search Committee, The Village Church of Barrington, 1600 E. Main Street, Barrington, IL 60010. Phone: (847) 381-5221; fax: (847) 381-5288; e-mail: vcb-davc@juno.com

CHILDREN'S PASTOR

Large Midwestern church seeks children's pastor to oversee the church's ministries to children and their families. Applicants should possess good leadership, administrative and relational skills, ability to develop volunteer leaders, and administer a large multi-faceted children's ministry. Understanding of cultural issues facing children and families and enthusiasm for outreach to children and parents are essential. Advanced degree and large-church experience preferred. Send résumés to: Children's Pastor Calling Committee, P.O. Box 24414, Minneapolis, MN 55424.

YOUTH PASTOR

Shady Grove Presbyterian Church (PCA), located in Montgomery County, MD, north of Wash. D.C., is a 180-member congregation seeking a full-time Youth Pastor to develop its ministry to teens. Candidates should possess a commitment to the Reformed faith, a relational/discipleship orientation to youth ministry, and the proven ability to equip volunteers. Compensation commensurate with experience. Direct inquiries to: Search Committee, Shady Grove PCA, 16911 Redland Rd., Derwood, MD 20855; (301) 330-4326.

FULLER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY's School of Theology invites nominations and applications for the Arthur DeKruyer/Christ Church Oak Brook Chair of Preaching, a tenure-track appointment at the rank of full or associate professor, beginning September 11, 1999. Requirements: doctoral degree, M.Div. or equivalent, ordination, with some teaching experience. Gifted preacher with pastoral experience. Research interests supportive of teaching specialty. Strong commitment to theoretical and practical aspects of biblical preaching. Sensitive to ecumenical and cultural issues, to the urban world and its pressures, to difference theological traditions. Publication record and ability to contribute to shaping advanced degree program desirable. Responsibilities include: basic instruction in preaching with heavy involvement in practicum work. Applications, including letter of intent and curriculum vita, should be addressed to: Dean William A. Dyrness, School of Theology, Fuller Theological Seminary, 1356 N. Oakland Ave., Pasadena, CA 91182 or e-mail: <theology@fuller.edu>

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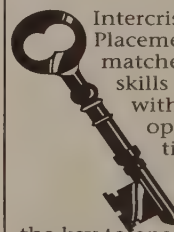
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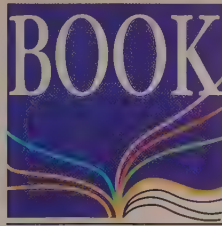
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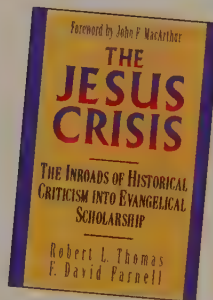


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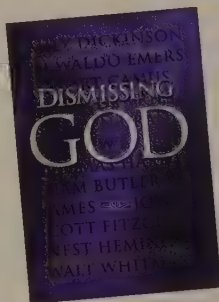
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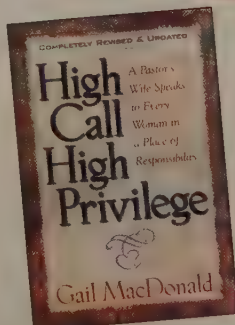
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The Devil in the DNA

Richard Dawkins, the flamboyant British biologist who gave us the phrase “selfish genes,” now offers a genetic explanation for President Clinton’s alleged foibles with *les femmes*. Our evolutionary ancestors were harem builders (like seals), Dawkins explains, instead of monogamous (like Canadian geese). Any male monopolizing power and wealth also monopolized the females, thus ensuring the survival of his genes. Clinton’s behavior is simply a fossilized remnant from our genetic past.

Well, Dawkins’s Just-So story may be good for a chuckle. But reducing human behavior to genetics is serious business these days. The latest fad is an updated version of sociobiology known as evolutionary psychology, which seeks explanations for human behavior in our genes. Surprising numbers of liberals and conservatives are eagerly claiming it as support for their own political philosophies.

Why is evolutionary psychology so popular? It promises to fill a gap in the Darwinist world-view: the need for a workable morality. Ever since Darwin, many have recognized that evolution leads to moral nihilism. For example, Cornell biologist William Provine (himself a loyal Darwinist) acknowledges that Darwinism implies “no free will” and “no ultimate foundation for ethics.”

But we all experience the angst of facing moral choices, so evolutionists keep trying new ways to fit morality into the picture. Evolutionary psychology claims that by examining our evolutionary history, we can identify which behaviors have been selected for their adaptive value. These provide the basis for a genuinely scientific morality.

Does this new theory succeed in rescuing evolution from moral nihilism? No. The first problem is that any behavior practiced anywhere can be judged to have survival value—after all, it has *survived*—including behavior widely considered immoral.

In a recent article in the *New York Times*, Steven Pinker, a telegenic science popularizer, urges us to “understand” teenage girls who kill their newborns, arguing that “the emotional circuitry of mothers has evolved” by natural selection to include “a capacity for neonaticide.” Infanticide is built into our “biological design,” and we can’t blame people for doing it.

Pinker’s article triggered outraged responses, and even he backs away from his own conclusions: In the same article he unexpectedly writes, “Killing a baby is an immoral act.” So which is it? Either evolution provides a moral guide or it doesn’t.

The same contradiction runs through Dawkins’s article, which explains harem building as a product of natural selection. Sensing his readers might take

this as justification for immorality, Dawkins confides that he has made the “un-Darwinian personal decision” to be “deliberately monogamous.” But if the Darwinian process provides a moral guide, why should anyone need to make “un-Darwinian” decisions? For that matter, how *could* anyone?

The second problem with evolutionary psychology is its genetic determinism. It claims to base morality on the genes that govern our behavior. But if genes really do that, moral choice is an illusion.

In *The Moral Animal*, Robert Wright spends hundreds of pages denouncing freedom as an illusion and describing human beings as “robots,” “machines,” and “puppets” of our genes. Then he turns 180 degrees, arguing that we are free to choose moral ideals contrary to the “values” of natural selection.

These fatal contradictions make hash of every effort to derive morality from biology—and Christians need to press the point in our classrooms and living rooms. Evolutionary psychology is being dished up to an anxious public via magazine and newspaper articles. In an era dogged by declining morality and social decay, it offers the soothing promise of a morality buttressed by the certitude of science.

Make no mistake. The goal of evolutionary psychology is utterly radical: to replace traditional religious morality with a new scientific morality. The strategy is to debunk traditional morality by reducing it to genetic self-interest. Wright is typical: He unmasks all “thoughts and feelings,” all “moral values,” as “stratagems of the genes.” Even Jesus’ teachings are nothing but ideologies serving his “evolutionarily ingrained interests.” Evolutionary psychology proposes to base morality frankly on “selfish genes.”

Some Christians have hoped to make peace with Darwinism as long as it is restricted to biology. But evolutionary psychology demonstrates that there is an inexpugnable imperialism in Darwinianism—a compulsion to reduce all society to material mechanisms. Just as Darwinist theory in biology aims to replace divine design with natural processes, so in ethics it aims to replace revealed morality with a naturalistic morality. Sociologist Howard Kaye observes evolutionary psychology is nothing less than a secularized natural theology—an attempt to use nature to justify a secular world-view.

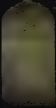
Exactly 100 years ago in his Princeton lectures, Dutch statesman Abraham Kuyper argued that Christians are not up against individual theories but comprehensive world-views. The only sure defense is to frame Christianity as an equally comprehensive world-view. Only then will genetic Just-So stories be relegated to the storybooks, where they belong. **CL**

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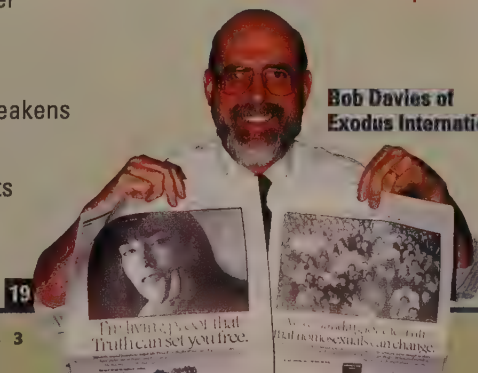
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Michael G. Maudlin,
Managing Editor

The Last Temptation of Moses

INSIDE CT

I remember being surprised in 1995 when *Time* published its “Is the Bible Fact or Fiction?” cover story. In it they “reported” on how Abraham, Joseph, and Moses never existed. No new evidence had come to light to question anew traditional interpretations. They just thought the most important news event that week was that there was *still* no independent confirmation of Israel’s “mythic” origins.

But that’s not what surprised me. I was surprised because weeks earlier I had lunched with Richard Ostling, *Time*’s senior correspondent and a former CT news editor. In a Chinese restaurant down the street from the Time-Life building, he excitedly told me how he had just reported on the work of Egyptologist James Hoffmeier, from Wheaton College, who in a recent book had marshaled all the evidence consistent with the Hebrews’ sojourn in and evacuation from Egypt. It was going to be a cover story.

Surprise! The story morphed after it left his hands. *Time*’s assembly line of editors and writers, acting as the arbiters of what is intellectually acceptable, turned the thesis 180 degrees from what Dick envisioned.

When the makers of the animated film *The Prince of Egypt* (to be released in December) interviewed the same experts as *Time* and used similarly educated

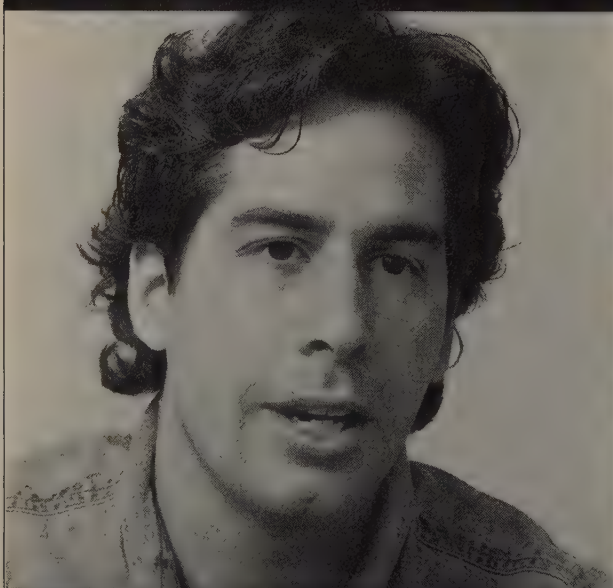
professionals, the results were very different. God is back in, and not only does Moses exist, but he makes the sea part, turns a stick into a snake, and calls down serial plagues.

Is Hollywood more faithful than New York? I don’t think so. Rather, the media companies’ goals are different. Instead of wanting to appear intellectually stylish and “daringly” skeptical, the movie studio DreamWorks wants to sell movie tickets. And a nonexistent, or even a de-miracled, Moses does not make the cash registers buzz or beep. (Anyone for *The Last Temptation of Moses*?)

What is CT’s angle?

First, we wanted to bring you the story that *Time* missed. After executive editor David Neff heard Hoffmeier talk at a convention of Bible scholars, he assigned associate editor Kevin D. Miller to follow up the story. And second, we believe in pursuing truth—which entails some risk. When we explore whether the Exodus really happened (see p. 44), we have something to lose (and that something is more precious than reputations or revenues). Still, as Kevin shows in his report, when Christians practice good scholarship (pursuing truth rather than careers) and humbly recognize the limits of human knowledge while being faithful to what God has revealed in his Scriptures, we find that truth is not opposed to faith. Indeed, they are partners. And that’s our angle. **CT**

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

China's Tragedy and Triumph

President Clinton's recent visit to China has motivated many editors to publish articles on the state of religious freedom in that country. In the blur of ink and paper, the article in the July 13 edition of *CHRISTIANITY TODAY*—"A Tale of China's Two Churches," by Timothy C. Morgan—afforded your readers one of the best and most comprehensive accounts of the extraordinarily complex mix of tragedy and triumph that characterizes the situation in China today.

As your article correctly noted, Rabbi Yechiel Eckstein and the International Fellowship of Christians and Jews is at the forefront of the "prodding engagement" approach to China. Our *Presidential Appeal for Religious Liberty in China* was crafted specifically to show President Clinton that numerous religious leaders nationwide, hailing from a variety of faiths, strongly support a firm yet fruitful dialogue with the Chinese leadership that presses for greater freedom of religion for the Chinese people.

Our course in China is clear. We must provide *both* carrot and stick to the Chinese if we are to gain even a reasonable hope of effecting change. We must acknowledge and praise the changes that have taken place in regard to religious freedom—and many have—but we must never forget the religious believers who are unjustly serving lengthy prison sentences for the "crime" of following their consciences in worshipping Almighty God.

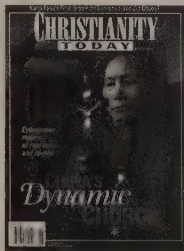
The policy of "prodding engagement" has already begun to work; now we must continue to pray and work—and give it the time it needs to bear fruit. Articles such as Morgan's provide nurture to the greater cause—care for those persecuted for their faith—and strengthen and inform the broad-based coalition that has been forged, and for that, we thank you.

*Christopher Meidl, Executive Director
International Fellowship of
Christians and Jews
Chicago, Ill.*

Just read your piece on China. A very good joy indeed! I am a member of the Union Church here in Hong Kong. We have helped build a couple of churches as well as a school, the second school in the country that was handed from the state

back to the church. That school is in Bei Wan in Guangdong Province. We also built a dorm as some of the students travel 2-4 hours each way just to get an education.

*Mac Overton
Hong Kong*



If only our church leaders had the humility and integrity of Dr. Han (p. 36), that they might say: "We also have to confess that we have done some things wrong to our brothers and sisters. A divisive church cannot be very strong for our Lord, especially in America. Yet we fight each other."

I suggest that CT print the names of the top (20? 100?) political leaders of China, so that Christians and churches could covenant to pray daily for one of them, for a year, that God would express Christ's grace, mercy, and peace to and through that person.

*Philip W. Gilman
Freehold, N.J.*

An Honest Opinion

I appreciated the article in the July 13 issue of CT entitled "Karla Faye's Final Stop." What I liked most is that it wasn't inflammatory to one side or the other; it was just an honest opinion from someone who wanted to show an inside look.

I have carried a strong opinion to one side of this issue but have backed off in recent months, and it was nice to see the approach Ms. Owens took.

Keep up the good work in supplying thought-provoking articles that are done in good taste.

*D. J. Weiss, Associate Minister
St. Louis Church of Christ
St. Louis, Mich.*

Virginia Stem Owens can turn a phrase like few others, but she doesn't have any remote idea what she's talking about. How many years did she serve in solitary? How many serial killers and child rapists and chain-saw murderers has she personally been in prison with?

*Gene Neill
Lake Placid, Fla.*

Certainly it is wrong to glory in the execution of someone. But does Virginia Stem Owens need to be "distressed" about application of Genesis 9:6? Too many persons arguing the Karla Faye Tucker case said that she didn't deserve to die but rather that she deserved mercy. Yet by definition, mercy is undeserved.

For the Christian this debate must address the Noahic covenant and the issue of desert. This article did neither.

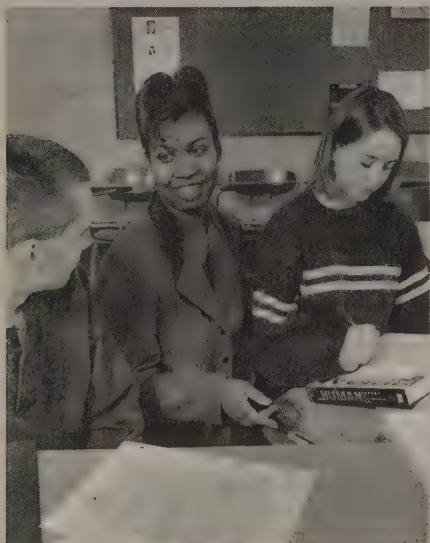
*Robert A. Daniels
Associate Professor of Sociology
Mount Vernon Nazarene College
Mount Vernon, Ohio*

Thank you for such a richly troubling article on capital punishment. As an evangelical and an Episcopal rector, I too have been unable to find a street corner on



Pastor Polnow wasn't impressed with how the men of his flock came back from Promise Keepers.

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Michelle R. Loyd-Paige

Ph.D. from Purdue University; board member of Grand

Rapids Urban League; host of Abundant Living, a weekly radio show on WQWQ in Muskegon; member of the Children's Agenda Project in Muskegon County; professor of sociology at Calvin.



Randal M. Jelks

Ph.D. candidate at Michigan State University; M.Div. from McCormick

Theological Seminary; board member for Grand Rapids Symphony; member of Grand Rapids Council for the Humanities; history instructor and director of academic multicultural affairs at Calvin.



Edward Miller Jr.

Ph.D. from Indiana University; former Spanish instructor at

Wake Forest University; former steering committee member of the North American Association of Christian Foreign Language Teachers; professor of Spanish and chair of Calvin's Spanish department.



Charsie Randolph Sawyer

DMA from University of Michigan; award-winning vocalist who has performed nationally with orchestras, opera companies, oratorio societies and choirs; member of National Association of Teachers of Singing; associate professor of music at Calvin.

LETTERS

which I felt I belonged.

In her refreshing refusal to capitulate to the rhetoric of (even Christian) politics, Owens embodies "gospel vulnerability" to the anguish of all parties. By demonstrating a willingness to tolerate intense ethical ambiguity in the midst of an unwavering commitment to Christ, she has given us a model for approaching many other such complex, emotionally wrenching issues.

While I have been unable to determine that the death penalty accomplishes its intended purpose in meting out justice, satisfying victims' families, atoning for crimes, or even serving as a deterrent, Owens's many personal stories from Huntsville brought me to my knees for the arrogance of my own ideas and attitudes.

The biggest thing missing in my personal position on capital punishment? Prayer.

*Rev. Hillary R. Bercovici
St. Mary's Church of Scarborough
Scarborough, N.Y.*

Refreshing Yet Convicting

Bravo to Spencer Perkins for telling it like it is! A man of God, a man of grace taking an incredible risk to be honest ["Playing the Grace Card," July 13]. How refreshing, yet convicting.

What person exists who hasn't been hurt by others, and who hasn't hidden behind, "they haven't asked me to forgive them"? We may never voice such feeble excuses, masked as we might be by pleasant demeanor. But the ugliness of a bitter spirit is vivid to the Lord, with whom we have to do and to whom we have to answer. Deep within he tells us as he did the apostle, "My grace is sufficient for you."

Thank you, Brother Perkins. May your legacy be men and women of grace.

*Dan Lofgren
Bonney Lake, Wash.*

God and Hell

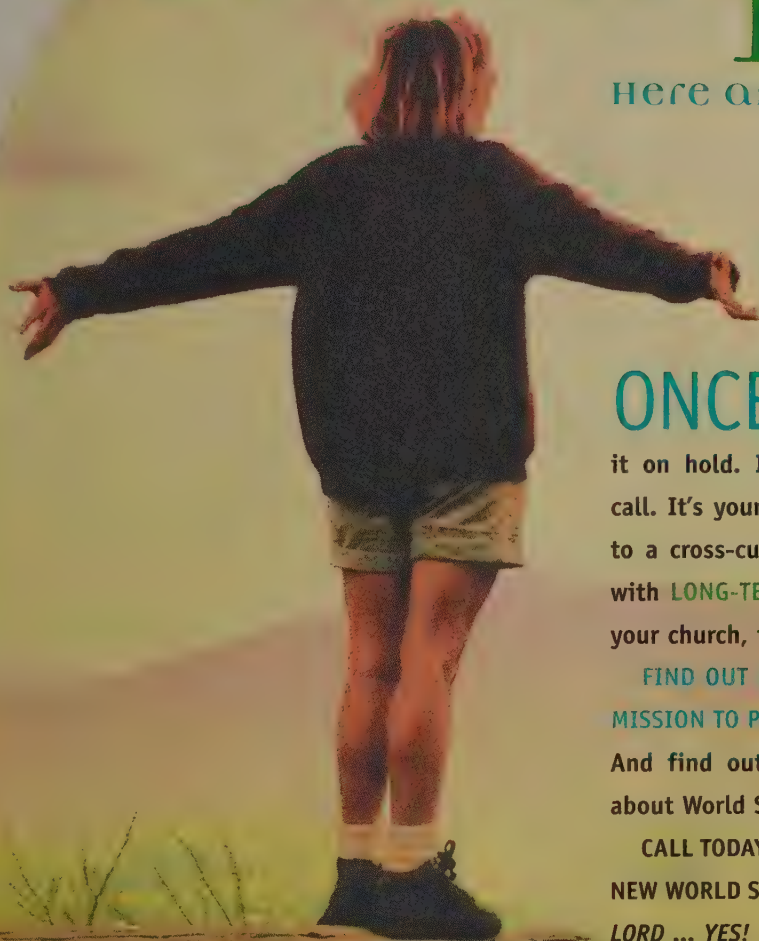
I have to question the veracity of any Christian who shares the view of the author of "Brimstone for the Broad-Minded" [July 13] and has no problem with the concept of hell. Have you ever looked in the eyes of a loved one suffering from excruciating pain? Have you ever imagined your loved one suffering not for a year, or two years or ten, or even for a lifetime, but for eternity? If mortal human beings with a limited capacity to love can feel such anguish over the pain and suffering of a loved one whose pain will someday come to an end, how is it that the God who defines him-

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LETTERS

self as love can bear the thought of abandoning his own creatures to a state of unbearable torture never to look upon them again? Does God want people driven to him out of fear or drawn to him by his love?

I'm not denying that hell exists, but I will not deny my confusion about it. Hell as it is portrayed in the Bible is much more than righteous indignation. It is hell, and not even the word *hell* can capture its eternally tormenting furor! I'm sure I am not the only Christian who struggles with this concept. Let's not cover our confusion or dismay with theological clichés. The world does not look to us to provide pat answers to plaguing questions, but to be honest with ourselves about things that just don't make a great deal of sense from our limited human understanding of things.

Bruce L. Thiessen
Sacramento, Calif.

The problem with this article is that it assumes that the view of hell as eternal conscious torment is true. No wonder so many people have a problem with this view; it suggests that God will grant (or already has granted) immortality to sinful people and, after judgment, will subject them to the most perverse and sadistic of punishments: never-ending existence in miserable torment. Although this view may be traditional, anyone who does a thorough, unbiased study on hell will discover that this position is not and never was what the Bible truly teaches.

The true, literal view is not that God will unjustly subject sinners to eternal conscious torture in hell, but rather that he will justly destroy them in hell—with no hope of restoration. Jesus clearly stated this in Matthew 10:28.

Dirk A. Warren
Warren, Ohio

What kind of a God would ask, even command us, to forgive seventy times seven in a day and to go the second mile, while he himself is willing to forgive mankind only in this short span of life?

Richard W. Rundell
Haskell, Okla.

Heavenly Rulers

I agree with nearly all of what Chuck Lowe points out in "Do Demons Have Zip Codes?" (July 13); it provides a needed corrective to much contemporary practice. But I was surprised that a discussion of territorial spirits omits much about Paul's heavenly "rulers and authorities"

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(Eph. 1:20-21; 6:12), which I think most scholars understand as heavenly authorities behind the earthly ones (similar to Daniel 10). Was this possibly cut short due to space constraints or possibly in the editing process?

Craig Keener
Wynnewood, Pa.

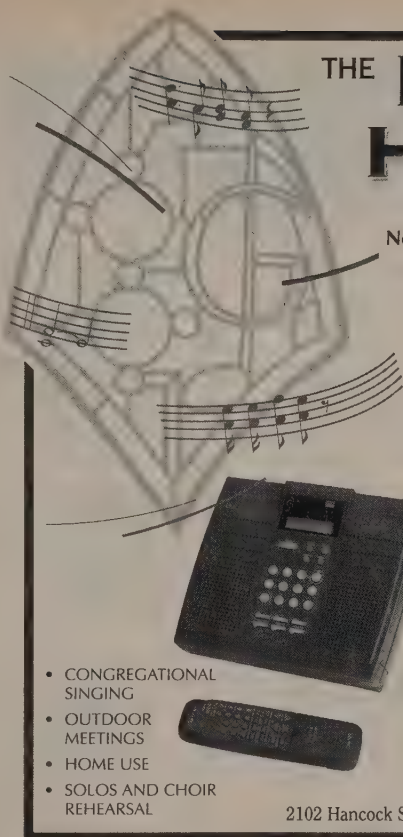
Our Lives Are Not Our Own

The editorial entitled "Lies We've Heard Before" made an extremely vital point concerning the deceptive nature of such issues as abortion and physician-assisted suicide—that we often falsely afford to ourselves more liberty than we have. Where in the world have we come up with the idea that we are autonomous and our lives are ours to do with whatever we please? This article speaks of falsehoods when dealing with this topic. I understand that patients may be in a great deal of pain, a situation in which we all express fear. Regardless of that fact, we do not have a right to do what we may with our lives. Neither do we have the wisdom to make decisions concerning such issues. That is why so much confusion exists around these issues. We are treading in an area in which we do not belong. An era of rights for the individual has made us lose sight of the truth. Our lives are not our own but have been given to us by and belong to God.

Kyle Castens
St. Louis, Mo.

✍ The fact is that this nation, despite all the intentions of the founders, Supreme Court, People for the American Way, and others, has a national religion of paganism. Included in this national religion is a creation myth taught in the public schools as fact, institutionalized hedonism, sex and fertility cults, sexual obsessions which seek to justify the lowering of the age of consent to preteen ages, polytheistic and pantheistic spirituality, and a mass human sacrifice cult through our escalating violence on the streets, the schoolyards, homes, and abortion/infanticide and PAS. These forms of alternative spirituality, violence, and human sacrifice then are presented in the form of entertainment so that the surrounding culture is desensitized and rendered irrelevant in our protests. What used to be "first do no harm" medicine has evolved (or devolved) into "first check the approved provider list in your HMO and then do as much harm as you wish." And of course, call it "choice," a favorite rubric of modern paganism.

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The past one hundred years have witnessed a renaissance of reflection on social issues from both Protestant and Catholic thinkers. To commemorate the promulgation of *Rerum Novarum* by Pope Leo XIII in 1891 and Abraham Kuyper's 1898 Stone Lectures at Princeton Theological Seminary, the Acton Institute and Calvin Theological Seminary are sponsoring a two-day academic conference assessing the legacy of the past century of Christian social thinking and charting a course for Christian social ethics for the next hundred years.

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Co-sponsored by the Acton Institute for the Study of Religion and Liberty and Calvin Theological Seminary

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Bill Likely to Die

The concern of CHRISTIANITY TODAY over the new "antimissionary" bill now before the Israeli Knesset is understandable ("New Bill Threatens Freedom of Speech, Religion," July 13). But this new "more punitive bill" is likely to encounter the same fate as its predecessors. Despite appearances to the contrary, this bill, like hundreds of others brought up every year, will die, in all likelihood, in committee and never come up for a vote in the general assembly. Even if that were to happen, it must be voted on three times before becoming law.

Your writer quotes Chuck Kopp, president of the National Council of Churches in Israel, as expressing dismay over the yes vote of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, which Kopp says violates Netanyahu's "written commitment to Christian leaders that he would oppose such legislation." Kopp should realize that Netanyahu passed the bill along to the committee as a professional courtesy to a member of his party, which politically savvy readers will recognize as standard policy in political circles and is certainly the tradition in Israel. His actions should not be interpreted as his agreement with the bill.

Christians need to keep in mind the historically justified suspicion among the Jewish people—in Israel and around the world—that their Christian neighbors wish to associate with them for no reason other than to bring about their conversion. Regardless of whether such bills are an appropriate response, sensitive Christians might continue to be mindful to these concerns. Doing so would greatly reduce the likelihood that more "antimissionary" bills will be introduced in the future.

*Rabbi Yechiel Eckstein
Founder and President
International Fellowship of
Christians and Jews
Chicago, Ill.*

A Cause for Mourning

Imagine my surprise to see Philip Harmon pilloried for his business failure and loss of millions of his family's and friends' money ["Unsuspecting Christians Bilked of Millions," July 13].

CHRISTIANITY TODAY, I believe, has lost credibility with readers who know the complexity of the truth. A dedicated Christian brother, Harmon has served with distinction on the boards of numerous ministries. His life has been fruitful in many evangelistic endeavors. His fall is a cause for mourning.

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After much financial success, Harmon retired in the 1970s. Gradually he was coaxed into new businesses by the needs of his family and friends. By the early 1990s the businesses were experiencing cash flow problems.

As his businesses difficulties grew, he refused to accept failure and borrowed from many who could not afford the risk. He says he was blinded by his pride and in denial, failing to admit to the gravity of his financial situation.

When he could no longer carry the debt burden, he sought help. Some Christians attempted to solve the problem in a scriptural way by taking care of the needy and liquidating the remaining assets. Others decided the matter should be given to the government and contacted the U.S. attorney.

The whole spectrum of human response to a tragedy has been exposed by this situation, from unmerited forgiveness to merited hatred. Unfortunately, CT chose to publish one extreme, ignoring the lessons of grace and forgiveness taught elsewhere in the magazine.

*Ted W. Engstrom, President Emeritus
World Vision
Monrovia, Calif.*

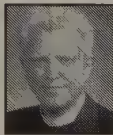
Clarification

The North American Scene item "Church Nearly Closed After Lawsuit" (July 13) contained three items that Paul Biegner of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod's Minnesota North District has asked CT to clarify: (1) Daniel Reeb was not fired from a pastorate in the Bahamas but "expelled from the clergy roster of the Missouri Synod as unfit for ministry." (2) Reeb's expulsion occurred before the verdict in the David Samarzia trial after he was confronted with depositions from victims and had admitted to the sexual abuse. (3) Samarzia bought the contents of Redeemer Lutheran Church at a sheriff's auction; however, the congregation refused to deed the building and land to Samarzia. He then offered to "take \$200,000 with the congregation's apology that 30 years before leaders of the congregation 'knew or should have known.'"

Brief letters are welcome. They may be edited for space and clarity and must include the writer's name and address if intended for publication. Due to the volume of mail, we cannot respond personally to individual letters. Write to Eutyclus, CHRISTIANITY TODAY, 465 Gundersen Drive, Carol Stream, IL 60188; fax: 630/260-0114. E-mail: ctedit@aol.com (✉).

THE MONEY PROBLEM

A Conference on the Financing of American Religion



LOREN B. MEAD

Author of *Five Challenges for the Once and Future Church* (1996) and *Financial Meltdown in the Mainline?* (1998). Mr. Mead is Founder and former President of the Alban Institute in Washington, D.C.



MARK CHAVES

Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of Arizona, Mr. Chaves is author of *Ordaining Women: Culture and Conflict in Religious Organizations* (1997) and co-editor of *Financing American Religion* (Alta Mira Press, 1998).



ROBERT WOOD LYNN

Mr. Lynn is former Senior Vice President of Religion at Lilly Endowment, Inc. His recent scholarship focuses on the relationship between money and the Christian faith.

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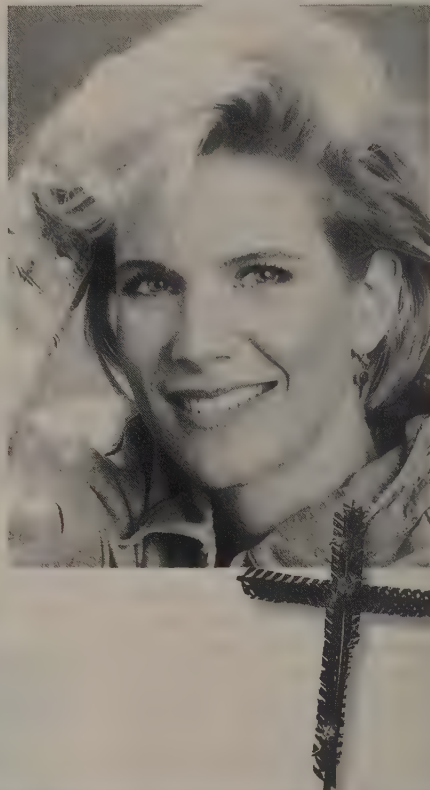
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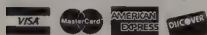
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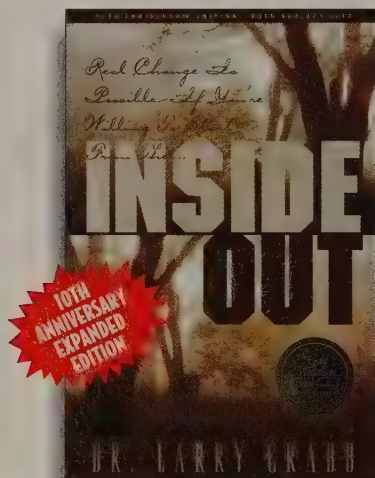
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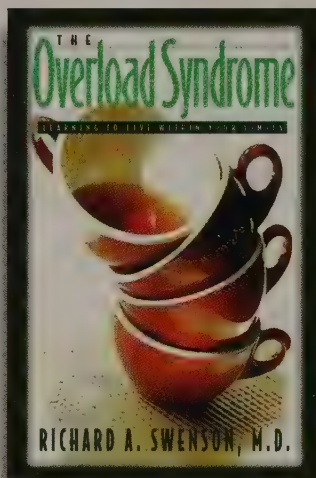
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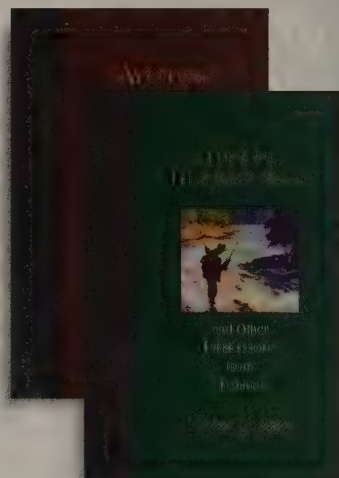
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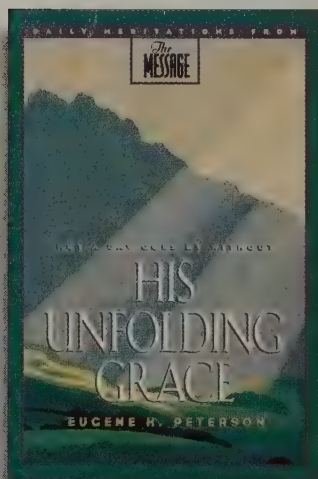
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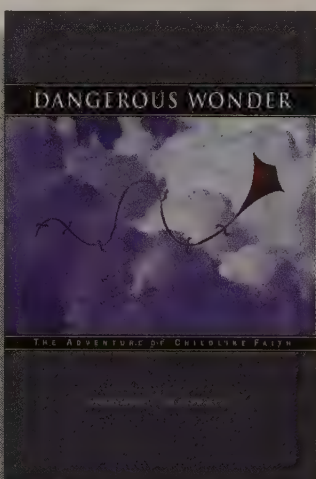
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HOMOSEXUALITY

Ad Campaign Ignites Firestorm

Janet Folger thought she had seen enough of what she describes as hostility and intolerance. The new national director of the Center for Reclaiming America, a ministry founded by D. James Kennedy, had witnessed the public ridicule of notable conservatives—such as Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott and football star Reggie White—who dared to call homosexuality a sin.

The final straw came when White House press secretary Mike McCurry derided those who called homosexuality sinful “backward.”

So Folger, 35, got on the phone and within two weeks had enlisted support from 14 other Christian organizations for a series of newspaper ads based on the theme that homosexuals can change their orientation.

“People have been intimidated into silence,” Folger told CT. “The ads were designed to open discussion on the other side.”

Folger coordinated the first phase of the “truth in love” campaign, which spent \$206,000 for full-page ads in *USA Today*, the *New York Times*, and the *Washington Post*. Groups participating included the Christian Coalition, Concerned Women for America, Family Research Council, and American Family Association.

The most debated ad pictured former lesbian Anne Paulk with the headline “I’m living proof that Truth can set you free.” She is married to John Paulk, a former homosex-

ual who is an analyst for Focus on the Family and board chair of Exodus International, a Seattle-based ministry to former homosexuals.

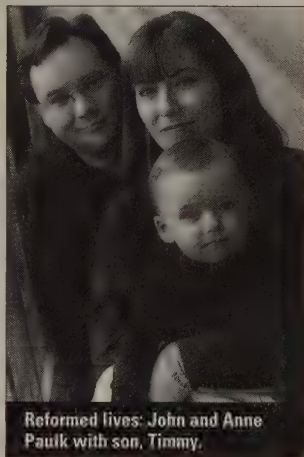
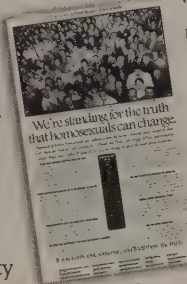
Another ad, containing a photo of some of the 850 former homosexuals who gathered at a recent Exodus conference, declares, “We’re standing for the truth that homosexuals can change.”

The ads highlight reformed lives through Christ. But the Human Rights Campaign (HRC), the largest homosexual lobby, quickly enlisted financial support

from nine other groups to put an ad in *USA Today* showing a church-going Republican couple who are “proud and happy” of their lesbian daughter.

“The far Right does not have a monopoly on family values and religion,” says HRC executive director Elizabeth Birch. “Gay people are no less religious or family-oriented than anyone else.”

“I’ve never felt closer to God,” says HRC senior policy advocate Tracey St. Pierre, who says she knows from 15 years of trying that “ex-gay” ministries do not work. “I prayed, I spoke to church counselors,” she says. “I begged God to change me.”



Reformed lives: John and Anne Paulk with son, Timmy.

held moral and religious beliefs,” Davies says. “They know that homosexuality is not God’s intent for their lives.”

By John W. Kennedy.

In addition, an interfaith association of more than a dozen homosexual-rights groups representing mostly mainline denominations criticized the ads for using Scripture in attempting to change sexual orientation. “We will no longer be silent when our sacred texts are misused and manipulated,” says Meg Riley of the Unitarian Universalist Association.

But Exodus International director Bob Davies says tens of thousands have successfully made the switch, proving that homosexuality is not innate and irrevocable. “Most of those contacting us are Christians who are in deep conflict with their most deeply

TELEVISION

Viewers Get Double Dose of Faith

Beginning September 21, WB Network viewers will receive a double dose of *7th Heaven*. On Monday nights, the network will air new episodes of the faith- and family-friendly drama, now in its third season. On Sundays, WB will repeat episodes from the first season, which aired before the program found an ardent audience.

7th Heaven features a functional and fun-loving family headed by Eric Camden, the minister of a non-descript Protestant church (CT, Nov. 17, 1997, p. 74). Stay-at-home mom Annie is equally adept at repairing the home and raising the couple’s five children, who range in age from seven to eighteen.

“The show has a very loyal following because there isn’t anything like it on TV,” says WB spokesperson Brad Turell. “This show is a response to the conservative Christians who are out there saying, ‘Family values, family values, family values.’” With ABC canceling both *Soul Man*, about an Episcopal rector who is a single father, and *Nothing Sacred*, a controversial program about an iconoclastic Catholic priest, Eric Camden is prime time’s reigning reverend.

With a surge in the ratings last spring—which led the network to the unprecedented decision to show reruns in prime time—*7th Heaven* is WB’s second most popular show after *Dawson’s Creek*, a risqué teen drama.

By Steve Rabey.



Family viewing: Stephen Collins and Catherine Hicks play the Camden parents.

CHURCH GROWTH

Falwell Plans Biggest Sanctuary

Liberty University founder Jerry Falwell says a new 12,000-seat Thomas Road Baptist Church, projected to have the largest seating capacity of any church in North America, will be completed in Lynchburg, Virginia, by Christmas 1999.

"We think our drawing power for the church will extend many miles in many directions," he says. "With the growth of the church and a student body that will reach 10,000 in the next six years, we feel a 12,000-seat church is more realistic." Thomas Road's existing sanctuary, built in 1969, has 3,300 seats.

The new church will be five miles away on the city's Candler's Mountain near Liberty University, which Falwell founded in 1971. Construction will cost at least \$20

million, and Falwell expects four unnamed—and as yet unsecured—benefactors to contribute \$5 million apiece.

Financial problems have long plagued Liberty (CT, Dec. 9, 1996, p. 62), and the school fell \$110 million in debt in 1990. But thanks to multimillion-dollar gifts from friends such as term life insurance titan A. L. Williams (CT, Dec. 8, 1997, p. 61), Liberty's debt has been reduced to \$10 million.

"This will be the biggest thing we've done since building the university," Falwell says. The sanctuary will be part of the first phase of a new \$200 million project planned for the 1,400-acre site. Future phases will include athletic facilities, a television studio, an outdoor amphitheater, a retirement village, a recreational vehicle



Off the ground: Construction will begin this fall on the largest sanctuary in the country. When finished it will seat 1,700 more than Crenshaw Christian Center in Los Angeles, where Frederick K. C. Price is pastor.

park, and a conference center.

Despite the colossal size, Falwell says the sanctuary will be cozy. "You've got to have a balcony and keep everybody close in," Falwell says. "Eye contact is very important."

Falwell started Thomas Road in 1956 with 35 members. The church now has 22,000 members and 7,500 weekly attendees. Church officials have discussed the move to a new sanctuary since 1981. Previously \$7 million had

been raised to purchase land and for architectural plans.

Falwell, who turned 65 in August, says the new church will be his last hurrah as he begins to hand over control to associate pastors, including son Jonathan. "That would be my last major project," he says. "I'd like to get that done and have it paid for before I pass [the ministry] to somebody else."

*By Christopher Calnan
in Lynchburg*



Charitable donation: The church and surrounding grounds on Dixie Trail in Raleigh is a prime piece of real estate.

Dying Church Bequeaths Sanctuary to Anglicans

John Lancaster, rector of Saint George's Anglican Church in Raleigh, North Carolina, had started to lay the groundwork for a \$250,000 capital campaign to construct a sanctuary. Instead, his congregation received an entire church—and parsonage—for free.

Saint George's formed in April 1997 with 64 members after splitting from the mainline Episcopal Church over issues of

women's ordination and use of the 1979 Book of Common Prayer. It is now part of the Anglican Church in America.

Initially congregants met in an orthodontist's office. The congregation started sharing space with Sunset Hills Christian Church last December.

Sunset Hills built the church that seats 160 in 1956, a result of a church split. The congregation at first had 120 attend-

ees, but the number had dwindled to 13 by the time Randal Klocke became pastor in 1990. Although attendance grew to 45 at one point, it fell to 16 last November when the congregation withdrew from the Disciples of Christ because members felt the denomination had become too liberal in areas such as homosexuality.

Nevertheless, the church retained the title to the property-

ty. Klocke, who supplemented his pastor's salary as a pizza-delivery driver, felt the Lord telling him to give the facilities to Saint George's outright. The remaining attendees concurred, and the transfer took place in June at a joint service.

"It's a mindboggling act of generosity that really caught us dumbfounded," Lancaster says. "The most amazing thing is this happened between two divergent traditions."

"This was God's plan to bless them," Klocke says. "Sunset Hills Christian Church was not faithful with what the Lord had given."

The three acres are situated on prime real estate and valued at \$750,000. Klocke earlier had been ordained a Southern Baptist and he is now director of counseling and outreach at Main Street Baptist Church in China Grove, North Carolina.

Biblical Job Training Succeeds

In the aftermath of welfare reform (CT, April 7, 1997, p. 46), Jobs Partnership is proving that the Bible has much to say about the value of work and how it should be done—values that are beginning to transform some communities with chronic unemployment problems.

Jobs Partnership began three years ago as a way of matching business leaders with pastors of different denominations and races to develop a program teaching a biblically based work

One achiever is Gerald Simms, a 22-year-old Richmond former drug dealer now employed as a brick mason. "Just because you live in the inner city doesn't mean you have to have the mind of the inner city," Simms says. "If you have the Lord, you can do anything."

Jobs Partnership uses a bib-

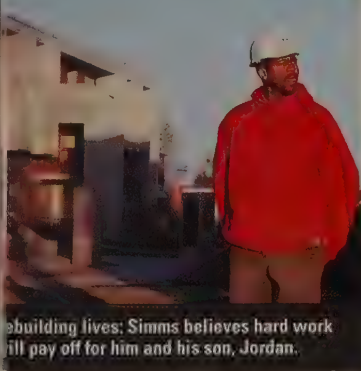


lically based weekly training curriculum to establish new attitudes toward work. The curriculum covers such topics as integrity, stewardship, communication, conflict resolution, and attitude in the context of honoring God. The program also offers a hands-on biblical human-resources development component, which teaches participants how to

devise a résumé, complete a job application, and prepare for an interview. Each participant is assigned a mentor for up to two years, a relationship that bridges race and geography. Materials are free.

Long says, "Our goal is going from welfare to getting well—it's not just about getting a job." Raleigh United Church of Christ minister Donald McCoy and highway construction company executive Chris Mangum cofounded Jobs Partnership.

By Carolyn McCulley.



Building lives: Simms believes hard work will pay off for him and his son, Jordan.

ethic to the under- or unemployed. Today, groups in 22 cities nationally and 10 North Carolina counties are part of the program. Jobs Partnership national director Skip Long expects that 40 new groups—including ones from Ireland, Uganda, and Trinidad and Tobago—will start within the next year. The success rate is solid. In Raleigh, North Carolina, where the program began, 178 of the 190 people who completed the 12-week training course at least two years ago are in full-time jobs.

In Brief

◆ **The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS)** has expressed "deep regret and profound disagreement with" recent ecumenical actions taken by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). In July in Saint Louis, the 2.6 million-member LCMS, at its triennial convention, criticized the ELCA for establishing full communion with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Reformed Church in America, and United Church of Christ (CT, Oct. 6, 1997, p. 81). Delegates also found fault with the joint declaration on the doctrine of justification between the ELCA and Roman Catholic Church (CT, Aug. 10, 1998, p. 26).

◆ **Regent University** founder Pat Robertson on July 16 instructed the school to return a \$1,000 grant awarded by the Virginia Commission for the Arts after learning that the state panel received \$523,000 last year from the **National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)**. The Virginia Beach school had used the funds to help produce *Pavel's Chariot*, a film about the Holocaust. A day earlier, the Robertson-founded Christian Coalition had called for an end to government funding of the NEA.

◆ **Dove Award** winner **O'Landa Draper**, 34, died July 21 of kidney failure at a Nashville hospital. The gospel musician, who led the 60-member singing group the Associates, had been nominated for Grammy album of the year five times.

◆ **David Wells**, 59, became the dean of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary's Charlotte, North Carolina, campus in July. Wells will continue as a theology professor at Gordon's campus in Hamilton, Massachusetts. He replaces Wayne Goodwin, 57, who will continue as ministry professor in Charlotte. CT

TV DOCUMENTARY

Faith and Science in Dialogue

Are scientists within the bounds of morality as they pioneer genetic engineering? Did the Creator's creative activity include a "big bang"?

Such questions are posed in "Faith & Reason," a one-hour documentary airing on most PBS stations September 11. Hosted by science writer Margaret Wertheim, the program touches on the historical link between religion and the work of scientists. It also takes viewers into the modern laboratories of controversial scientific disciplines, such as genetics, to examine the connections and conflicts between science and faith.

But Wertheim says the primary purpose of "Faith & Reason" is to document an emerging dialogue between theologians and scientists.

The program argues that the often-antagonistic post-Darwin relationship between Christianity and science is yielding to a new model in which believers are more open to the idea of God working through natural processes and in which scientists are more amenable to spiritual perspectives.

Wertheim says the discourse between scientists and people of faith has been taking place for two decades but has picked up momentum recently. She notes that evangelicals, who had been largely absent from the dialogue, are beginning to join the conversation in greater numbers. One, Nancy Murphy of Fuller Theological Seminary, is featured in the documentary.

By David Baird.

Conversation or Competition?

Pentecostals, Roman Catholics in long-standing talks to resolve conflicts, discover some commonalities.



Papal exchange: Cecil Robeck, Jr. (left) meets with Pope John Paul II at the Vatican.

In recent months, meetings between evangelicals and Catholics to discuss social issues and the historic joint declaration between Catholics and Lutherans on the doctrine of justification (CT, Aug. 10, 1998, p. 26) have attracted much attention. Meanwhile, few have noticed a more than quarter-century-long discussion between Roman Catholics and Pentecostals, which has generated several surprising and significant documents.

"Within the Pentecostal tradition, and within the evangelical tradition, there's been a reticence to talk about dialogue with Roman Catholics," says Cecil M. Robeck, Jr., a Pentecostal who has participated in the International Roman Catholic-Pentecostal Dialogue since 1985. He presented a summary of the group's accomplishments to the pope last year.

Robeck, an ordained Assemblies of God minister and a church history and ecumenics professor at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California, acknowledges that it is more common to hear charismatics talk about competition, or even open warfare, with Catholics, particularly in Latin America, where sometimes violent altercations with Catholics have accompanied the rapid growth of Pentecostalism.

Observers say that by 2005 Guatemala will have more Pentecostals than Roman

Catholics. In the 30 years after that, Robeck says, half a dozen Latin American countries will have a Pentecostal majority. "We have the potential of a Northern Ireland throughout Latin America if we don't watch ourselves."

FOCUSING ON CENTRAL TRUTHS:

But Catholic-Pentecostal dialogue is more than a regional matter, because the two groups are Christendom's largest blocs. According to researcher David Barrett, one-third of the world's 6 billion people are Christians. Roughly half of these believers—1 billion—are Catholics. With tremendous growth in the past generation, Pentecostals and charismatics now number 500 million.

Benedictine monk Killian McDonnell, a consultant to the Pontifical Council for Christian Unity, which was established after Vatican II to promote the Roman Catholic church's ecumenical efforts, believes discussion is essential. "The two most numerous Christian bodies in that world, which have historically been characterized by mutual hostility and denunciation, are getting together, and sitting down, and finding out that both sides have a lot of myths about what the other teaches," says McDonnell, a charter participant.

The goal of the talks is not structural unity, or even doctrinal uniformity. Pen-

tecostal participants do not speak for their own denominations and usually pay their own way to the international meetings. But the dialogue has built relationships and fostered understanding. "We have become old friends," says McDonnell. "We're astonished at the degree of agreement on the most central truths."

"DARK SIDE OF CONFLICT": Over the past 26 years, dialogue has been frank about such divisive issues as baptism and the Holy Spirit. But some of the toughest times came as members worked to write "Evangelization, Proselytism, and Common Witness," a document that goes to the heart of some of the two communities' most divisive disputes.

"We have come up with a document in which the pain is evident," says McDonnell. (The entire report will run in the fall issue of *Pneuma*, the journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies.)

Both Protestant missionaries to Latin America and Catholic clerics who have tried to protect their parishioners from such evangelism efforts can recount horror stories of intense religious rivalries that, at times, have included angry demonstrations, violence, and church burnings. More common is an ongoing war of words, with Protestants calling Catholics "non-Christians" or "demoniacs," and Catholics referring to Protestants as "wolves in sheep's clothing."

The authors of the report describe such events as "the dark side of our histories." As the report states, "It is a scandal when unbelievers are more aware of the things which separate these churches than those things they hold in common." Or, as Robeck told John Paul II last year, "We believe that Pentecostals and Catholics have far too often sinned against one another, thereby bringing shame upon the Name of the One who died for us."

During the dialogue, both sides have acknowledged past errors. Catholics, for example, have admitted to using political and economic power to intimidate Pentecostal pastors and to various failures in making Christian disciples, including "not always bringing parishioners to a personal faith commitment." Pentecostals, meanwhile, have confessed a need for greater systematic reflection on theology and its social implications.

EVANGELISM VERSUS PROSELYTISM: Dialogue participants are motivated by more than a mere desire for glob-

al goodwill. In both dialogue documents and phone interviews they talk about their "sorrow" over the church's failure to exhibit the unity Jesus prayed for in John 17:11 and that Paul pleaded for in Ephesians 4:3, a sorrow they experienced firsthand during the parallel and mutually exclusive Communion rituals that have been a part of the ecumenical worship services that conclude their annual meetings.

The report also describes how "the regrettable division among Christians is a counter witness to the credibility of the gospel," a reality that Muslims and Hindus have exploited in their own crusading efforts.

The report calls evangelism "an essential part of the mission of the church." However, proselytism is described as "a disrespectful, insensitive, and uncharitable effort to transfer the allegiance of a Christian from one ecclesial body to another." The report further describes proselytism as an unethical activity that can take many forms, including willful misrepresentation of the beliefs and practices of others, or the use of force, coercion, compulsion, mockery, or intimidation to press for conversions.

The report challenges believers to learn more about the theology of other Christian faith communities, to engage with other believers in public demonstrations of unity, such as joint prayer meetings and pulpit exchanges, to stand with others in the defense of civil and religious liberties, and to practice evangelism with an eye toward "ecclesial etiquette" as Billy Graham has done in many of his crusades.

Of course, divisions remain over such areas as the nature of the church or the question of who is or is not church-ed or evangelized.

Will the talks have significant impact? Vinson Synan, dean of Regent University's School of Divinity, says they are "essential" but adds, "for most Pentecostals, they are really not a big deal. Most have never even heard of them." Within the Assemblies of God, which has a rule prohibiting ministers from supporting the "ecumenical movement," there have been calls for disciplining Robeck and charges that he has been "meeting with the Antichrist."

But Robeck remains committed to the discussion. "When I talk about it with students or laypeople, they are excited," he says. "The greatest problem is with people in leadership in both faith communities who are concerned primarily with self-preservation."

By Steve Rabey.

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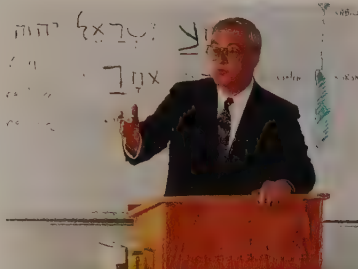
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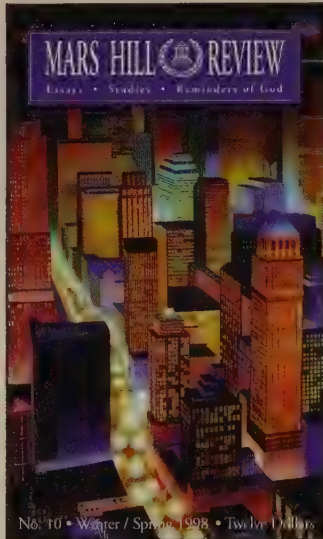
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Sects Not So Bad After All?

A German parliamentary commission of inquiry into "sects and psychogroups" has wrapped up two years of work by declaring that new religious and psychological movements generally pose no real danger to state and society.

The commission, composed of a dozen representatives of the country's main political parties and a dozen public religious experts, found that a fraction of the religious movements indeed had the potential to cause "conflicts" with some individuals. But commission members, in a 600-page report, concluded that the country's constitution, guaranteeing religious freedom, need not be amended. It called for tolerance and understanding within society, and demanded discontinuation of the "derogatory" term *sect*. Instead, such groups should be referred to as "new religious and ideological communities."

In its recommendations, the commission encourages parliamentarians to set up a federal foundation dealing with new religious and ideological communities. It further suggests that lawmakers pass legislation for state support of private counseling and information centers and look into profiteering by the new groups.

JUSTIFICATION FOR PROBE? Even though the outcome does not trample on individual religious freedoms, some German observers are upset at the scope and purpose of the study. During a June parliamentary debate on the final report, commission chairperson Ortrun Schätzle, of Chancellor Helmut Kohl's ruling Christian Democratic Union Party, refuted criticism that the commission targeted "fringe Pentecostal, charismatic, and end-times" churches.

"The Commission of Inquiry always oriented itself on the areas of conflict and not on individual groups and certainly not on any set of religious beliefs," she stressed.

Schätzle says the commission formed in 1996 as a result of petitions submitted by citizens complaining of "physical and psychological harm, extortion, oppression, and the use of manipulative techniques" against victims in certain groups.

"These victims and family members watched the work of the commission with high expectations and called on the state to evaluate the situation, warn the citizens of potential dangers, and, above all, to prevent violations of human rights," she added.

She noted that there has been in-

creased public concern about the activities of certain groups since the 1960s as changes in society prompted a boom in self-help groups with religious or New Age ideology. In general, there have been no "passive victims" among persons who joined new religious groups, she said, but added that the state must intervene "when basic law is violated."

SCIENTOLOGY WATCH: Roland Kohn, panel member from the liberal Free Democratic Party, reported that the commission has asked federal and state authorities to monitor the Scientology Organization, which has come under increased fire in Germany for its economic and political activity (CT, March 3, 1997, p. 68). The final report labels Scientology not a church, but an "extremist political" group. During the 1990s, several government and church officials have demanded that the Scientology Organization be banned.

Findings of the commission have been backed by representatives of the two main church bodies to which Germans nominally belong, the Roman Catholic Church and the umbrella Protestant Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD), which includes Lutheran and Reformed bodies. The EKD noted that churches must engage in dialogue with different religious groups and, where needed, assist with counseling of affected persons.

"We took care that in this process groups would not be persecuted, stigmatized, or defamed," said Hans Gasper, a commission member representing the Catholic Bishops' Conference. "The final report speaks highly of respect for religious and confessional freedoms."

Gasper told CT that "fringe" Pentecostal churches had been mentioned during discussions, particularly in connection with faith healing. In one incident in Cologne, a charismatic believer allegedly encouraged hospital patients to stop taking medicine and allow the Holy Spirit to heal them instead.

Gasper said 90 percent of the cases he researched deal with youth who join a sect or cult, then break off studies and isolate themselves from family members. Followers of unorthodox philosophies in Germany include 450,000 adherents of the New Apostolic Church, 166,000 Jehovah's Witnesses, 50,000 transcendental meditators, and 36,000 Mormons.

By Richard Nyberg in Bonn.

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PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Christians Aid Tidal Wave Survivors

The survivors of the July 17 tsunami that hit Papua New Guinea are slowly rebuilding their lives, despite the continued threat of disease. As many as 2,000 are feared dead in the remote area. Christian aid groups are supplying medical care, food, and fresh water.

Initially, decomposing corpses contaminated water sources, increasing the risk of typhus and malaria. Shallow graves and gasoline-ignited cremations substituted for traditional burial ceremonies.

Randall Karcher, a Wycliffe staff member in Papua New Guinea, says the absence of

the traditional burial practice of sharing stories around the body of the deceased will create significant psychological damage among survivors who lost everything. "It's kind of a reminiscing; a closure time," he says. "They're not going to have that chance."

Waves towering higher than 25-foot coconut trees decimated villages along 18 miles of the South Pacific island's northwestern coast, following an underwater earthquake. Some of the drowning victims were tossed miles from their villages.

Hundreds of children died, including many who attended



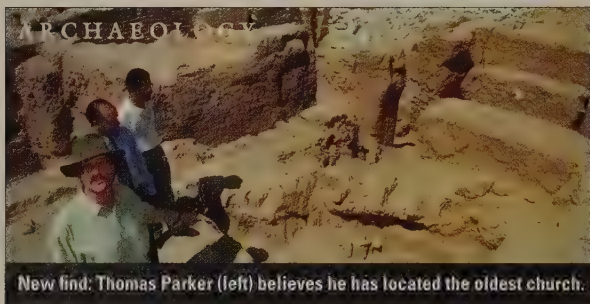
Drowning victim: The body of a Nimas village resident caught in the tsunami.

inland missionary-run schools. They had returned home for a two-week holiday when the waves struck the island located north of Australia. Some schools may not reopen because most of the children died.

Wycliffe linguists John and Bonnie Nystrom work in Arop, one of the villages

destroyed by the waves, but they were in Ukarumpa, about 300 miles away, when the tidal wave struck. "There's virtually no evidence the village was ever there," John Nystrom told CT. "The only evidence that someone once lived there is a cement foundation of a church."

By Christine J. Gardner.



New find: Thomas Parker (left) believes he has located the oldest church.

'Oldest Church' Discovered in Jordan

North Carolina State University archaeologist Thomas Parker believes he has uncovered remains of what may be the oldest church in the world, dating from the late third century, in the Jordanian port city of Aqaba.

Although other buildings used for Christian gatherings during the first century and a half following Jesus' ministry have been unearthed, Parker maintains these are the remains of "the earliest known building specifically designed as a church."

The church apparently crumbled during an earthquake in 363 and then was buried by desert sand until Parker's excavation team uncovered it. "It

may offer valuable clues about early church architecture unavailable from many Near Eastern churches continuously remodeled since that period," Parker told CT.

German archaeologists working in Umm Qais, in northern Jordan, believe they have found the remains of another church, this one built to mark the miracle of the Gadarene swine. It is a five-aisled basilica similar in design to a dozen other churches, such as the Church of the Nativity and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, which mark significant events in the life of Christ. The church was built over the remains of a first-century tomb.

By Gordon Govier.

AUSTRALIA

Racing Fans Can Find Faith at Track

Australia's biggest tire mogul, a recently born-again Christian after winning a battle against cancer, wants to bring religion to the center of his favorite pastime: auto racing.

Bob Jane has rescued an 80-year-old rustic church set for demolition and moved it to the Thunderdome NASCAR racing track in Melbourne. The church will be part of extended Christian activities at the first NASCAR track outside the United States.

The idea of having a church at the racing site came as a result of prayer. "This is a dangerous sport," says Jane, a self-made millionaire. "The drivers need all the help they can get to stay alive." The interdenominational church, to be completed next month, will be available for weddings, christenings,

funerals, and other events.

In addition to opening races with prayers and eulogies, Jane plans to bring sports ministers from Charlotte, North Carolina, to join Australian evangelism teams during the summer racing season that starts in October.

Jane, a racing-car driver himself, built the track as part of a motor-racing complex that includes flat and drag racing.

By Clare M. Booth in Melbourne.



Bob Jane



Rescued from demolition: The country church has been moved to a setting with more traffic.

Congress May Merge Efforts

Rather than competing for congressional votes, sponsors of two religious persecution bills are discussing how to combine the measures (CT, May 18, 1998, p. 20).

The Freedom from Religious Persecution Act (the Wolf-Specter bill), designed to punish countries guilty of severe religious persecution, passed the House by a 375-to-41 vote. In July, both the Wolf-Specter bill and the more comprehensive International Religious Freedom Act, introduced by Sen. Don Nickles (R-Okla.), had been scheduled for full Senate consideration. But legislators put the brakes on further congressional action and began talks on possibly fusing the bills.

Groups that monitor relig-

ious persecution abroad are cautiously supporting a compromise. "We don't want to see Wolf-Specter watered down to where it doesn't have any teeth," says Keith Rodrick of the Coalition for the Defense of Human Rights Under Islamization.

Karen Lord of the Helsinki Commission says, "When compared, Wolf-Specter is good for specific situations where religious persecution is most egregious. Nickles's bill takes a much broader view to get at the root of the problem."

Both lawmakers and religious groups say passage of some form of the legislation through both houses of Congress before the end of the year is critical.

By Walter Ratliff in Washington.

In Brief

◆ Following an 18-month audit, the French Tax Authority has imposed a 60 percent tax on religious contributions made by **Jehovah's Witnesses**, covering a four-year period. The government agency ruled it is not a religion, and therefore owes \$50 million in back taxes. The organization appealed the decision after the government put a lien on its property. In an open letter to French President Jacques Chirac, Jehovah's Witnesses representative L. A. Swingle called the ruling "a shocking display of religious discrimination" that "could affect donations to any religion, charity, or not-for-profit organization the tax administration chooses to target in the same manner." With 220,000 adherents, Jehovah's Witnesses are the third-largest religious body in France.

◆ Britain's House of Lords, the upper legislative body in Parliament, voted 290 to 122 to overturn a law reducing the **age of consent** for homosexual acts to 16 from 18. The House of Commons earlier had overwhelmingly supported the change in age (CT, Aug. 10, 1998, p. 27). The archbishop of Canterbury led the reversal move, with support from a variety of religious leaders, including the UK's Evangelical Alliance.

◆ Police in Kastoria, Greece, stopped an open-air program in July of the interdenominational antidrug society **Philemon**, which is associated with the evangelical **Hellenic Ministries** (CT, Nov. 17, 1997, p. 96). The ministry says police revoked their permit and ordered the group to disband upon orders from Orthodox Archbishop Seraphim. [CT]

Martyrs Carved in Stone

A congregation representing various denominations from around the world gathered July 9 at Westminster Abbey for the unveiling of ten limestone statues commemorating twentieth-century Christian martyrs. Queen Elizabeth, Anglican Archbishop George Carey, and relatives and colleagues of those honored attended.

The gleaming, nearly life-size figures included noted heroes such as Baptist civil-rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr., of the United States, Catholic Bishop Oscar Romero of El Salvador, Lutheran theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer of Germany, and Franciscan friar Maximilian Kolbe of Poland.

Canon Anthony Harvey, innovator of the project, says the selection process was complicated by the committee's desire to include every continent and a broad denominational representation.

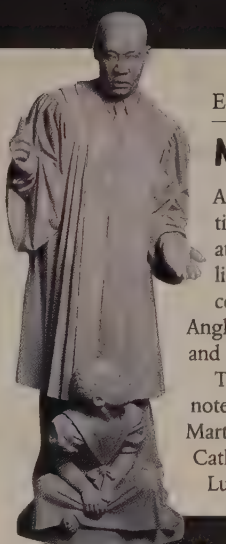
"The cost of Christian witness, and the number of Christians willing to die for what they believed . . . has been greater

in this century than in any previous period in the history of the church," Harvey says.

Others included are Saint Elizabeth, an Orthodox nun martyred during Russia's Bolshevik Revolution; Esther John, a Presbyterian evangelist in Pakistan; and Wang Zhiming, a pastor slain during China's Cultural Revolution.

Anglicans honored are Ugandan bishop Janani Luwum, killed during the rule of Idi Amin; Mange Masawala of South Africa, a teen murdered by her animist parents; and Lucian Tapiedi of Papua New Guinea, killed during the Japanese invasion in World War II. Tapiedi's murderer later converted to Christianity and became the rector of a church named in his honor.

By Karen L. Mulder in London.



WESTMINSTER ABBEY

Martyrs row: The statues, including King (above), fill niches that have been empty since the fifteenth century above the great doors.

Christians Expelled from Maldives

At least 15 foreign Christians have been expelled from the Republic of Maldives, a nation of 200 inhabited islands in the Indian Ocean, after government authorities launched unannounced searches of their homes. No official charges have been filed.

As many as 50 Maldivians also were arrested in June under suspicion of being Christians, which is illegal under the Maldivian constitution. The Evangelical Alliance of Sri Lanka reports they are being held in solitary con-

finement at the Dhoonidhoo prison and are likely being subjected to torture.

The national religion of Maldives is Islam and nearly all 280,000 residents are adherents, although a tiny native Christian population exists.

Recently, the country's Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs warned Maldivians not to listen to Christian programs broadcast for the first time in the Dhivehi language by Far East Broadcasting Association from Seychelles or they would risk arrest. [CT]

Growing Unrest

Greek Church says laity lamentations are groundless.

Is there a genuine crisis in the Greek Orthodox Church of America or is a small band of well-financed dissidents stirring up trouble in an otherwise stable archdiocese?

Opinions vary dramatically, but one thing is certain: the chasm is widening between the top leadership of the Greek Orthodox Church in America, which has 1 million U.S. members, and the newly formed dissident coalition Greek Orthodox American Leaders (GOAL). The intensifying conflict became evident at July's biennial clergy-laity congress in Orlando.

The Greek Orthodox Church's internal dispute over the role of their highest leader in America reached a new level in March, as GOAL leaders called for the resignation or reassignment of Archbishop Spyridon if he did not respond to their concerns by May 1 (CT, June 15, 1998, p. 13). So far, no resolution is in sight.

GOAL members, many of whom hold prominent church and community positions, lament what they consider Spyridon's autocratic leadership, a "pay-and-obey" mentality, and questionable financial dealings by the archbishop.

GOAL came together after the June 1997 firings of four priests by the archbishop at the Hellenic College/Holy Cross Seminary in Brookline, Massachusetts. Many members believe the firings are related to a sexual harassment cover-up at the seminary.

According to Mark Arey, executive director of communications for the Greek Orthodox Church in America, school officials have promised to work with two accrediting agencies to correct any defects in their current policies.

VOTE INDICATES DIVISION: In an emotional vote at the congress that illustrates the deepening rift within the church, members of the clergy-laity congress voted



Archbishop address: Spyridon delivers an opening speech at the congress.

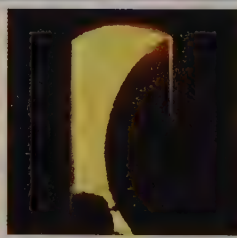
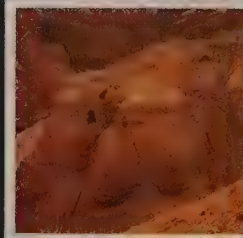
260 to 255 to recommend reinstating the four priests who had been dismissed and to develop a task force to study the situation.

Steve Angelides, an Oakland judge and a GOAL founder, believes the outcome is telling. "This vote proves that when the archbishop tried to minimize the discontent to 10 or 15 people, as he said at the beginning of the conference, he was wrong," he says. "It shows that he's divided the church right down the middle."

The congress is composed of clergy and lay representatives for the 500 Greek parishes across the country. Since the gathering, the four priests have written a letter to Spyridon asking to be reinstated. However, the vote is nonbinding and

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Spyridon has the power to dismiss it. Several priests say the vote represented the first time they had openly taken a stand against the archbishop.

CRISIS OR MISUNDERSTANDING?

Arey believes Spyridon has been unfairly portrayed as heavy-handed, and he says the archbishop cares deeply for his flock. Furthermore, he says talk among laity of financial impropriety is irresponsible. "We have the lowest deficit in ten years," Arey says. "We have the most comprehensive audits and financial disclosures ever. There's a disconnect between complaint and reality."

GOAL press officer Dean Poppes alleges that Spyridon has been fiscally capricious, citing a \$1.4 million home the archbishop tried to purchase—without committee approval—using a nonrefundable check for \$139,500 as one example. Arey counters that the archbishop had nowhere else to live, and his chancellor believed the executive committee would approve the transaction.

A subcommittee formed by the Archdiocesan Council Committee headed by San Diego Chargers owner Alexander Spanos

reported finding numerous irregularities in financial procedure and accused archdiocesan staff of impeding their investigation. Spyridon is not implicated directly.

Many GOAL leaders believe Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and Spyridon place little value in laity views. Angelides says, "They act like the Holy Spirit only comes through the patriarch of Constantinople."

Poppes concurs. "We have no beef with the doctrine, worship, or hierarchical structure of the Orthodox Church," he says. "We just want our hierarchs to be good hierarchs."

DIFFERING PHILOSOPHIES: The foundational disagreement may stem from disparate understandings of the role of Orthodoxy in modern American society. The underlying problem to activists such as Poppes is that the Greek leadership seems set on stopping the drive for an autocephalous American church.

Poppes complains that Spyridon and Bartholomew do not understand Americans. "They only understand tenth-century Constantinople," he says. "The model then was that the patriarch and emperor were hand-in-hand. That model doesn't

work in the twenty-first century."

Arey says the growing pains of the American church have led to confusion of long-standing clergy and laity roles. "You can't come in like the one-minute manager and change everything according to your liking and understanding," Arey considers GOAL to be "a very small, narrowly based group that has significant financial resources to run an ad campaign to portray the church as chaotic and mismanaged." Poppes says GOAL did spend \$125,000 in sending an eight-page newspaper mailing on "the crisis in the church" before the congress to almost 122,000 Greek Orthodox households.

At the conference, Spyridon said he "regrets the recent letters which have been circulated within our community whose sole purpose is to attack and hurt clergy and lay members of the church."

Despite the difficulties, Angelides is hopeful. "We've been religious couch potatoes," he says. "Our parents built these churches and we've done nothing. I am certain the Holy Spirit is using this as part of the transformation process."

By Shelly Houston.

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Pictured are Ed.D. faculty (L to R) Warren Benson, Brian Richardson, Jack Cunningham, Mark Simpson and Dennis Williams.

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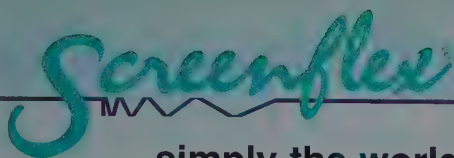
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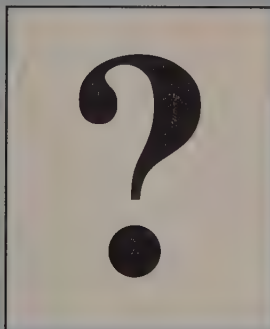
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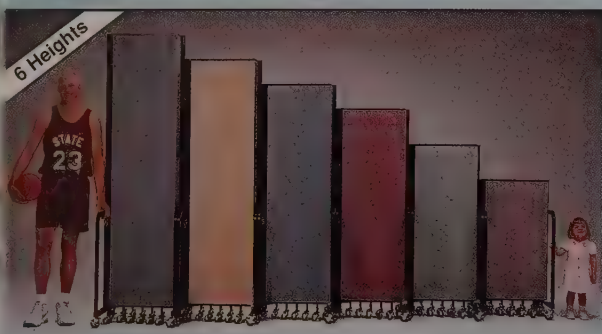
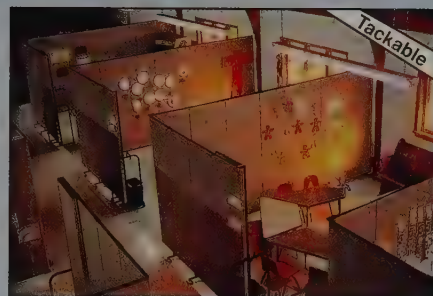
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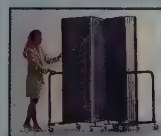
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Anglicans Deem Homosexuality 'Incompatible with Scripture'



Lambeth kickoff: Archbishop of Canterbury Carey (standing) addresses the opening service.

The campaign by liberal bishops for the ordination and marriage of practicing homosexuals suffered a striking setback in August at the historic Lambeth Conference in Canterbury, England.

Anglican bishops from around the globe voted 526 to 70 with 45 abstentions for a resolution declaring that homosexual practice is "incompatible with Scripture." During the past year, several other major Protestant church bodies have issued statements either rejecting ordination and marriage for practicing homosexuals or affirming that sexual relations should be limited to heterosexual marriage.

Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey said, "I stand wholeheartedly with traditional Anglican orthodoxy. I see no room in Holy Scripture or the entire Christian tradition for any sexual activity outside matrimony of husband and wife."

INFLUENTIAL RESOLUTION: Once a decade, the bishops of the world's 55 million Anglicans, known in the United States as Episcopalians, gather for the Lambeth Conference, held this time at the University of Kent in Canterbury. The meetings are advisory in nature and nonbinding, but are nevertheless highly influential.

The debate over the place of sexually active homosexuals overshadowed much of the three-week-long conference's agenda. Early on, a controversial meeting between the Lambeth sexuality study group and homosexuals was canceled. Bishop John Spong of New Jersey, a leading advocate for homosexuals, was

put on the defensive when he called African Christians "superstitious" and backward in their views on sexuality.

The bishops' sexuality study committee was drawn into intense exchanges as they drafted a compromise resolution. But two days later during a plenary session, bishops approved conservative amendments to the committee's hard-won agreement.

During debate, Bishop Catherine Wainwright of Indianapolis told the conference that, in the past, the church had thought it had the correct answers to moral problems such as slavery but centuries later had to repent. She said, "Our call is not to correctness but to love."

After the vote, Bishop James Stanton, president of the conservative American Anglican Council of Dallas, said the sexuality debate has "sapped our energy from urgent tasks such as evangelism and justice for the poorest of the poor."

Liberal bishops stressed that they would not end their efforts on behalf of homosexuals. Scottish Bishop Richard Holloway said he felt "gutted, shafted, and betrayed, but the struggle will go on."

AFRICAN VOICES: The sexuality resolution may signal the most influence ever by African and Asian bishops. In a reference to the growing influence of African Anglicans, Stanton noted how "eloquent learned voices from other places around the globe" were powerfully persuasive at Lambeth. About 87 percent of Anglicans worldwide reside in eight countries.

The greatest growth has been concentrated in Africa and in a few spots in Asia.

In Nigeria, for instance, the number of Anglican dioceses has increased 35 percent from 26 a decade ago to 61 this year. There are 5.7 million Anglicans in Nigeria. In the United States, by comparison, there are 2.3 million Anglicans (mostly in the Episcopal Church, U.S.A.).

Bishop John Rucyahana of Shyira, Rwanda, is one example of a new generation of church leaders from the developing world who have been tested by internal warfare, religious persecution, and poverty. Rucyahana told CT, "The church is losing the ability to preach the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. We don't like your First World way of speaking ambiguous words and not being straight on the issues. We don't feel it's time for more dialogue [on homosexuality]."

"It's not the institution per se which we want to save. We want to save the ability to preach the transforming gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, the ability to convert the world to Jesus, not to the institution."

In other action, Lambeth bishops voted to oppose compulsion in ordination, lending support to four American bishops who refuse to ordain women.

By Timothy C. Morgan, with Robert Nowell and David Virtue reporting from Canterbury, England.

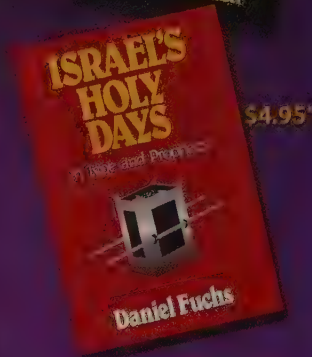
Lambeth Sexuality Resolution

The resolution states in part that the Anglican Communion:

- In view of the teaching of Scripture, upholds faithfulness in marriage between a man and a woman in lifelong union, and believes that abstinence is right for those who are not called to marriage.
- Recognizes that there are people who experience a homosexual orientation. Many are members of the church and are seeking pastoral care and moral direction, and God's transforming power for the ordering of relationships. The church commits to listen to the experience of homosexual people and assure them that they are loved by God, and that all baptized, believing, and faithful persons, regardless of sexual orientation, are full members of the body of Christ.
- While rejecting homosexual practice as incompatible with Scripture, calls on all Anglicans to minister pastorally and sensitively to all, irrespective of sexual orientation, and to condemn irrational fear of homosexuals, violence within marriage, and any trivialization and commercialization of sex.
- Cannot advise the legitimizing or blessing of same-sex unions, nor the ordination of those involved in such unions.

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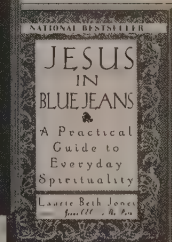
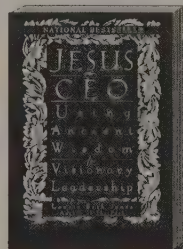
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Keeping Students in School

Christian colleges seek to improve retention rate.

Jennifer Martin looked forward to attending a Christian college. After graduating from a public high school where she participated in Young Life, Martin sought a refuge from the world where she could be fed spiritually. "I thought it would be like a big summer

camp, with everyone jumping up and down about God every day." Martin, a scholarship recipient, selected Eastern College in Saint Davids, Pennsylvania, largely because of its proximity to her home in Willow Grove.

But anticipation quickly turned to dis-

illusionment. Four months into her first year, Martin seriously considered leaving. "I was feeling very disconnected at Eastern," she says. "I wasn't feeling I had found a niche." Martin is one of many Christian college students who contemplate leaving school. Research shows more Christian college students drop out before graduation than students at comparable private colleges: 47 percent of first-year Christian college students stay through graduation, compared to 53 percent at other private institutions.

Student retention is a worsening national problem at both private and public institutions, with rates declining 1 to 2 percent a year, according to Eastern College psychology professor Laurie Schreiner, director of the Coalition for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU) Quality/Retention Project. "Students are much more likely to shop around, to vote with their feet," she says.

Christian college students see themselves as consumers, Schreiner says, and will transfer to a public school or drop out altogether before considering another Christian college if they are unhappy with the product.

Some Christian colleges have been slow to recognize retention as a problem, relying instead on recruitment efforts to increase enrollments. Others have realized the challenge, but have not had the financial resources to tackle it.

FOCUS ON FACULTY: Now, though, institutions are trying to learn from one another how to keep their students in school. The CCCU recently surveyed 20,000 students at 79 member schools to find ways of increasing student retention. The survey measured students' satisfaction with their college experience as an indicator of their propensity to stay through graduation.

The survey indicates Christian college students are generally more satisfied with their educational experience than students at secular private colleges, which makes the dropout rate especially perplexing.

Although respondents indicated the greatest discontent with parking, food, and financial aid, they also reported dissatisfaction with academic advising. Retention experts are hoping a renewed focus on one-on-one interaction with faculty outside the classroom will help.

About 20 CCCU faculty and staff joined the largest-ever National Conference on Student Retention in New Orleans in July for training in mentoring students. "We need to see [advising] as more than course scheduling," Schreiner says.

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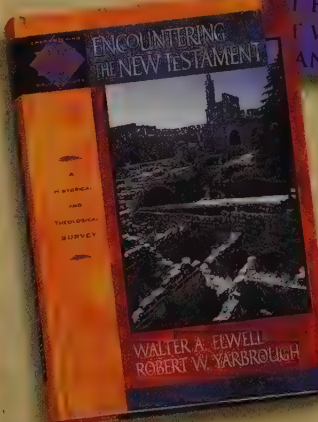
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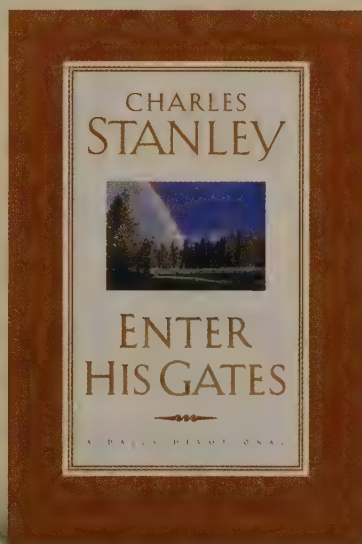


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Because of counsel from her adviser, Liddy Tuleja, Martin decided to remain at Eastern, despite having a boyfriend at Virginia Tech and her indecision on a major. Over coffee or during impromptu meetings after class, Tuleja says, "I would just listen and let her make her own decisions." Martin, who is a senior business major this fall, calls Tuleja both a mentor and friend.

Such time-intensive retention solutions come at a price for already overburdened faculty members. "You've got a full teaching load, you're expected to be on committees, preparing for classes, [doing] scholarly research," says Tuleja. "You're kind of a jack-of-all-trades." Most professors advise about 20 students. The best advisers can mentor as many as 40 at a time, but a larger advising load does not necessarily mean a larger paycheck.

DESIRE FOR DIVERSITY: Institutions may have the most difficulty retain-



Mentoring moment: Tuleja (left) convinced Martin to stay in school.

ing ethnic minorities, despite increased efforts to attract them.

The survey indicates nonwhite students are among the most disenfranchised with their Christian college experience, a situation that is mirrored across the board in higher education. At Christian institutions, Schreiner says, "It's not that we're not welcoming and nice, but we're geared to a white mentality." Recently, the Mustard Seed Foundation, which awards grants to

Christian organizations, committed to help Christian colleges retain underrepresented students by creating a \$10 million scholarship fund. The money will be distributed among ten CCCU institutions over a five-year test phase in an effort to attract African-American, Hispanic, and Native-American students.

Schreiner says schools can improve their retention of minority students if they work to broaden their curriculum offerings and employ more minority faculty and staff.

But the pool of qualified nonwhite faculty is small, forcing Christian colleges with limited budgets to recruit amid offers from other private and public institutions. "It is impossible for us to compete in salary and status," says Grace Ju, an Asian-American professor of biology at Gordon College in Wenham, Massachusetts, which has 9 percent minority faculty. "What are we to do?"

Some minority professors are wary of

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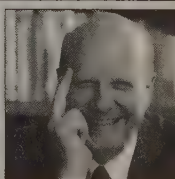
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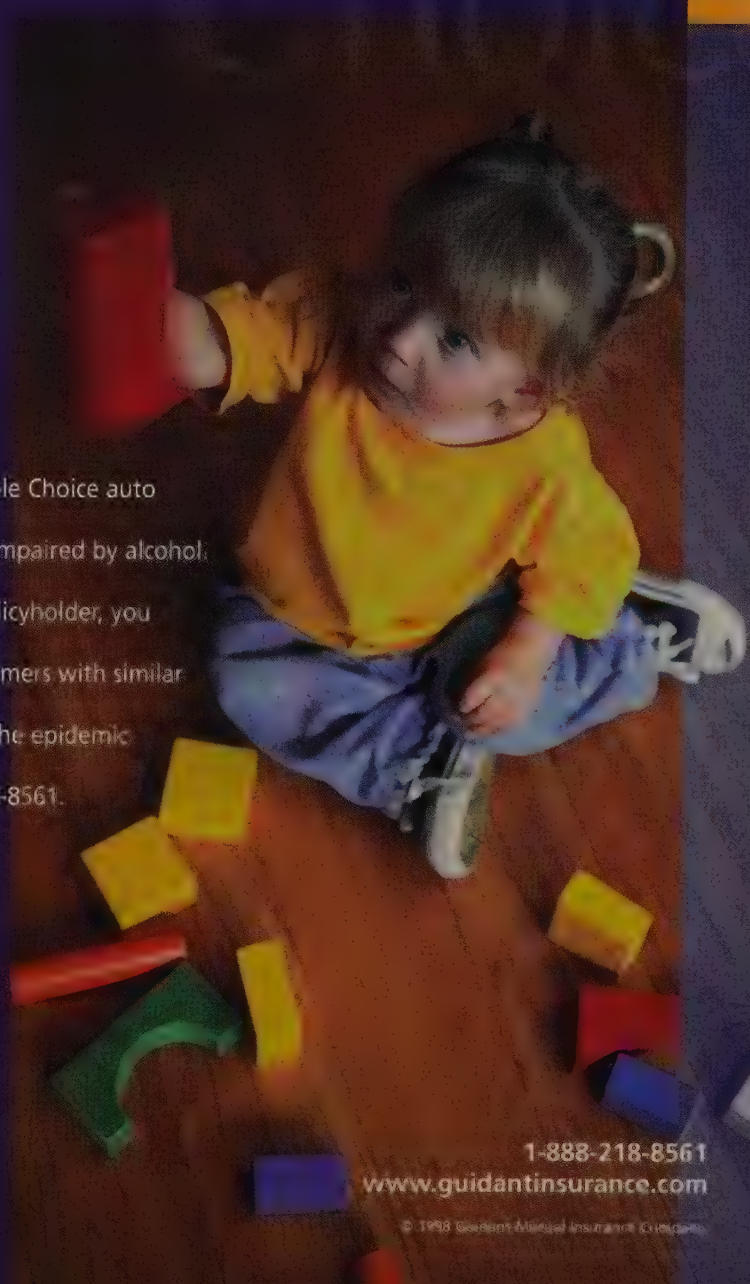
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affirmative action-type efforts at Christian colleges. Michelle Loyd-Paige, an African-American professor of sociology at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan, says faculty should be hired for their skills, not just their skin color. "You want to be sure, when you are bringing people in, they feel they are welcome, not as a statistic," she says.

Creating a sense of community that acknowledges cultural differences but focuses on Christian unity is critical to ethnic minority-student retention, Loyd-Paige says.

She believes campuses that tie Christian identity to a particular denomination—especially mostly white denominations—may have a difficult time achieving multiculturalism. She says more campuses strive to be multiracial, acculturating different races to the college's subculture, than truly multicultural, acknowledging "individual expressions of [Christianity] might be a little bit different." Loyd-Paige, a 1981 Calvin alumna, commutes 45 miles to the college from her home in Muskegon Heights, which is 80 percent African-American.

While the percentage of minority students and faculty is small at Christian colleges, diversity is slowly increasing. Some colleges are hiring minority recruiters and inviting inner-city students to summer programs on campus. At Bethel College in Mishawaka, Indiana, white and nonwhite students are forming intentional communities by sharing campus houses. Calvin College and Point Loma Nazarene College in San Diego are offering graduate fellowships for minority alumni who agree to teach at their alma mater.

TUITION COSTS: Affordability is another piece of the retention puzzle. For 1997-98, CCCU tuition grew at 6.3 percent versus 5 percent at similar private colleges. But CCCU tuitions are still \$2,800 less expensive per year on average.

The cost of attracting students is high. Colleges spend an average of \$1,600 in marketing costs for each new student, according to CCCU president Robert Andringa, even though most students attend colleges within 400 miles of home.

Administrators are dealing with the affordability factor by offering institutional scholarships and seeking additional sources of revenue. "Discounting" is a common institutional pricing strategy. "On average, private colleges are using 29 percent of their tuition revenue to pour back into scholarship aid for students," Andringa says. Still, Steve Moore, vice president for campus life at Seattle Pacific University, cautions, "If you hold tuition down, you have to increase your revenue some other way."

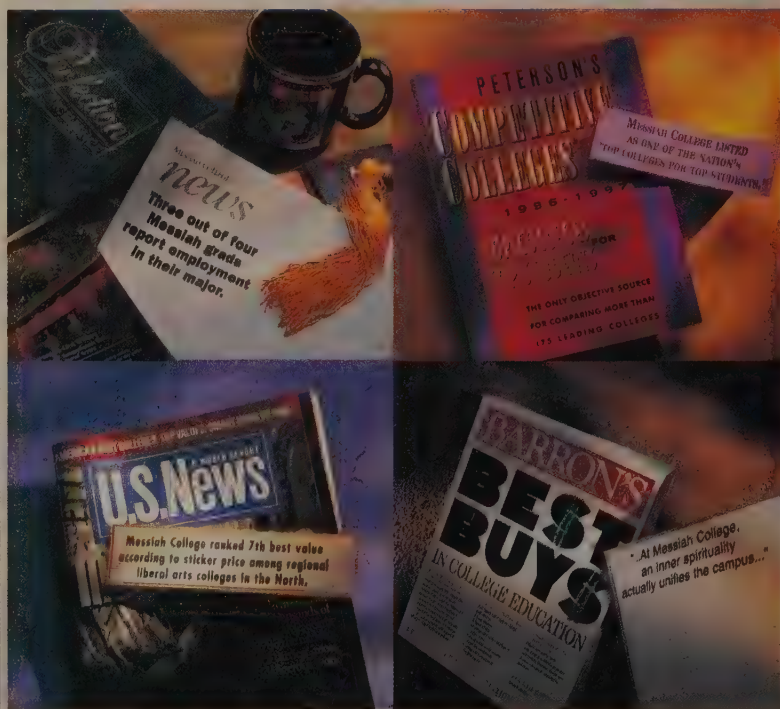
QUALITY IS KEY: As colleges consider how to enhance the quality—and affordability—of the education they deliver, the latest education trend of Internet-based distance learning could pose a significant challenge by reducing the face-to-face interaction with faculty. "I'm concerned that if we go in the direction of distance learning that we still maintain relationships, in the advising process as well as the teaching process," Schreiner told CT.

Students say having more contact with faculty and seeing successful alumni are necessary elements for them to see the cost of college as a worthwhile investment.

Ultimately, retention experts believe students will stay if the quality of education remains high. For Christian higher education, this means staying true to its mission of integrating faith and learning. "Christian higher ed sometimes has focused too much on its survival instead of focusing on its service," says Moore. "The driving factor has to be the mission, not the economy."

By Christine J. Gardner.

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Reorganized Latter Day Saints Aim to Grow After Revising Doctrines

Several thousand members have left the Independence, Missouri-based Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (RLDS) due to recent steps taken to become more ecumenical and theologically moderate.

After the death of founder Joseph

Smith in 1844, most Latter-day Saints (Mormons) followed Brigham Young to Utah, where their descendants have experienced strong growth (CT, June 15, 1998, p. 25). But more than 200 splinter groups claim the right to prophetic leadership, with the 250,000-

member RLDS being the largest offshoot.

Jim Cable, RLDS communications director, says thousands of members have quit attending over issues such as presidential succession, more open Communion, and especially ordination of women. Rather than formally withdrawing their membership, however, Cable says former attendees have started their own congregations, which they believe have retained Smith's original intention. Those spinoffs have names such as the Restoration Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints and the Church of Jesus Christ Center Branch Restoration.

The 1996 appointment of W. Grant McMurray marked the first time since the RLDS organized in 1860—when Smith's son was old enough to become leader—that a descendant had not led the church. Smith's great-grandson, Wallace B. Smith—who had no male heir—chose McMurray as his successor. McMurray earned his master of divinity degree at a United Methodist seminary. In an effort to increase membership, the RLDS has abandoned language that defined the church as the truest reflection of Smith's vision. The RLDS, with its more Trinitarian theology, no longer emphasizes beliefs that make it distinct from Protestants. "When you go into a Buddhist culture, a Hindu culture, or a tribal African culture, they don't care two hoots how you differ from a Lutheran," says McMurray, 51.

The RLDS church, which never adopted the doctrines of polygamy, celestial marriage, and baptism of the dead, began ordaining women in 1984 and now has more than 5,000 women among its 19,000 ordained leaders. In April, the RLDS World Conference approved appointing two women to the church's Council of Twelve Apostles. The Morsx zmon church has only male leadership, from the local to national levels.

The RLDS has also joined mainline Protestants in discussing the place of homosexuals in local congregations. McMurray broached that volatile subject for the first time in April. RLDS ministers are free to function at meetings with the church's homosexual and lesbian caucus.

In spite of the doctrinal shifts, RLDS doctrine remains founded on the Book of Mormon and Smith's *Doctrine and Covenants*. McMurray also says the RLDS is committed to an "open canon of Scripture," which is consistent with Smith's teaching.

By Doug LeBlanc in
Independence, Missouri.

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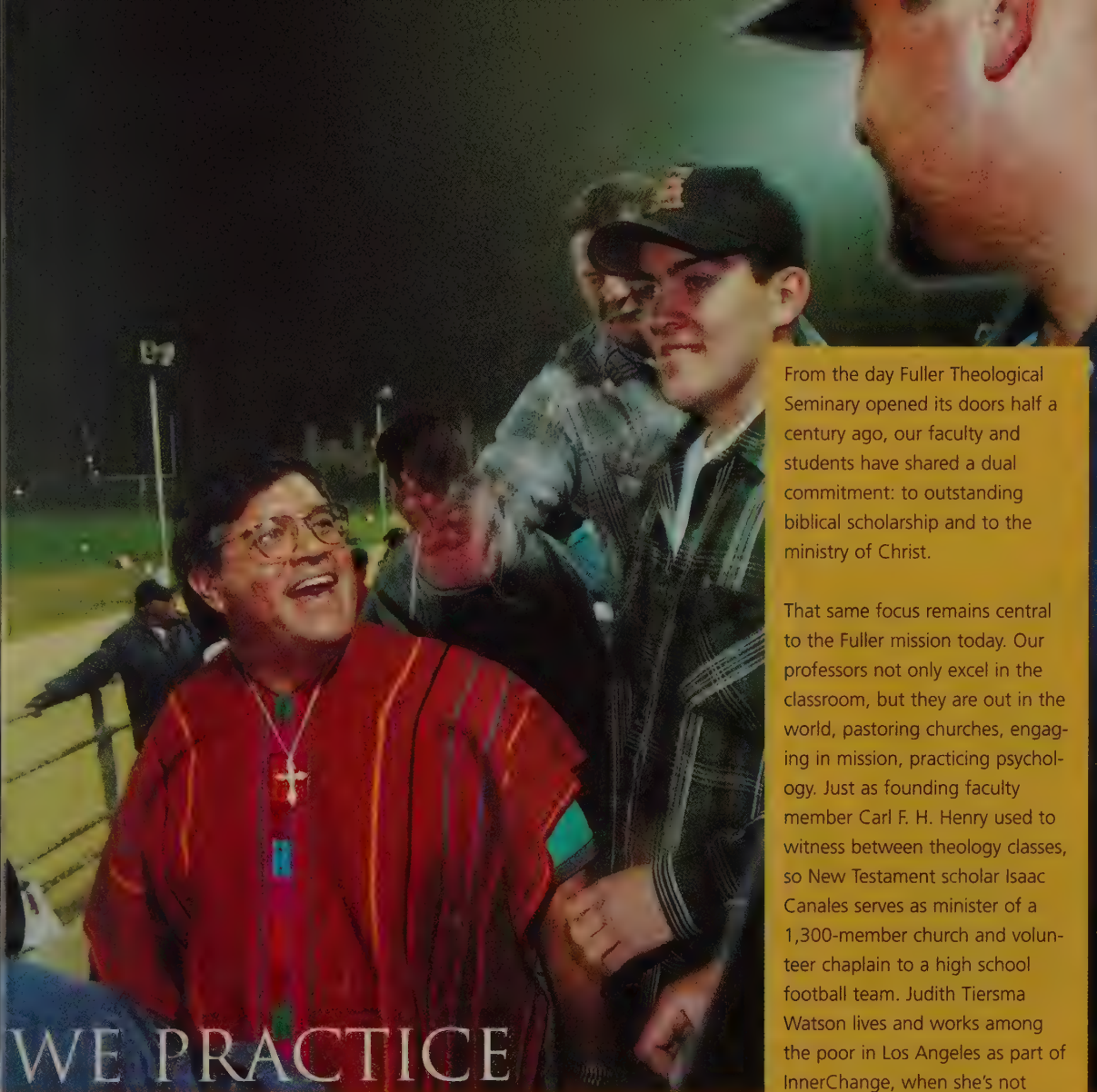
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When Lies Become News

Christian journalists should be fairer than their secular counterparts.



As we write this, the Brenda Starr comic strip is featuring an Internet-rumormonger-turned-journalist named Ratt Sludge. Like most of her real-life counterparts, our high-minded heroine is appalled at the way gossip now masquerades as reporting, and the pursuit of circulation and ratings these days trumps the pursuit of truth.

Brenda Starr has a point. Americans have plenty to be worried about as journalistic irresponsibility has grabbed headlines on the front pages, stimulated self-flagellation and self-righteousness on the editorial pages, and, yes, spawned satire on the comic pages.

- The *Cincinnati Enquirer* in June published a front-page apology to Chiquita Brands because one of its reporters had allegedly stolen thousands of messages from the banana firm's voice-mail system.

- CNN and *Time*, also in June, conceded they did not have adequate proof to back up a lengthy report alleging that the U.S. military had used deadly sarin nerve gas to kill American defectors in Laos during the Vietnam War. Correspondent Peter Arnett got his hands slapped. Two producers got fired.

- The *Boston Globe*, earlier this year, apologized after one of its most popular columnists admitted to having fictionalized people and quotes.

- The *New Republic* owned up to multiple fabrications and fantasies on the part of a young hotshot writer.

One such trespass might be the result of an individual, irresponsible, rogue reporter. But this epidemic of journalistic felonies (violation of privacy, fraud, unsubstantiated allegations) is evidence of something bigger: The prac-

tice of reporting the news has lost its moorings in telling the truth, plainly and simply.

Principles under assault

In 1996, the Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ) overhauled its ethics statement, anchoring the practice of newsgathering to four principles: Seek the truth and report it; minimize harm; act independently; and be accountable.

Unfortunately, all four of these principles are under assault in new ways. The growing trend of journalistic commentary is undermining the time-tested role of the media in reporting accurately and truthfully. Several months ago, the Project for Excellence in Journalism surveyed coverage of the White House intern scandal, finding that nearly half of what newspapers published in the first week of the scandal was commentary. In the public's consciousness, journalists, both print and broadcast, are slightly more credible than used-car salesmen. News commentary sells a point of view. But commentary is all too often seeping into straight news coverage. The coverage of Monicagate demonstrates how far the news media have detoured not only into commentary but speculation.

The principle of minimizing harm is a refreshingly honest admission that too many individuals caught in the headlights of the news media end up as road kill. In journalism school, educators drill many an aphorism into students' minds, including their mission "to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable." But in the public's mind, journalism has moved from afflicting the comfortable to afflicting anything in its path.

The SPJ code says, "Pursuit of the news is not a license for arrogance." Unless journalists make allowances for the inherently intrusive nature of newsgathering, they are likely to face yet greater public hostility. Senators Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) and Orrin Hatch (R-Utah), at the urging of the Screen Actors Guild, are sponsoring legislation that would make it a federal offense for the "menacing pursuit" of a celebrity or a news subject. Though such a law would be practically unenforceable, it would have a chilling effect, exposing much legitimate newsgathering to costly civil litigation.

The principles of independent action and accountability must go hand in hand. American journalism has an honorable tradition of independence, but accountability has only infrequently been a strength. With the recent apologies by the national press, news media accountability has taken a small step forward. But accountability means much more than openly correcting mistakes. Full accountability requires a new level of transparency and openness about the process of newsgathering.

Journalism and morality

Increased competition in journalism, brought about by the timeliness of cable news and Internet technology combined with shifting consumer desires, has changed the professional environment for journalists from public service to self-service. Traditional journalistic values have suffered as Internet technology has handed a megaphone to unaccredited and unaccountable gossip merchants.

How can journalists reconnect their historic standards with the contemporary practice of reporting? Looking across more than two hundred years of journalism in North America, it is clear that the best journalists and journalism not only respect the absolute truth of divine revelation, but also terrestrial truth, methodically and painstakingly discovered.

Neil Reynolds, editor of the recently redesigned and refurbished *Ottawa Citizen*, said a newspaper is "a daily journal of moral conduct." Speaking at a faith and media conference, sponsored by *Christian Week* in June, Reynolds observed that a newspaper is "a vehicle for parables about people and how they make moral decisions." Sometimes these parables concern the media themselves. Until journalists revive the long-forgotten moral dimension implicit in each reporting task they undertake, more scandals, more mistakes, and more fabrications are certain to occur—and citizens will be deprived of the careful chronicling of the moral odyssey of our society.

It would be a mistake to tar all news media alike. In their best moments, journalists are mission-minded people. But when personal ambition, prejudice, or carelessness get in the way, grotesque mistakes are made. Each issue of the *Columbia Journalism Review*, for example, not only casts darts at error but crowns with laurels the excellent efforts of the nation's reporters and editors. For Christians, neither reactionary condemnation of the news media nor withdrawal from media interaction are adequate responses.

The First Amendment providentially intertwines freedom of speech and freedom of religion. Undergirding these twin freedoms is fear of oppression and a love of truth. Truth indeed is the best defense against demagoguery.

Our commitments

From the founding vision of Billy Graham, CHRISTIANITY TODAY has approached journalism both as a ministry and as a mission field. We aim for excellence in truth-telling as a service to all readers and an example to other journalists. Trustworthiness, fairness, truthfulness, respect, and impartiality are some of the journalistic values we lift up out of our commitment to evangelical truth and charity.

But like all other journalists, we struggle with issues that affect fairness and accuracy. We struggle with independence, being only too aware that at times reporting on advertisers has removed money from the paychecks of our colleagues in advertising sales. We struggle with the difficulties of reporting thoroughly, hampered by the limits of staff, budget, and editorial deadlines. Still, we look to our mission of reporting truthfully on the Christian world and try to surmount these obstacles.

In an era when major metropolitan dailies are trimming their foreign bureaus, a magazine of much smaller scale must rely on reports from trusted friends around the globe. We build our reputation on their trustworthiness—and on the rare occasions they don't get the story

right, we wince and say we're sorry.

In an effort to encourage staff accountability and guard against error, we have instituted careful procedural review of pending articles, which becomes more rigorous and intensive as a story's potential for controversy or harm rises. Our news editors check bad news stories about fellow Christians against a set of criteria—none of which has to do with the juiciness or entertainment value of the material. Instead, we examine the national prominence of the figure being reported on, the certainty of his or her malfeasance, the potential for public harm if the matter is not reported, and so forth. People acting like jerks, creeps, and blockheads do not qualify for our attention. Crooks and con artists do.

One reason such bad news stories do not occupy more of our news space is that we function with a limited staff: only three in-house editors and one reporter on a part-time stipend are devoted to news. None of us has much time to go fishing for scandal. Often we must wait till such issues become a matter of record.

Take our reporting of financial scandals, for example. In the past 12 months, we have covered five stories of Christians who solicited investments from fellow believers and ended up deep in debt and shamefaced in court. In each case, we waited to report until formal charges were filed, indictments were handed down, or verdicts were announced. We are rarely able to do the original investigative reporting that might have exposed these individuals. But our purpose was served nevertheless: to remind our readers that such confidence games go on all the time, and that—especially in church circles where we all trade on trust—believers must beware. Friends of the fallen have complained that we were kicking Christian brothers while they were down. But our purpose is not to smear: only to warn.

Objectivity is no longer in fashion. Most journalists, including many Christian journalists, believe it is no longer possible: Since we all come to the events of the day with our precommitments, whether to kingdom values or worldly ways, we should be transparent, own up to our prejudices, and report with vigor.

But fairness should never be out of fashion. And part of the way CT's editors measure their fairness is by the reactions of those on the wrong side of our commitments. Do those whose positions we consider wrong recognize themselves in our reporting? When they say they were not caricatured, but disagreed with in an accurate and principled fashion, we know we've been doing our job. Recent coverage of Mormonism brought forth just such responses from Latter-day Saints ("Mormons on the Rise," June 15, 1998, p. 24). They thanked us for our fairness, despite our differences.

In 1993, journalist-historian Paul Johnson said, "Fairness is one of the deepest human yearnings—it is the first moral point a small child recognizes—and lack of it the commonest complaint the public flings at the media." Christian journalism has a moral and scriptural mandate to be even fairer than its secular counterparts. 

Too many individuals caught in the headlights of the news media end up as road kill.

DID THE EXODUS NEVER



KEVIN D. MILLER

“**T**he actual evidence concerning the Exodus resembles the evidence for the unicorn,” writes Baruch Halpern of Pennsylvania State University.

“The Book of Joshua is of no historical value as far as the process of settlement is concerned,” contends Volkmar Fritz, director of the German Protestant Institute of Archaeology in Jerusalem.

“The period of the patriarchs, exodus, conquest, or judges as devised by the writers of Scriptures . . . never existed,” declares Robert Coote of San Francisco Theological Seminary.

The Genesis and Exodus accounts are “a fiction written around the middle of

the first millennium,” states Niels Peter Lemche at the University of Copenhagen, and, “The David of the Bible, David the king, is not a historical figure.”

Welcome to the intellectual world of the biblical minimalists, a new breed of radical scholars who would turn Abraham, Joseph, Moses, and even King David into legends and myths by the stroke of their pens. As far-out as their pronouncements may sound, their work is filtering its way into our world through seminary textbooks and media soundbites. The effect is a wholesale rejection of the Bible’s accounts of Israel’s origins—a matter of no small concern to believing Jews and Christians.

Answering these skeptics, however, is not always so easy as one might expect.

The fact is that not one shred of direct archaeological evidence has been found for Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob or the 400-plus years the children of Israel sojourned in Egypt. The same is true for their miraculous exodus from slavery. And remember those reassuring Sunday-school stories about archaeologists finding Jericho’s walls lying outward just as the Book of Joshua suggests they fell? It turns out that the most respected archaeologist to dig at Jericho earlier this century, Kathleen Kenyon, differed.

But before anyone scribbles “Fiction” over the title page of the Old Testament, some scholars want to tell another side to the story, one that Kenneth Kitchen, James Hoffmeier, and a handful of others are meticulously piecing together.

ER-HAPPEN?

How two Egyptologists are countering scholars who want to turn the Old Testament into myth.



ENRICH LESSING/ART RESOURCE

Through top university presses and in academic conferences, they are exposing a fundamental problem with the conclusions of the biblical minimalists: the skeptical, narrow lenses through which they read the Bible serve them a bit too conveniently—allowing them not only to dismiss uncritically the historical value of the Bible's texts but also to avoid certain bothersome details that get in the way of their own accounts of the origin of Israel.

Back to the future

In one respect, the current skepticism is nothing new. As early as the eighteenth century, some scholars using the then-new methods of higher criticism had dismissed the early biblical accounts as legends. By the end of the nineteenth century, Julius

Wellhausen had unified decades of theorizing about the authorship of the Pentateuch into his now-famous (slightly modified) Jahwist-Elohist-Priestly-Deuteronomist grid. Known as the Documentary Hypothesis, this theory claimed to detect four different authors or documents behind the "Books of Moses."

By distinguishing these various sources, one could understand the development and progress of Jewish religion from its primitive nomadic origins through the era of the Prophets onward to a religion of the Law. Thus, instead of believing the Law was given to Moses on Mount Sinai in the second millennium B.C., Wellhausen thought it was composed after the Jews

Well-worn path: Semites from Canaan were traveling to Egypt long before Jacob did, as seen in this 1890 B.C. scene.

had returned from their exile in Babylon only 450 years before Jesus.

Though discounting the stories of early Israel is not new, the rise of the current skepticism is surprising because of what came between the Wellhausens of the past century and the Lemches of the present decade: the moderating influence of William Foxwell Albright, the "dean of biblical archaeology."

When Albright was born in 1891, Wellhausen's theory had already become the reigning orthodoxy in Old Testament studies. Later, as an established professor of Semitic languages at Johns Hopkins University, Albright recalled that as a

young student he had absorbed the assumptions of higher critics like Wellhausen and had held to an "initially rather skeptical attitude toward the accuracy of Israelite historical tradition." However, while taking part in archaeological digs in Palestine as a graduate student, his skepticism "suffered repeated jolts as discovery after discovery confirmed the historicity of details which might reasonably have been considered legendary."

Albright came to suspect scholars like Wellhausen who built grand theories on textual speculation. He saw little use in surmising, for example, whether the children of Israel had conquered Canaan. To *know*, one needed to dig and see if there existed the layers of destruction that would correspond to an Israelite conquest. Empirical facts, not abstract theory, held the answers.

Perfecting modern excavation techniques, Albright and others discovered cities in Judah whose destruction layers seemed to support the biblical accounts of the Babylonian exile. Pottery inscriptions revealed the existence of a Sea People called the Philistines. And thirteenth-century devastation layers at a site believed to be biblical Bethel were interpreted by Albright's student G. Ernest Wright to be the work of Joshua's army.

Eventually, even many liberal scholars began to accept the general outline of biblical history proposed by the "Albright-Wright synthesis." So influential in the middle years of this century was their biblical archaeology, as it came to be called, that as recently as 1981 Old Testament scholar John Bright could state, "There can really be little doubt that ancestors of Israel had been slaves in Egypt and had escaped in some marvelous way. Almost no one today would question it."

"We've given up the patriarchs"

Open up the popular magazine *Biblical Archaeology Review* today and you will find almost everyone questioning the Exodus account and a lot of the other biblical stories as well. In the July-August 1997 issue, a curious exchange takes place between Niels Peter Lemche and Thomas Thompson, on the biblical minimalist side, and two challengers to the minimal-

Understatement:

Joshua 11:11 says Joshua burned "Hazor with fire."

Archaeologists digging at Hazor (right) found the fire was so hot it turned mud bricks to glass.



ist position, William Dever and P. Kyle McCarter. What is revealing in the dialogue are the defensive tactics taken by one of the *moderates*, Dever, a professor at the University of Arizona and a leading authority on Syro-Palestinian archaeology (he long ago rejected the term "biblical archaeology").

"I agree with you that [the Book of] Joshua has little to do with any historical events," he says at one point. "If you guys think I—or the Israeli archaeologists—am looking for the Israelite conquest archaeologically, you're wrong. We've given that up. We've given up the patriarchs." After Dever has defended the likelihood of a united monarchy under David and Solomon (which is part of what makes him a moderate) and is attacked by Thompson for his motives in searching for and finding a gate at Gezer thought to have been built by Solomon, Dever retorts: "Tom, I don't care in the least whether Solomon ever existed. I'm probably more of a disbeliever than you. I don't really care about the tradition. I don't believe any of the myths." Finally, after having endured Thompson's innuendoes and attacks throughout the debate, Dever exclaims in sheer exasperation: "I do resent being called a fundamentalist."

What is it that turns a William Dever into a "fundamentalist" for seeing an association between a gate and the biblical account of Solomon? The answer, says James Hoffmeier of Wheaton College in Illinois, is summed up in one phrase: the hermeneutics of suspicion. If Albright had been able to convince a generation of

scholars that the Bible's account of Israel's origin could be matched in general terms to the evidence from the digs, it was because the Bible was still considered "innocent until found guilty." The undoing of the Albright antidote to Wellhausen skepticism came when people like Lemche and Thompson began insisting that the Bible stories should be viewed as fables until indisputable evidence proved them to be historical. The accounts were now seen as fictional until proven factual, guilty until proven innocent.

This virulent neoskepticism has proven exceptionally resistant to anything smacking of a "fundamentalist" interpretation, and its proponents have set about revising what they believe was the Albright school's overeager attempts to identify discoveries as biblical events when other events in Near Eastern history could account for them just as well or better. For the minimalists, the paradigm shift has left the Bible largely irrelevant and the fight over the Bible's historical value passé.

Answering the minimalists

But the battle for Jericho, the Exodus, and the other stories of Israel's origins isn't over yet, say Hoffmeier, who has just published a monograph titled *Israel in Egypt* with Oxford University Press, and Kenneth Kitchen, a veteran ancient-languages expert at the University of Liverpool in England. It is just the beginning of round three.

In countering the revisionist history, these two bring something to the fight that Lemche and Thompson and most of

the radical minimalists (with the exception of D. B. Redford) don't have: the credentials of being Egyptologists in addition to backgrounds in biblical studies and Syro-Palestinian archaeology. Using their unusual expertise, they are pointing to discoveries that, vis-à-vis the minimalist pronouncements, show the historical plausibility of the following Bible stories:

Father Abraham. The Bible says God called Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldeans (modern Iraq) and led him to the land of Canaan (modern Israel). From his descendants arose the 12 tribes of Israel. These Semitic-speaking, Asiatic people migrated to Egypt, returning only 400 years later to settle Canaan, the land promised to their forefather.

Not so, say the minimalists. One suggests the story is a myth written in the sixth century B.C. to console the Jews being held in Babylon with the knowledge that they are really "back home," since "Abraham" had originated from there. And just as God had led their forefather to Canaan, they too would one day return to the land promised his seed. Seen this way, the story reflects the circumstances of the middle of the first millennium B.C., not the first half of the second millennium B.C.

If so, asks Kitchen, how does one explain the following odd coincidences:

- Abraham—if he existed—would have lived sometime between 1800 and 1600 B.C. (using the late Exodus dating based on the death of Pharaoh Rameses II in 1213 B.C. and Exodus 1:11, which says that the children of Israel built the city of Rameses). Why, then, does the Genesis 14 account of Abraham defeating a coalition of kings from the east fit so well the geopolitical conditions of that—and only that—era?

Before that time, the region of Mesopotamia was closely governed by the dynasties of Ur, and after that time, the

empires of Babylon and Assyria controlled the region. Only during the first half of the second millennium could kings of small city-states have roamed the countryside, as did the potentates Abraham encountered, looking to expand their domains.

- Abraham, and later Isaac, made a treaty with King Abimelech, and Jacob made a treaty with Laban. "I have over 90 documents [of ancient treaties and covenants] to compare from 2600 B.C. down to 600 B.C.," Kitchen told CT, "and so there's no room for mistake here." The treaties, he explains, take distinctive forms over the centuries, with oaths and curses and stipulations being presented in different orders and being given different emphases. The ones with Abimelech and Laban fit precisely the structure of treaties from the middle of the second millennium—but neither later nor earlier ones.

- The names Yitzchak (Isaac), Ya'akov (Jacob), Yoseph (Joseph), and Yishmael (Ishmael) all begin with something linguists call the "Amorite imperfective." From studying lists of thousands of names found from the third millennium and later, Kitchen shows that 55 percent of the names during the time of the Patriarchs begin with an *i/y* sound, but already "by 1500 the whole thing drops to a tiny percentage and never ceases dropping after that." Where, Kitchen asks, did the fiction writers of the middle first millennium B.C. get these names if they were composing their biblical novellas a thousand or more years after the names had fallen from popular use?

- Kitchen asks the same question about Genesis 37:28, which states that Joseph was sold by his brothers to slave traders on their way to Egypt for 20 silver shekels. Tracking the price of slaves sold from 2400 B.C. to 400 B.C. using extrabiblical sources, he finds that this amount matches exactly the going price in the eighteenth century. Steady inflation had driven it up to 30 shekels by the

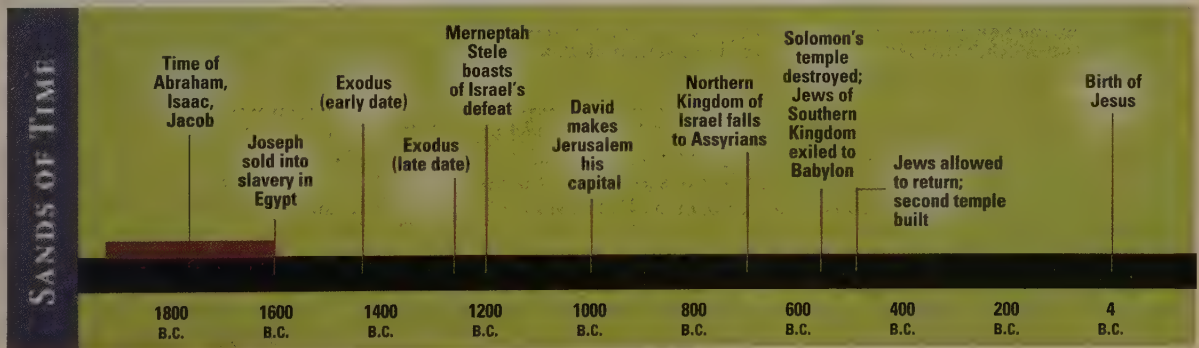
thirteenth century (which corresponds to Exod. 21:32), 50 shekels in the eighth century (which corresponds to 2 Kings 15:20), and to nearly 100 shekels soon after the Exile in the sixth century.

Joseph in Egypt. Is it realistic to think that a Semitic-speaking foreigner like Joseph, and later Moses, could have risen to the highest levels of Egyptian government? Hoffmeier answers by pointing to an Egyptian tomb discovered in Sakkara, Egypt, in the late 1980s. It contains the coffin of a Semite named Aper-el along with the coffins of his wife and children. His titles include "vizier," "mayor of the city," "judge," "father of god," "child of the nursery."

Hoffmeier points out that Aper-el's name was the first of a high-ranking, Semite official to be found there, even though Sakkara has been excavated and explored for more than a century. "If such a high-ranking official as Vizier Aper-el was completely unknown to modern scholarship until the late 1980s, despite the fact that he lived in one of the better documented periods of Egyptian history [fourteenth century], and was buried in arguably the most excavated site in Egypt, it is wrong to demand, as some have, that direct archaeological evidence for Joseph should be available if he were in fact a historical figure." This is even more the case, he says, because Joseph lived during a period when surviving Egyptian documents of any kind are sparse and because Joseph operated in the Nile Delta, an area that remains "underexcavated" to this day.

Joseph's high ranking becomes even more plausible when considering the regular migrations and imperial transactions that occurred between Canaan and Egypt, as seen in the following discoveries:

- The Wisdom of Merikare and the Prophecy of Neferti, ancient Egyptian documents, report influxes of thousands of Semites into the Nile Delta between 2200 and 2000 B.C. Similar patterns of



settlement recurred over the next thousand years, creating a "significant Asiatic population" in the Delta region, says Hoffmeier. The Merikare document explains that these Asiatic, Semitic-speaking peoples, like Jacob and his sons, had come to the fertile Delta area in search of food during times of famine.

- For several periods in its history, Egypt's empire expanded into surrounding regions, including Canaan. During these times, young men and boys from those provinces were brought to Egypt to be trained in the pharaoh's ways and later sent back home as regional rulers who were loyal to the pharaoh.

Also, a study on foreign children reared in the pharaoh's nurseries during the eighteenth dynasty shows that some of these children became court officials, and that a few eventually attained high government posts. The similarities to the stories of Joseph and Moses (and Aper-el) are obvious.

- For two centuries ending in 1550 B.C., a foreign Asiatic people called the Hyksos actually ruled Egypt. After their expulsion, the new pharaoh extended his rule into Canaan and Syria, transporting back to Egypt many prisoners of war. In an address to the meeting of the Institute for Biblical Research last year, Hoffmeier explained that he believed that "after the expulsion of the Hyksos ruling and military elite, Pharaoh Ahmose and his successors discovered large numbers of Semitic-speaking peoples, including the Hebrews, in the Delta, who were subsequently forced to work alongside the POWs. This shift in status from being tolerated immigrants to an enslaved population described in Exodus 1:8 may represent the transition from the Hyksos period to the eighteenth Dynasty. It is worth noting that the practice of using forced labor for building projects is only documented for the period 1450 to 1200, the very time most biblical historians place the Israelites in Egypt. The realization that there were others enslaved along with the Hebrews may explain who the 'mixed multitude' of Exodus 12:38 are who joined the 'freedom train.'"

Moses and the Exodus. It is simply too fantastic, say the minimalists. The ten plagues, a million-plus runaway slaves tra-

versing a desert, the miracles—all of these put the story squarely in the realm of fable and legend. Furthermore, how could the children of Israel escape from Egypt and the pharaoh's army be destroyed without getting recorded in Egyptian annals?

In answer to the latter question, Hoffmeier agrees with his critics: such a momentous event would not have transpired without being recorded. But recorded *where*?

"I don't know of any surviving papyrus documents from Egypt's Delta," says Hoffmeier. "It's too wet. And papyrus

[made from the reed-like plant of the same name] is where most of the records were kept.

The inscriptions that we see on statues and temple façades tend to be propagandistic, what-we-want-you-to-know messages. And where papyrus records have survived, they tend to be from the desert areas. So we have very few of the day-to-day court records of 3,000 years of Egyptian history."

While direct evidence for the Exodus is missing, the following circumstantial evidence supports viewing the Exodus as a historical event rather than a late, fictive legend:

- In a surviving Egyptian document called Leiden Papyrus 348, or-

ders are given to "distribute grain rations to the soldiers and to the *'Apiru* who transport stones to the great pylon of Rames[s]es." This brings to mind Exodus 1:11, which says the Hebrews "built supply cities, Pithom and Rameses, for Pharaoh." While hotly debated, *'Apiru* is believed by some scholars to refer to the Hebrews, the *'Ibri*. If a future discovery of an inscription could link this word to the Hebrews, this document would prove to be our first direct extrabiblical reference to the children of Israel in slavery in Egypt.

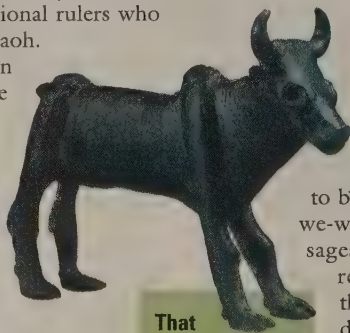
- Recent discoveries of military outposts on a road leading from Egypt into Canaan, built by Pharaoh Seti I and earlier kings in the thirteenth century B.C., shed new light on why a northern route for the Exodus would have meant war for the Israelites. Exodus 13:17 states: "When

Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines, although that was nearer; for God thought, 'If the people face war, they may change their minds and return to Egypt.'" Instead, the Bible explains, "God led the people by the roundabout way of the wilderness."

- While it is virtually impossible 3,000 years later to retrace the footsteps of a people who escaped over a sand-swept wilderness, an Egyptian letter (*Anastasi III*) from guards at a "border crossing" between Egypt and the Sinai helps explain Moses' insistent cry, "Let my people go!" The text indicates that in the thirteenth century the Egyptians maintained a tight border control, allowing no one to pass without a permit. The letter describes two slaves who—in a striking parallel to the Israelite escape—flee from the city of Rameses at night, are pursued by soldiers, but disappear into the Sinai wilderness. "When my letter reaches you," writes the official to the border guard, "write to me about all that has happened to [them]. Who found their tracks? Which watch found their tracks? Write to me about all that has happened to them and how many people you send out after them." Another inscription from the same cache of documents (*Anastasi VI*) records that an entire tribe gained permission to enter Egypt from Edom in search of food.

- If it seems incredible to believe that 600,000 men plus women and children could have survived as a people in the Sinai wilderness for 40 years, we may be misinterpreting the number, says Hoffmeier. Hebrew University professor Abraham Malamat, for one, points out that the Bible often refers to 600 and its multiples, as well as 1,000 and its multiples, typologically in order to convey the idea of a large military unit. "The issue of Exodus 12:37 is an interpretive one," says Hoffmeier. "The Hebrew word *elep* can be translated 'thousand,' but it is also rendered in the Bible as 'clans' and 'military units.' When I look at the question as an Egyptologist, I know that there are thought to have been 20,000 in the entire Egyptian army at the height of Egypt's empire. And at the battle of Ai in Joshua 7, there was a severe military setback when 36 troops were killed. If you have an army of 600,000, that's not a big setback." In other words, the head count may have been far fewer than suggested by a literal reading of Exodus 12:37.

- While conservative scholars debate an "early" and "late" date for the Exodus



That idolatrous look:

Recently unearthed, this Canaanite bull may have been one of those the Israelites were tempted to worship since it dates to the twelfth century B.C.

"KING DAVID WAS HERE"

By the 1980s, superskepticism about Israel's origins had reached as far as Kings David and Solomon, whose reigns stretched from about 1000 B.C. to 920 B.C. In the early 1990s, says Kenneth Kitchen of the University of Liverpool, "Thomas Thompson wrote a big, fat book on ancient Israel that more or less denied there was ever a united monarchy of Israel, and it claimed that people like David and Solomon were fictions." It turned out to be bad timing because of several discoveries that followed soon after the book was published.

In 1993, excavators at the ancient city of Dan unearthed a stone slab dating to 841 B.C. It contained the first ancient extrabiblical reference to the "House of David"—a phrase used more than 20 times in the Old Testament. Immediately, the biblical minimalists proposed that a better rendering of the phrase would be "House of Dod," referring to a Canaanite deity. In 1994, however, a second fragment belonging to the same stone was found. The words it added to the original portion of text, says Kitchen, "limited the amount of ways you could interpret the text," making "House of David" the obvious translation. Concerning "Dod," Kitchen says, he has "demolished that false deity" in a recent scholarly article (in *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*) by showing that this deity, in fact, never existed in ancient Canaan, but only in the linguistic inventions of nineteenth-century scholars.

Soon after the 1993 discovery, a second likely ninth-century B.C. reference to "House of David" came to light when André Lemaire reassessed a section of an inscribed stone called the Mesha Stele. And just last winter, Kitchen himself tentatively proposed the deci-



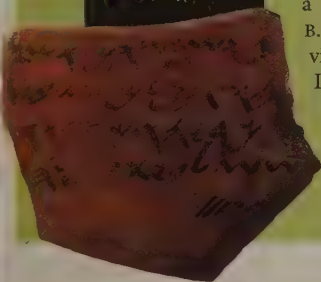
Written in stone: Discovered in two pieces, the Tel Dan Stele is helping to muffle those who say King David was a myth.

phering of a third mention of David in an ancient source—this one dating to 924 B.C., fewer than 50 years after David's death and four years after Solomon's. Inscribed on a temple wall in Thebes, the name appears in a list of places in Palestine that Pharaoh Shoshenq I is said to have raided successfully. While this portion of the victory boast is cracked and parts of it are missing, a probable interpretation for the line in question is "highlands of David." Kitchen believes it may correspond to passages in the Book of Samuel where David is presented as a fugitive leader in the "highlands" of Judah.

In addition to these David sightings, several recent references to King Solomon and his temple have surfaced in antiquities markets and have gained the attention of the academic world. One is a receipt for a donation to "the House of Yahweh," which may date as early as the ninth century B.C. when Solomon's temple still stood in all its glory. Another is a seal with Solomon's name on it that could very well date to the tenth century B.C. when Solomon still lived.

By Kevin D. Miller.

Tax deductible: Dated to the 800s B.C., this ancient receipt for three shekels donated to the "Temple of Yahweh" gives us the oldest known reference outside the Bible to King Solomon's temple.



(fifteenth century or thirteenth century B.C.), all but the most skeptical scholars agree that the Israelites were in Canaan by the year 1208 B.C. This date was set a century ago with the discovery of the Merneptah Stele. This seven-foot high, black granite stone contains a victory hymn of Pharaoh Merneptah, which pro-

claims, "The Canaan is plundered with every hardship. / Ashkelon is taken, Gezer is captured, / [and] Yano'am reduced to nothing. / Israel is laid waste, his seed is no more."

Not surprisingly, the minimalists downplay its significance, claiming it simply refers to an insignificant early nomadic

tribe—a proto-Israel, if you will. But the undeniable fact is that a pharaoh considered Israel's defeat worth inscribing on stone, and that a people called Israel lived in Canaan by that time. Just as fascinating are pictorial carvings on a temple wall in Luxor, Egypt, which Egyptologist Frank Yurco believes depict the destruction of

Ashkelon, Gezer, Yano'am, and the Israelites mentioned in the Merneptah Stele. If so, the first existing reference to Israel comes complete with pictures of them.

Joshua fit the battle?

By the time the archaeological search arrives in the Promised Land, the rocks and pottery scraps begin to cry out their history more loudly. Archaeologists love having more artifacts and inscriptions to study—but how best to interpret a rock's cry? Often, the interpretation ends at the very place the interpreters' prejudices begin.

Such prejudice got Hoffmeier flunked from a class he was taking in the early 1970s in graduate school. Raised in Egypt as a missionary kid, Hoffmeier found his first year of graduate studies unsettling, especially in a class where the professor was denying the history of Abraham in his lectures drawn from a book he was writing on the subject. "I remember the knots in my stomach when he was lecturing. He said the type of nomadic way of living in tents and riding on camels didn't fit the second millennium, but it did fit the first. But when he trotted out all the evidence for the first millennium, he made a statement in passing that his reason for that position was that texts from the ancient Near East rarely mention the use of tents."

Made curious by the word *rarely*, Hoffmeier began noticing numerous references to nomads from Syria and Palestine using tents in Egyptian texts he was reading for his hieroglyphics class. To his surprise, he also discovered that his professor had written extensively on a particular Egyptian text that described nomads and their tents in Syria-Palestine during the second millennium. "So he knew about this reference to how the Bedouin lived, but he didn't talk about it," Hoffmeier says. "I realized there's a pattern here of minimizing evidence that doesn't fit."

Though Hoffmeier failed the course, "not because of my work, but because of what he knew I stood for," he ultimately

had the last say when he published an article—on tents in the ancient Near East. "Later, I saw him at a wedding," Hoffmeier remembers. "He walked up to me and said, 'Well, it was a good article on tents. But there are a lot of other things in the book you haven't really dealt with.' But he conceded on that point that I was right. It was a great moral victory for me." It also taught Hoffmeier the lesson "that some of these experts are close-minded people. They're not willing to wrestle with different views," he says.

A good example of this can be seen in the cover stories

Time and *U.S. News & World Report* ran in 1995 on how archaeological discoveries confirm and discredit the Bible. In their sections on the conquest of the Promised Land, both painted a dark portrait of the historical trustworthiness of the Book of Joshua. Experts were quoted to say that of the sixteen cities said to have been destroyed by Joshua's forces, only three have been shown to have been destroyed during a time period that would fit an Israelite conquest—and Jericho wasn't one of them.

The alleged nonevent at Jericho became the poster child of the skeptics; few questioned the negative conclusion since it was based on the findings of Kathleen Kenyon, who excavated Jericho for six years in the 1950s. She believed the site was uninhabited from 1500 B.C. to about 800 B.C., encompassing the very time of the Exodus and the Israelite crossing of the Jordan River into Canaan. What's for Israel to conquer, this line

of reasoning goes, if nobody's home?

This seemingly bleak assessment can be answered in part by the Bible itself, says Hoffmeier. Many times scholars claim that the Book of Joshua paints the conquest as one of burning every city to its foundations. "A careful reading of

Joshua shows there are only three cities that Joshua was specifically said to have burnt with fire—Jericho, Ai, and Hazor." So when a city lacks an expected destruction level, "we should remember that to besiege a city does not necessarily mean to destroy a city. To capture a city may not involve destroying it in such a way that you'd find that destruction in the archaeological record." What would there be left to settle if everything was destroyed?

Furthermore, literary comparisons of Joshua with other war chronicles of the period show that the Book of Joshua reflects the rhetorical hyperbole commonly used in such writings. For example, Joshua 10:20 boasts that Joshua's men had "wiped out" their enemy, but in the very next phrase begins speaking unself-consciously of "the survivors."

Even archaeologically, the picture is not so bleak as the minimalists paint it to be, says Hoffmeier. A detailed look at the archaeological finds at Hazor, Ai, and Jericho puts the foregone conclusions of "uninhabited" and "not destroyed" into perspective.

- One of the three cities under question, Hazor, has, in fact, proven to have been inhabited and destroyed during the time of Joshua. Already current excavations have uncovered a palace with a small chapel area. Littered across its floor are the heads of decapitated statues of Canaanite deities and an Egyptian sphinx with the name of the pharaoh hacked out. "The palace was destroyed in such an inferno that many of the mud bricks actually turned to glass," says Hoffmeier. "No Canaanites would destroy their own deities, and no Egyptians would deface their monuments." Only the account in Joshua 11:11 of the Israelites burning "Hazor with fire" fits the evidence.

- "Ai is a little more complicated," admits Hoffmeier. The excavated site thus far shows that it indeed wasn't inhabited during the time of Joshua and wasn't destroyed at that time by fire. That is, if *this* site is, in fact, where ancient Ai was located. "Part of the problem is that, in the Bible, Ai and Bethel are always mentioned as being close to each other, and the identification of Ai has been based on the proposed identification of the site at Bethel—neither of which has been clearly demonstrated. We may be looking in the wrong place."

- "Jericho," says Hoffmeier, "is still an open question." Despite the problems it poses, there is archaeological agree-



Mother of all billboards: Pharaoh Merneptah (d. 1203 B.C.) boasted (prematurely!) on this seven-foot-high stone that "Israel is laid waste and his seed is not." It is the first extrabiblical mention of Israel.

ment on three important points that correspond directly with the biblical record: Jericho was destroyed violently sometime in the second millennium B.C.; it was occupied briefly and partially during the period of the Judges (a small palace from that period has been identified); and it was rebuilt completely in the days of King Ahab in the ninth century. The point of difference is over exactly when that first destruction occurred, and by whom.

Kenyon dated Jericho's destruction to 1570 B.C., when the Egyptians kicked the Hyksos out of their land and pursued them north to Jericho and beyond. But while her early findings were published in journals and in a popular book on the subject, only recently has the technical report of her excavations been completed and published. By studying it in detail, Bryant Wood, director of the Associates for Biblical Research, discovered evidence in her findings that sometimes contradicts Kenyon's own conclusions.

For example, one type of pottery she had unearthed was made for a limited time in the late fifteenth century—150 years after Kenyon's 1570 B.C. date of destruction. And seals were found for pharaohs from 1570 to as late as Amenhotep III, who died in 1349 B.C. Contrary to Kenyon's conclusions, these artifacts make dating Jericho's destruction feasible between the fifteenth and thirteenth centuries when most conservative scholars believe the Exodus occurred.

• The Bible says the Israelites crossed the Jordan River on dry ground and then besieged Jericho, seeing its walls fall after they had marched around it seven days. Wood finds this credible even in terms of natural causes (which God controlled for his purposes), given the seismological activity in the region. In an intriguing article in *Biblical Archaeology Review*, he cites Stanford University geophysicist Amos Nur, who documents a 1927 earthquake and mudslide in this century "that cut off the flow of the Jordan." Nur adds: "Such cutoffs, typically lasting one to two days, have also been recorded in A.D. 1906, 1834, 1546, 1267, and 1160." In the 1927 quake, writes Wood, "a section of a cliff 150 feet high collapsed into the Jordan near the ford at Damiya, blocking the river for some 21 hours." Perhaps, he suggests, the collapse of Jericho's walls resulted from an aftershock to the earthquake that blocked the Jordan River and allowed the Israelites to cross into Canaan.

Fools with spades

Despite the current revisionist work, Hoffmeier and Kitchen are confident the future will side with those who take the Bible's history seriously. As seen with the three recently discovered "House of David" inscriptions (see "King David Was Here," p. 49), archaeologists keep unearthing objects straight from the world of the Bible. Almost yearly now, seals for the kings of Judah and Israel and surrounding Canaanite nations are being found. In the last number of years, a twelfth-century B.C. bronze bull and a sixteenth-century silver Canaanite calf were excavated, illustrating why the Israelites were constantly warned against idol worship.

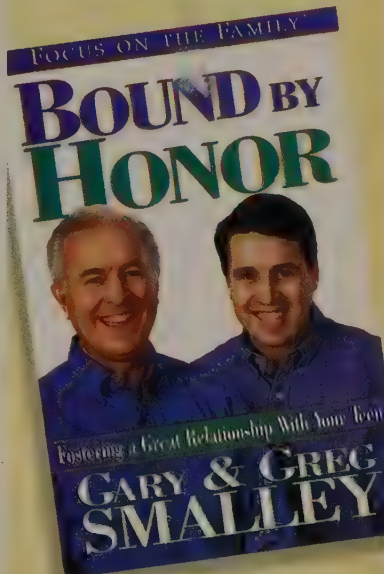
In 1979 a silver scroll from the seventh-century B.C. was found in a cave near Jerusalem. Containing the words in Numbers 6:24-26 ("May Yahweh bless and keep you; May Yahweh cause his face to shine upon you and grant you peace"), it forced revisionists to explain how their sixth-century B.C. composition date (or even later) for Numbers squared with a portion of that book appearing a century earlier.

Such discoveries have theological implications, says Hoffmeier. "There is a lot at stake here. The New Testament interweaves the salvific events of the Old Testament into it in such a way that Jesus the Passover Lamb loses significance if there is no historical Passover. And methodologically, there is the issue of how one interprets Scripture. In a sense we are seeing [with the minimalists] the Old Testament counterpart to the Jesus Seminar in New Testament studies. Also, what happens in scholarship today may feel irrelevant, but it soon trickles down into 'this is what the scholars say' in newspapers and television broadcasts."

For those who find such newspaper reports disturbing, Hoffmeier and Kitchen urge patience. "The biblical record, when you give it a fair test, fits its world and the world fits it," says Kitchen. "When scholars say such things as 'We have no evidence,' that merely means we do not know. Negative evidence is no evidence. It only takes one fool with a spade to dig up a new inscription and, whoosh!, that 'no evidence' disappears. I'm just amazed over the 40 years I've been in this business how we keep blundering into things you didn't expect that tie in with the Scriptures. If something doesn't seem to fit, the answer is to wait and see, not out of cowardice, not out of escapism, but just to see what happens when you have fuller evidence." **CT**

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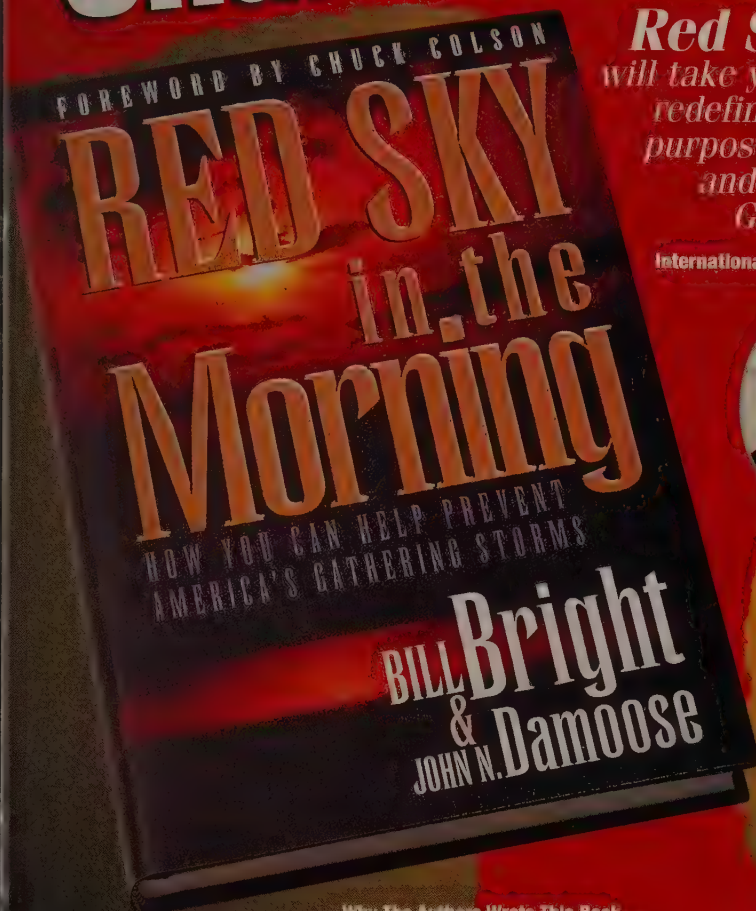
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J. I. PACKER

Still Surprised by Lewis

Born 100 years ago come November, C. S. Lewis is today beloved of evangelicals. His books have brought provided beeline expression to our rabbit-trail thoughts, compelling language to our religious longings, and a vision of God to our impaired imaginations. In this essay, J. I. Packer explains why a man whose theology had decidedly unevangelical elements has come to be the Aquinas, the Augustine, and the Aesop of contemporary evangelicalism.

Yes, I was at Oxford in Lewis's day (I went up in 1944); but *no*, I never met him. He was regularly on show as the anchorman of the Socratic Club, which met weekly to discuss how science, philosophy, and current culture related to Christianity; but as a young believer, I was sure I needed Bible teaching rather than apologetics, so I passed the Socratic by. The nearest I ever got to Lewis was hearing him address the Oxford theologians' society on Richard Hooker, about whom he was writing at that time for his assigned volume of the Oxford History of English Literature, the "Oh-Hell" as for obvious reasons he liked to call it. He spoke with a resonant Anglicized accent (you would never have guessed he was Irish),

PHOTO COURTESY OF MARION E. WADE CENTER, WHEATON COLLEGE

Why this nonevangelical
Oxford don has become
our patron saint.



C. S. Lewis

and when he said something funny, which he did quite often, he paused like a stage comedian for the laugh. They said he was the best lecturer in Oxford, and I daresay they were right. But he was not really part of my world.

Yet I owe him much, and I gratefully acknowledge my debt.

First of all, in 1942–43, when I thought I was a Christian but did not yet know what a Christian was—and had spent a year verifying the old adage that if you open your mind wide enough much rubbish will be tipped into it—*The Screwtape Letters* and the three small books that became *Mere Christianity* brought me, not indeed to faith in the full sense, but to mainstream Christian beliefs about God, man, and Jesus Christ, so that now I was halfway there.

Second, in 1945, when I was newly converted, the student who was discipling me lent me *The Pilgrim's Regress*. This gave me both a full-color map of the Western intellectual world as it had been in 1932 and still pretty much was 13 years later, and also a very deep delight in knowing that I knew God, beyond anything I had felt before. The vivid glow of Lewis's scenic and dramatic imagination, as deployed in the story, had started to grab me. *Regress*, Lewis's first literary effort as a Christian, is still for me the freshest and liveliest of all his books, and I reread it more often than any of the others.

Third, Lewis sang the praises of an author named Charles Williams, of whom I had not heard, and in consequence I picked up *Many Dimensions* in paperback in 1953 and had one of the most overwhelming reading experiences of my life—though that is another story.

Fourth, there are stellar passages in Lewis that for me, at least, bring the reality of heaven very close. Few Christian writers today try to write about heaven, and the theme defeats almost all who take it up. But as one who learned long ago from Richard Baxter's *Saints' Everlasting Rest* and Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* the need for clearly focused thought about heaven, I am grateful for the way Lewis helps me along here.

The number of Christians whom Lewis's writings have helped, one way and another, is enormous. Since his death in 1963, sales of his books have risen to 2 million a year, and a recently polled cross section of CT readers rated him the most influential writer in their lives—which is odd, for they and I identify ourselves as evangelicals, and Lewis did no such thing. He did not attend an evangelical place of worship nor fraternize with evangelical organizations. "I am a very ordinary layman of the Church of England," he wrote; "not especially 'high,' nor especially 'low,' nor especially anything else." By ordinary evangelical standards, his idea about the Atonement (archetypal penitence, rather than penal substitution), and his failure ever to mention justification by faith when speaking of the forgiveness of sins, and his apparent hospitality to baptismal regeneration, and his noninerrantist view of biblical inspiration, plus his quiet affirmation of purgatory and of the possible final salvation of some who have left this world as nonbelievers, were weaknesses; they led the late, great Martyn Lloyd-Jones, for whom evangelical orthodoxy was mandatory, to doubt whether Lewis was a Christian at all. His closest friends were Anglo-Catholics or Roman Catholics; his parish church, where he worshiped regularly, was "high"; he went to confession; he was, in fact, anchored in the (small-c) "catholic" stream of Anglican thought, which some (not all) regard as central. Yet evangelicals

love his books and profit from them hugely. Why?

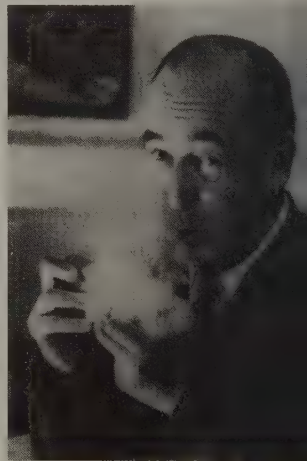
As one involved in this situation, I offer the following answer.

In the first place, Lewis was a *lay evangelist*, conservative in his beliefs and powerful in his defense of the old paths. "Ever since I became a Christian," he wrote in 1952, "I have thought that the best, perhaps the only service I could do for my unbelieving neighbors was to explain and defend the belief that has been common to nearly all Christians at all times." To make ordinary people think about historic Christianity, and to see and feel the strength and attraction of the case for it, was Lewis's goal throughout. All through his writings runs the sense that moderns have ceased to think about life and reality in a serious way and have settled instead for mindless drift with the crowd, or blind trust in technology, or the Athenian frivolity of always chasing new ideas, or the nihilism of knee-jerk negativism toward everything in the past. The Christian spokesman's first task, as Lewis saw it, is to put all this into reverse and get folk thinking again.

So his immediate goal in a sustained flow of didactic books, opinion pieces, children's stories, adult fiction and fantasy, autobiography, and poems, along with works of literary history and criticism, spread out over more than 30 years, was to stir up serious thought. About what? About the Christian values and perspectives that the people he once labeled the Clevers had left behind, and about the morasses one gets bogged down in once the Christian heritage is abandoned; and on from there. He would have agreed with the often-stated dictum of fellow evangelist Martyn Lloyd-Jones that the Christian is and must be the greatest thinker in the universe, and that God's first step in adult conversion is to make the person think.

Lewis was clear that, as he has *Screwtape* tell us in many different ways, thoughtlessness ruins souls; so he labored mightily by all kinds of stimulating persuasives—witty, argumentative, pictorial, fanciful, logical, prophetic, and dramatic by turns—to ensure, so far as he could, that death-dealing thoughtlessness would not flourish while he was around. His constant pummeling of his reader's mind was neither Ulster temperament nor Oxford didacticism, but the urgent compassionate expression of one who knew that the only alternative to grasping God's truth and seeing everything by its light is idiocy in one form or another.

And he believed, surely with reason, that his credibility as a Christian spokesman in an anticlerical age was enhanced by the fact that he had no professional religious identity but was just an Anglican layman earning his salt by teaching English at Oxford. As G. K. Chesterton was to himself simply a journalist with a significant Christian outlook, so Lewis was to himself simply an academic with a significant spare-time vocation of Christian utterance. Evangelicals appreciate lay evangelists of Lewis's kind.



Second, Lewis was a *brilliant teacher*. His strength lay not in the forming of new ideas but in the arresting simplicity, both logical and imaginative, with which he projected old ones. Not wasting words, he plunged straight into things and boiled matters down to essentials, positioning himself as a common-sense, down-to-earth, no-nonsense observer, analyst, and conversation partner. On paper he had a flair, comparable to that of the great evangelists in the pulpit (Whitefield, Spurgeon, Graham, for example), for making you feel he is in personal conversation with you, searching your heart and requiring of you total honesty in response. Never pontifical, never browbeating, and never wrapping things up, Lewis achieved an intimacy of instruction that is very unusual. Those who read today what he wrote half a century ago find him

that they throw light directly on realities of truth and fact.

G. K. Chesterton, Charles Williams, and to some extent Dorothy L. Sayers exhibit the same sort of bipolar mental development, and what I have said of Lewis's writings can be said of theirs, too. Such minds will always command attention, and when possessed, as the minds of these four were possessed, by the values and visions of Christian faith and Christian humanism, they will always make an appeal that is hard to resist; and that appeal will not diminish as the culture changes. Visionary didacticism, as in Plato, Jesus, and Paul (to look no further) is transcultural, and unfading in its power. Bible-loving evangelicals, who build their whole faith on the logical-visionary teaching of God himself via his servants on Genesis to Revelation, naturally seek and appreciate this mode of communication in

Lewis's mind was so highly developed that all of his arguments are illustrations, while all of his illustrations are arguments.

engaging and holding their attention, and when the reading is over, haunting them, in the sense that they do not forget what he said. At his best, Lewis is a teacher of great piercing power. What is his secret?

The secret lies in the blend of logic and imagination in Lewis's make-up, each power as strong as the other, and each enormously strong in its own right. In one sense, imagination took the lead. As Lewis wrote in 1954:

The imaginative man in me is older, more continuously operative, and in that sense more basic than either the religious writer or the critic. It was he who made me first attempt (with little success) to be a poet. . . . It was he who after my conversion led me to embody my religious belief in symbolic or mythopoeic forms, ranging from *Screwtape* to a kind of theologized science-fiction. And it was of course he who has brought me, in the last few years, to write the series of Narnia stories for children . . . because the fairy tale was the genre best fitted for what I wanted to say.

The best teachers are always those in whom imagination and logical control combine, so that you receive wisdom from their flights of fancy as well as a human heartbeat from their logical analyses and arguments. This in fact is human communication at its profoundest, for in the sending-receiving process of both lobes of the brain (left for logic, right for imagination) are fully involved, and that gives great depth and strength to what is heard. The teaching of Jesus presents itself as the supreme example here. Because Lewis's mind was so highly developed in both directions, it can truly be said of him that all of his arguments (including his literary criticism) are illustrations, in the sense that they throw light directly on realities of life and action, while all his illustrations (including the fiction and fantasies) are arguments, in the sense

that they throw light directly on realities of truth and fact. that no twentieth-century writer has managed it so brilliantly as did C. S. Lewis.

Third, Lewis projects a *vision of wholeness*—sanity, maturity, present peace and joy, and finally fulfillment in heaven—that cannot but attract, willy-nilly, the adult children of our confused, disillusioned, alienated, and embittered culture: the now established culture of the West, which we shall certainly take with us (or maybe, I should say, which will certainly take us with it) into the new millennium. Both Lewis's didactic expositions (think of *The Problem of Pain*, *The Screwtape Letters*, *Mere Christianity*, *Miracles*, *The Four Loves*, *Letters to Malcolm: Chiefly on Prayer*, and *Reflections on the Psalms*) and his fiction (think of the three Ransom stories, the seven Narnia tales, *The Great Divorce*, and *Till We Have Faces*) yield a vision of human life under God (or Maleldil, or Aslan, or the unnamed divinity who confronts Orual) that is redemptive, transformational, virtue-valuing, and shot through with hints and flashes of breathtaking glory and eternal delight in a world to come. To be sure, the vision is humbling, for the shattering of all egoistic pride, all Promethean heroics, and all the possessive perversions of love is part of it. In the text of all his Christian writings, and in the subtext, at least, of all his wider literary work, Lewis rings endless changes on the same story: a story of moral and intellectual corruption, embryonic or developed, being overcome in some way, whereby more or less disordered human beings, victims of bad thinking and bad influences from outside, find peace, poise, discernment, realism, fulfillment, and a meaningful future. Evangelicals love such writing: who can wonder at that?

Here we are at the deepest level of Lewis's creative identity. At bottom he was a mythmaker. As Austin Farrer, Lewis's closest

clerical friend and Oxford's most brilliant theologian at that time, observed, in Lewis's apologetics "we think we are listening to an argument; in fact, we are presented with a vision; and it is the vision that carries conviction." Myth is perhaps best defined as a story that projects a vision of life of actual or potential communal significance by reason of the identity and attitudes that it invites us to adopt. Lewis had loved the pre-Christian god-stories of Norse and Greek mythology, and the thought that did most to shape his return to Christianity and his literary output thereafter was this: In the Incarnation, a myth that recurs worldwide, the myth of a dying and rising deity through whose ordeal salvation comes to others, has become a space-time fact. Both before Christ, in pagan mythology, and since Christ, in imaginative fiction from Christian and para-Christian Westerners, versions of this story in various aspects have functioned as "good dreams," preparing minds and hearts for the reality of Christ

stepdaughter, after she had read all the Narnia stories, cried bitterly, saying, "I don't want to go on living in this world. I want to live in Narnia with Aslan"—and then adding the five-word paragraph: "Darling, one day you will." The power of Lewisian myth as Christian communication could not be better shown, and countless believers who have nourished their children on Narnia will resonate with Sayer here.

Not is that all. Over and above its evangelistic, or pre-evangelistic, role, Lewisian myth has an educating and maturing purpose. Lewis's 1943 Durham University lectures, published as *The Abolition of Man* (whew!) with the cooler academic subtitle, "Reflections on education with special reference to the teaching of English in the upper forms of schools," is a prophetic depth charge (it has been called a harangue) embodying his acute concern about our educational and cultural future.

The combination within him of insight with vitality, wisdom with wit, and imaginative power with analytical precision made Lewis a sparkling communicator of the everlasting gospel.

according to the gospel. With increasing clarity, Lewis saw his own fiction as adding to this stock of material.

Lewis knew that by becoming fact in Christ, the worldwide myth had not ceased to be a story that, by its appeal to our imagination, can give us "a taste for the other"—a sense of reality, that is, which takes us beyond left-brain conceptual knowledge. He found that what he now knew as the fact of Christ was generating and fertilizing within him stories of the same shape—stories, that is, that picture redemptive action in worlds other than ours, whether in the past, present, or future. In the fantasy novels (*Out of the Silent Planet*, *Perelandra*, *That Hideous Strength*, *Till We Have Faces*, and the seven Narnias) he became what Tolkien called a "sub-creator," producing good dreams of his own that, by reflecting Christian fact in a fantasy world, might prepare hearts to embrace the truth of Christ. The vision of wholeness that these myths project, and of the God-figures through whom that wholeness comes (think here particularly of Aslan, the Christly lion), can stir in honest hearts the wish that something of this sort might be true, and so beget, under God, readiness to accept the revelation that something of this sort is true, as a matter of fact.

Lewis once described *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* as giving an answer to the question, "What might Christ be like if there really were a world like Narnia and he chose to be incarnate and die and rise again in that world as he actually has done in ours?" All the Narnia books elaborate that answer: Aslan's doings are a reimagining in another world of what Jesus Christ did, does, and will do in this one. George Sayer, Lewis's finest biographer, ends his chapter on Narnia by telling how "my little

Lewis's educational philosophy called for imaginative identification on the part of young people, with paths of truth and value foreshadowed in the Platonic tradition, focused in the biblical revelation, and modeled in such writings as Spenser's *Faerie Queene* and his own stories; and *The Abolition of Man* was the waving of a red flag at an oncoming juggernaut that would reduce education to the learning of techniques and so dehumanize and destroy it, tearing out of it that which is its true heart. (Could he inspect public education today, a half-century later, he would tell us that what he feared has happened.) His fiction, however, was meant to help in real education, moral aesthetic and spiritual—value-laden education, in other words—and it is from that standpoint that we look at it now.

A close-up on Lewis's philosophy of education is needed here. Its negative side is hostility to any reductionist subjectivizing of values, as if the words that express them signify not realities to discern and goals to pursue, but just feelings of like and dislike that come and go. As a long-term Platonist and now a Christian into the bargain, Lewis had for some time been troubled by the lurching of twentieth-century philosophy into this subjectivism, and *The Abolition of Man* begins as his assault on a school textbook that assumed it. Such subjectivizing, he says, produces "men without chests"; that is, adults who lack what he calls "emotions organized by trained habit into stable sentiments"—what we would call moral formation and moral character.

Positively, Lewis calls for adherence to the Tao (his term: *Tao* means *way*). The Tao is the basic moral code (beneficence, obligations and respect within the family, justice, truthfulness,

mercy, magnanimity) that all significant religions and all stable cultures maintain, and that Christians recognize from the first two chapters of Romans as matters of God's general revelation to our race. Lewis sees this code as a unity, and as time-honored and experientially verified wisdom, and as the only safeguard of society in this or any age, so it is no wonder that he states its claim emphatically. Commenting on the fact that would-be leaders of thought dismiss some or all of the Tao in order to construct alternative moralities (think of Nietzsche, for instance), he declares:

This thing which I have called for convenience the Tao, and which others may call Natural Law or Traditional Morality or the First Principles of Practical Reason or the First Platitudes is not one among a series of possible systems of value. It is the sole source of all value judgments. . . . The effort to refute it and raise a new system of value in its place is self-contradictory. . . . What purport to be new systems or (as they now call them) 'ideologies', all consist of fragments from the Tao itself, arbitrarily wrenched from their context in the whole and then swollen to madness in their isolation, yet still owing to the Tao and to it alone such validity as they possess. If my duty to my parents is a superstition, then so is my duty to posterity. . . . If the pursuit of scientific knowledge is a real value, then so is conjugal fidelity. The rebellion of new ideologies against the Tao is a rebellion of the branches against the tree: if the rebels could succeed they would find that they had destroyed themselves.

Lewis's novel *That Hideous Strength*, which tells of a devilish research organization called the N.I.C.E. taking over a British university in order to take over Britain in the name of science, seems to me as to others an artistic failure, but it is a striking success in the way that it pictures this process of moral rebellion and the self-destruction to which it leads—and that, I suspect, was the only success that Lewis cared about when he wrote it.

Now, Tao-orientation is an internalized mindset that has to be learned. Lewis invokes Plato on this: "The little human animal will not at first have the right responses. It must be trained to feel pleasure, liking, disgust and hatred at those things which really are pleasant, likable, disgusting, and hateful." Yes, but how? Partly, at least, through stories that model the right responses: poems like Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, one of Lewis's lifelong favorites (best read, he once affirmed, between the ages of 12 and 16), novels like those of George MacDonald, and myths like the Chronicles of Narnia. Doris Myers urges that the chronicles are a more or less conscious counterpart to the *Faerie Queene*, modeling particular forms of virtue in a Tao frame with Christian overtones across the spectrum of a human life. Affirming that "the didacticism of the Chronicles consists in the education of moral and aesthetic feelings . . . to prevent children growing up without Chests," Myers reviews them to show how in each one "a particular virtue or configuration of virtues is presented, and the reader is brought to love it through participating in the artistry of the tale." The child will thus absorb the Tao by osmosis through enjoying the story.

Specifically, in the first chronicle, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, Lewis works to "strengthen the Chest" by inducing an emotional affirmation of courage, honor, and limitless kindness, with an emotional rejection of cowardice and treachery. In *Prince Caspian*, the second, he highlights joy within responsible

self-control, in courtesy, justice, appropriate obedience, and the quest for order. In the third, *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, the endragoning and dedragoning of Eustace, "the Boy without a Chest," is flanked by vivid images of personal nobility (Reepicheep the Mouse) and public responsibility (Caspian the captain), while a tailpiece tells us how Eustace after his dedragoning was seen to be improved—"you'd never know him for the same boy." (The image, of course, is of Christian conversion.) Numbers four and five (*The Silver Chair* and *The Horse and His Boy*) teach lessons on managing one's thoughts and feelings as one nears adulthood; number six (*The Magician's Nephew*) invites hatred for the life-defying development of knowledge and use of power apart from the Tao; and number seven (*The Last Battle*) inculcates bravery in face of loss and death.

Thus Lewis's Narnia links up with his attempt, in *The Abolition of Man*, to recall education to its Tao-grounded roots. The attempt was ignored, and today we reap the bitter fruits of that fact. The inner desolation and desperation that young people experience as subjectivist relativism and nihilism are wished upon them in schools and universities is a tragedy. (If you do not know what I am referring to, listen to the pop singers; they will tell you.) Yet Lewis's imaginative presentation in his tales of a life of wholeness, maturity, sanity, honesty, humility, and humaneness, fictionally envisaged in order that it might be factually realized, still has great potency for both conversion and character building, as Narnia lovers most of all will testify. And evangelical believers greatly appreciate potency of this kind.

This brings us to the fourth factor in evangelical enthusiasm for C. S. Lewis: namely, the power with which he communicates not only the goodness of godliness, but also the reality of God, and with that the reality of the heaven that exists in the fullness of God's gracious presence.

Lewis's power here stemmed from his own vivid experience. From childhood he knew stabbing moments of what he called joy, that is, intense delightful longing, Sweet Desire (his phrase), that nothing in this world satisfies, and that is in fact a God-sent summons to seek the enjoyment of God and heaven. The way he describes it is calculated (Lewis, like other writers, could calculate his effects) to focus in our minds an awareness that this experience is ours too, so that Augustine was right to say that God made us for himself and our hearts lack contentment till they find it in him, in foretaste here and in fullness hereafter. Having found Sweet Desire to be an Ariadne's thread leading him finally to Christ (the autobiographical *Surprised by Joy* tells us how), Lewis holds our feet to the fire to ensure, if he can, that the same will happen to us. "If we consider the unblushing promises of reward and the staggering nature of the rewards promised in the Gospels, it would seem that Our Lord finds our desires, not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us . . . We are far too easily pleased." Nothing must be allowed to distract us from staying the course with Sweet Desire.

Lewis's power to communicate God and heaven's reality was exerted through his marvelously vivid rhetoric. Rhetoric—that is, the art of using words persuasively—ran in the Lewis family, and C. S. Lewis himself was a prose poet whose skill with simple words, like Bunyan's, enabled him to suggest ineffable things to our imaginations with overwhelming poignancy.

Thus, in *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, a momentary breeze

brought the three children "a smell and a sound, a musical sound. Edmund and Eustace would never talk about it afterwards. Lucy could only say, 'It would break your heart.' 'Why,' said I, 'was it so sad?' 'Sad!! No,' said Lucy.

"No one in that boat doubted that they were seeing beyond the End of the World into Aslan's country."

And this is how *The Last Battle* ends:

"There *was* a real railway accident," said Aslan softly. "Your father and mother and all of you are—as you used to call it in the Shadowlands—dead. The term is over: the holidays have begun. The dream is ended: this is the morning."

And as He spoke He no longer looked to them like a lion; but the things that began to happen to them after that were so great and beautiful that I cannot write them . . . we can most truly say that they all lived happily ever after. . . . All their life in this world and all their adventures in Narnia had only been the cover and the title page: now at last they were beginning Chapter One of the Great Story which no one on earth has read: which goes on forever: in which every chapter is better than the one before.

The knockout quality of such writing is more than words can express.

The combination within him of insight with vitality, wisdom with wit, and imaginative power with analytical precision made

Lewis a sparkling communicator of the everlasting gospel. Matching Aslan in the Narnia stories with (of course!) the living Christ of the Bible and of Lewis's instructional books, and his presentation of Christ could hardly be more forthright. "We are told that Christ was killed for us, that His death has washed out our sins, and that by dying he disabled death itself. That is the formula. That is Christianity. That is what has to be believed." Then, on the basis of this belief and the future belief that he is risen and alive and so is personally *there* (that is, everywhere, which means *here*), we must "put on," or as Lewis strikingly renders it, "dress up as" Christ—that is, give ourselves totally to Christ, so that he may be "formed in us," and we may henceforth enjoy in him the status and character of adopted children in God's family, or as again Lewis strikingly puts it, "little Christs." "God looks at you as if you were a little Christ: Christ stands beside you to turn you into one." Precisely.

Not just evangelicals, but all Christians, should celebrate Lewis, "the brilliant, quietly saintly, slightly rumped Oxford don" as James Patrick describes him. He was a Christ-centered, great-tradition mainstream Christian whose stature a generation after his death seems greater than anyone ever thought while he was alive, and whose Christian writings are now seen as having classic status.

Long may we learn from the contents of his marvelous, indeed magical, mind! I doubt whether the full measure of him has been taken by anyone as yet.

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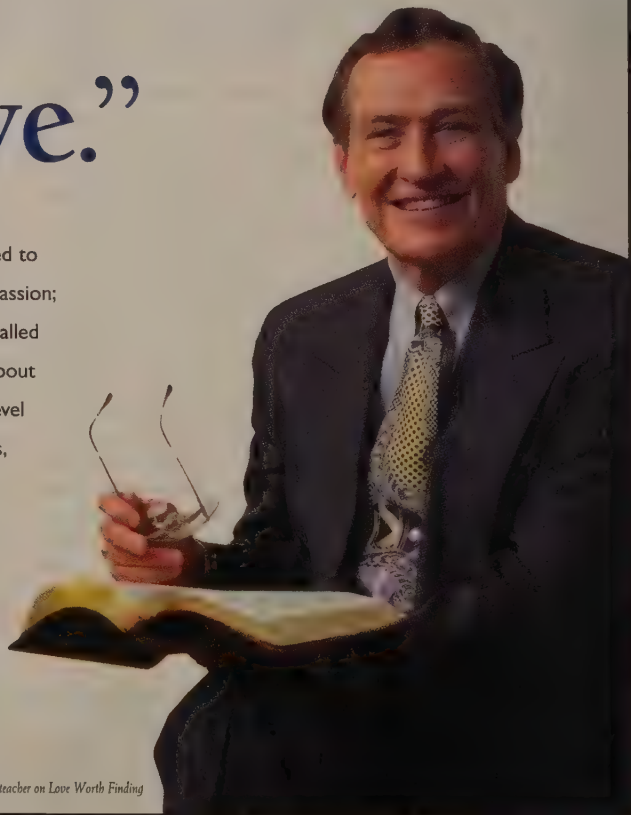
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*Real
Students.*

*Real
Stories.*

In Africa, I learned that good intentions are no substitute for good preparation.



LAURA CORCORAN didn't expect to fail when she headed to Kenya. Even though she was fresh out of college, she already had a lot of experience doing what she loved – working with disadvantaged kids. There was a summer at a reservation in Wyoming, winter weeks in Belize, and a summer in Philadelphia's inner city.

But Nairobi was different. More complex. Despite her best efforts, the door closed, and she came home early.

"I felt like a total failure," she recalls.

After months of prayer, Laura still felt called to urban ministry, so she decided to study at Gordon-Conwell. Here she has taken many classes with Professor Dean Borgman at Gordon-Conwell's

Center for Urban Ministerial Education (CUME) in Boston. In her first class, a guest teacher was Dr. Doug Hall, an adjunct professor who directs Emmanuel Gospel Center, an inner city ministry.

"He said we need to research our methods and goals, or we can be *counter* productive.



"It was like light bulbs flashing – that's what happened to me in Kenya! Everything I've learned since has reinforced my conviction that good intentions are no substitute for good preparation.

"I can see that my experience in Africa has actually helped me get more out of my classes at Gordon-Conwell. Now I'm eager to go back out and put everything I've learned into practice!"

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The Return of the Jewish Church



In 1967, there were no Messianic Jewish
congregations in the world. Today there are 350.

Who are these believers?

How long have you been a Christian?" "I'm not a Christian," the woman replied indignantly. "I'm a Messianic Jew."

I was visiting Beth Yeshua in Philadelphia, one of the leading Messianic Jewish congregations in the United States. Though my question was poorly chosen, I was stunned by the definitive rejection of the label *Christian* and reminded that there may never be an easy fit between Jewish faith and 2,000 years of evolving Christian culture.

"In A.D. 150, Justin Martyr wrote to Trypho the Jew, saying, 'You can be a Jew or a Christian, but you can't be both.' And that is the one thing both communities have traditionally agreed on," says Jamie Cowen, rabbi of Tikvat Israel, a Messianic Jewish congregation based in Richmond, Virginia. "The whole thrust of Messianic Judaism is to restore the roots of the faith as a belief in Jesus as a Jewish Messiah.

"We see our mission as being two primary things—to help Jews understand Jesus as their Messiah, and to help the Christian church understand her Jewish roots."

The rapid growth of Messianic Judaism has been remarkable. In 1967, before the Jewish people regained control of Jerusalem, there was not a single Messianic Jewish congregation in the world, and only several thousand Messianic Jews worldwide. Today, over 350 Messianic Jewish congregations—50 in Israel alone—dot the globe. There are well over one million Jews in the United States who express some sort of faith in *Yeshua* (the Jewish form of *Jesus*), according to a 1990 survey, one of the most extensive ever conducted. Sid Roth, host of the *Messianic Vision* radio and television show, estimates that more than 100,000 Jewish people in the former Soviet Union alone have made professions of faith.

As the numbers of Messianic Jews have increased, so has the profile of the movement grown in evangelical circles. For instance, last year's Promise Keepers "Stand in the Gap" rally began with Messianic leaders blowing the shofar (ram's horn) and standing with Gentile Christian leaders on the platform.

This merging of two of the three major Abrahamic religions is setting the world on edge. Many Arab observers view the phenomenon with a curious astonishment, while a number of Jews and Christians take turns attacking and defending the controversial faith of Messianic Jews.

What's behind the numbers, the passion, and the controversy?

Strange symbols

Congregation Beth Yeshua ("House of Salvation" or "House of Jesus") in Philadelphia is one of the leading Messianic Jewish congregations in America. It was



founded by Martin Chernoff and is now led by his son, David, a messianic rabbi. It typifies the growing faith of Messianic Judaism.

You will not find a cross at Beth Yeshua. Stars of David are plentiful, but in the front of the congregation—the place where a Christian church might plant a huge wooden cross—there is an ark containing a Torah scroll (the five books of Moses).

Worship services are held on Friday night and Saturday morning. Participants, including visitors, are offered a prayer shawl and a kippa (a small head covering). The service is exuberant. Children and some adults dance together in organized Jewish dances at the front of the synagogue as the worship team leads the congregation with the enthusiasm of a charismatic service.

The integration of the young and old is startling. Though children are eventually excused to go to their own classes, during the worship time the dancing and singing insure that the children are perhaps the most active participants of all. I kept thinking, “My kids would love this,” as I saw a young girl go to her seat for a quick sip from a water bottle before returning to dance some more.

The worship songs are laden with Jewish allusions and a liberal use of Hebrew. Much of the rabbi’s message sounds quite evangelical, but the frequent Hebraic references repeatedly reminded me I was not in a Gentile Christian service: instead of *cross*, I heard about the *tree of sacrifice*; and the apostle Paul is referred to as Rabbi Shaul (pronounced “Shaw-ool”).

Faith in a Jewish key

What exactly is a Messianic Jew (MJ)? The one constant is a desire to strip away centuries of Gentile accretions. “The basic point Christians must understand is that even though Jewish people may not be able to define what it means to be Jews, they feel an obligation of loyalty to their people to remain Jewish,” writes Jews for Jesus founder Moishe Rosen with his wife, Ceil, in their new book, *Witnessing to Jews*.

“Jewish people often have aversions to Christian symbols such as the cross, the crèche and depictions of Jesus,” they write. “At the very least, those symbols puzzle Jews, who have been taught from childhood not to make images of God. At the worst, they seem to a Jewish person to verge on idolatry. . . . For these reasons, sometimes a messianic congregation can be very helpful in bridging the culture gap



between Jewish and Gentile Christians.”

Eliezer Maass, director of training for AMF International (formerly American Messianic Fellowship), warns that “there are many different models of messianic congregations; there is a lot of diversity in this movement.”

This makes it hazardous to describe its congregations, since new expressions of worship and belief are arising all the time as the movement grows. In general, however, there are a number of cultural differences. MJs prefer “synagogue” or “congregation” to the word *church*, and rather than spell out God and Lord, they often use the Jewish practice of denoting respect by referring to G-d and L-rd. The Anglicized word *Christ* is dropped in favor of *Messiah*. MJs usually recognize Saturday as the Sabbath, and many still observe the rite of circumcision. Most MJs also believe that God desires the Jewish people to remain a “distinct and obedient” nation until Jesus’ second coming—hence the objection to the title *Christian*.

A typical Messianic Jewish synagogue will serve a variety of believers. Some are previously secular Jews who found faith in the MJ context. Others are previously evangelical Christians with Jewish blood, eager to incorporate the beloved traditions of their heritage with their belief in the Messiah. There are also Torah-observant Messianic Jews who continue to follow the strict orthodox practices of Orthodox Judaism, including kosher food preparation.

How to maintain a distinct and authentic Jewish practice has been a constant family debate throughout Messianic Judaism. Christians have not been silent as they watched from the outside. In 1975, the Fellowship of Christian Testimonies to the Jews (FCTJ) passed a resolution stating that “Christian faith is consistent with, but not a continuation of Biblical Judaism, and is distinct from rabbinical Judaism. . . .

Bible-believing Hebrew Christians should be aligned with the local church in fellowship with Gentile believers.” The same resolution challenged the practice of wearing yarmulkes and prayer shawls, stating that “any practice of culture, Jewish or non-Jewish, must be brought into conformity with New Testament theology.”

A Messianic Jewish Alliance of America (MJAA) member responded with an article that was published in *Israel My Glory Quarterly*: “Why can an American remain an American and be a Christian, why can a Pole, a Russian, a Japanese, but only the Jew can no longer identify himself with his people?”

Much of this controversy between Messianic Judaism and Christianity remains today in certain circles. Many Christians have a difficult time understanding the historic persecution the Jewish people have undergone and the corresponding walls that exist between the two faiths. For centuries, Jews have seen Christians as their primary persecutors. The Inquisition, the crusades, various pogroms in Europe, and the atrocities of Nazism were waged in the name of Christianity. When you have a grandfather who was murdered in a Nazi gas chamber under a sign reading “You are being killed in the name of Jesus Christ,” it’s a bit of a stretch when an eager young evangelist tries to tell you the good news about Christianity.

Raised with such awareness, new Jewish believers often go into culture shock as they are assimilated into Gentile Christian churches. Though they are willing to believe in the Messiah who was a Jew, it is difficult to get over the atrocities that have been done in his name.

Messianic leader Stuart Dauermann explains, “Before they can seriously consider the claims of Jesus, Jewish people need a ‘cultural bed’ to rest in. The mes-

sianic congregation attempts to penetrate that cultural barrier."

While constructing this cultural bed, many MJ leaders have removed Western elements of Christianity, including the very label *Christian*. That's why many Messianic Jews will state forthrightly, "I'm not a Christian, I'm a Messianic Jew."

"Linguistically, the terms are equivalent," Rob Kirsch, a medical doctor and Messianic Jew, explains. "But in common thought, *Christian* means *Gentile*. Since I'm not a Gentile, I'd rather avoid a label that carries that connotation."

The whole thrust of Messianic Judaism is to restore the roots of the faith as a belief in Jesus as a Jewish Messiah.'

As the only practicing Messianic *mohel*—a physician who performs ritual circumcision—Kirsch likes to consider himself on the "cutting edge" of Messianic Judaism. He was raised in a conservative Jewish home but met Yeshua at the age of 19 through the "slow, persistent, and dogged witness" of some college classmates.

For many years, Rob could not shake the feeling of being a "visitor" in the independent churches he regularly attended. He and his wife attempted to celebrate some of the Jewish holidays at home on their own, but they ran into many difficulties trying to assimilate their Jewish roots and their faith in Yeshua.

When Rob's family finally came to Beth Yeshua in Philadelphia, it felt like "coming home," he says. "I realized it was possible and appropriate to remain Jewish and be a believer, but working out how to do it was a big question for me."

Rob was delighted to learn that the leaders of Beth Yeshua had worked out many of the issues he and his wife had confronted in trying to live the life of a Jew who believes in Yeshua.

Apart from the MJ reticence to use the label *Christian*, the absence of crosses is

another sore point for many Western Christians who grew up singing "The Old Rugged Cross."

"[The cross is] is synonymous with the symbol of death for all the wrong reasons," explains Joel Chernoff, president of the International Messianic Jewish Alliance. "Due to the centuries of death and persecution of Jews by people prominently displaying that symbol, the cross has become a symbol not of the Messiah's atonement, but of untold horror and misery."

Joel points out that Hezekiah was willing to burn Aaron's rod when such a dramatic symbol of Israel's deliverance became venerated in and of itself, apart from what it represented. So, too, the Messianic Jews don't hold symbols sacred—simply the truth behind them.

That also explains why Easter is celebrated as part of Passover. "There's a reason the crucifixion occurred during the Passover," Joel points out. "It loses a great deal of its power and meaning if it's divorced from that context."

As for Christmas, Joel notes that there is no biblical command to celebrate Christmas, so many Messianic Jews simply decide not to—though they don't fault Gentile Christians for such celebrations.

"We have the same faith, but a different cultural practice or expression," he points out. "In first-century Jerusalem, the early Messianic Jewish body of believers decided that the cultural worship experience of Gentile believers could be diverse, that they should hold to a few things, and then be themselves."

The MJAA wing of Messianic Judaism is not interested in any of the cultural trappings of Gentile Christianity, unless those cultural practices reflect a specific, biblically prescribed practice.

"Christian churches are very Gentile," admits Arthur Glasser, dean emeritus of the School of World Mission at Fuller Theological Seminary. According to Glasser, what the Messianic Jews are doing is no different from what the Chinese and German Christians are doing—working hard to contextualize a faith that supersedes all nationalistic cultures and makes sense in their own. Besides, he adds, it is the only effective way to reach a people who need the Messiah as much as anyone.

"You can't say to the Jews, 'You're on the ash heap of history because you failed Jesus, and God has tossed you aside, making you of no significance. God is through with your people, but here's the gospel through Jesus Christ.' That's not a

very effective way to win friends and influence people," he chuckles, adding, "You don't have to become a Western-style Christian to worship God in a legitimate fashion."

Some within the MJ movement are more cautious than those leading the MJAA. Maass offers the friendly, in-house critique that "sometimes the temptation is to bend over backwards and be so concerned about acculturation and being sensitive to the Jewish community to the point where Jesus becomes secondary."

Messianic pastor Louis Lapidus, a colleague of Maass's, warns, "We risk structural damage when we hide the Messiah or drape him in so much Jewish garb that he appears to be merely a great Rabbi."

In reality, the Gentile church doesn't have "some kind of major say about this," says Maass. Western Christians do not own the gospel. MJs are here to stay, regardless of how the Gentile church feels about it. In many ways, the tensions from Acts 15 and the Jerusalem council are being revisited.

Even so, Maass wants the Messianic Jewish movement to "keep those doors and channels of communication open to the Gentile church."

The cost of belief

The personal costs that Messianic Jews pay for their faith in Yeshua are often severe, from being shunned by their families to being excluded from the local Jewish Community Center. Historically, Judaism has been a nonproselytizing faith, but now there is a full-time missionary in the United States who tries to counteract the Messianic Jewish movement. Jews for Judaism missionary Mark Powers believes that the traditional Jewish community is at one in its opposition to Messianic Judaism: "Regardless of our differences, be they political or whatever, the Jewish community is united on this issue: They [MJs] are not Jews. They are Christians. There's nothing wrong with being Christian, but it's just not Jewish. . . . It's provable that [the messianic movement] was designed specifically as a marketing strategy to bring Jews into the church."

Gary and Shirley Beresford, a South African Messianic Jewish couple, found out the hard way that their faith would even exclude them from being citizens of Israel. On December 25, 1989, while Christians around the world celebrated the birth of Jesus, the Israeli Supreme Court disinherited any who believed in Jesus' name. Justice Menahem Elon

wrote an opinion that stated that Messianic Jews cannot make *aliyah* (literally, *ascend*, or immigration to Israel) under the Law of Return.

"Messianic Jews attempt to reverse the wheels of history by 2,000 years," he wrote. "But the Jewish people have decided during the 2,000 years of its history that [MJs] do not belong to the Jewish nation . . . and have no right to force themselves on it."

The MJAA responded with a full-page ad in the *Jerusalem Post*, warning that the circle of exclusion would expand. Within seven years, that prophecy came true as the Orthodox Union of North America declared that Reform and Conservative sects are "not Judaism," setting off a seething controversy within the Jewish community.

"It is a trifle ironic that the Reform and Conservative Jews expect Messianic Jews to abandon our Jewish identification on their demand," observes Bruce Choen, rabbi of Congregation Beth El, a Messianic Jewish synagogue in New York City. "The issue of how exactly to define 'Jewish' is on the table as an 'in-house' issue like never before in modern Jewish history."

Messianic Judaism is now the fastest-growing stream of faith within the Jewish community, by far, according to Joel Chernoff. The nation of Israel has not watched this explosion dispassionately. The December 1989 decision stating that Messianic Jews cannot make *aliyah* under the Law of Return met with little organized opposition; now the Israeli Knesset has decided to up the ante. It is currently considering a law titled "Prohibition of Inducement for Religious Conversion," which aims to stop all proselytizing of traditional Jews. Joel Chernoff fears that the proposed law "lays the groundwork for the legalized harassment and persecution of Messianic Jews and Gentile Christians in Israel."

The law is certainly extreme—something that you would expect to find in a Muslim nation: "Whoever possesses, contrary to law, or prints or copies or distributes or shares or imports tracts or advertises things in which there is an inducement for religious conversion is liable for one year imprisonment. Any tract or advertisement in which there is inducement to religious conversion will be confiscated."

Although this bill is mired in committee, an even more stringent bill has been

proposed (and at this writing has passed a preliminary reading in the Knesset) that calls for a three-year jail sentence and NIS 50,000 (\$13,700 U.S.) fine for "anyone preaching with the intent of causing another person to change his religion." Unlike the previous bill, this one has the support of Prime Minister Netanyahu and his cabinet.

These new rounds of legislation were proposed after American evangelist Morris Cerrullo mailed close to one million booklets to households in Israel. The booklets, written in Hebrew, made the case that Yeshua is the Messiah. As soon as the ultra-orthodox community learned of the booklets, they warned postal delivery men to cease distribution. (A few postal workers were beaten when they ignored the warnings.) All but approximately 150,000 of the booklets were delivered.

Cerrullo's organization acted independently, and there are mixed feelings within the Messianic community about what took place. While many MJs thought the booklet was well done, they recognized the potential political consequences.

Many might ask, "How could such severe legislation be seriously considered

Mapping the Messianic Jewish World

Several organizations are riding the wave of burgeoning Jewish interest in the Messiah. Clearly, the largest and most representative in this country is the Messianic Jewish Alliance of America (MJAA), with some 85 to 90 congregations.

The Union of Messianic Jewish Congregations (UMJC) is next, comprising about 70 Messianic congregations worldwide. The MJAA and the UMJC are close in spirit, with relatively similar visions and virtually identical practice. In fact, the UMJC originated from within the MJAA, the result of a "personal division" in 1979 that has since been addressed and "healed." Though a future merger is not a foregone conclusion, it is a distinct possibility.

The Federation of Messianic Congregations is a much smaller group of about 12 synagogues. Eliezer Maass, who attends an FMC congregation, points out that the FMC tends to be on the "right wing" of the spectrum and "more conservative" doctrinally. As such, FMC congregations tend to have a closer relationship with Gentile churches.

These three groups account for about 90 percent of the Messianic Jewish congregations. Of course, there are a number of independent synagogues as well. In general, the MJAA is seen as the organization most clearly "pushing the envelope" in its effort to define an indigenous Messianic Jewish congregation. In the middle would be the UMJC, with the FMC on the

right. Though there are clearly differences (Maass cites the common saying within the Jewish community, "Where there are two Jews, you have three opinions"), the groups have a fairly amicable association. The FMC invited the UMJC president to speak at a conference several years ago, and the UMJC and MJAA jointly sponsor events today. It would be more of a stretch to see the MJAA and the FMC work closely together.

Beyond these three groups are several missions organizations, with Jews for Jesus and Chosen People Ministries being the largest and most influential. Both of these groups have also begun planting congregations (in fact, several of the FMC congregations were planted by Chosen People Ministries). Though traditionally these missions may have followed the assimilation and the "Hebrew Christian" model, this is changing as the entire movement seeks to define a more indigenous model. The Assemblies of God and the Southern Baptists have launched their own missions efforts as well.

The movement has even entered the Roman Catholic church. Cardinal Jean-Marie Lustiger, archbishop of Paris, states openly, "I'm a Jew," though his theological beliefs are obviously in line with the Roman Catholic tradition.

The Messianic Jewish movement is strongest in the United States and then Israel. Russia is also a very active nation, with numerous congregations being founded. Holland and Great Britain round out the "top tier."

in a supposed democracy?" The answer is hinted at by Larry Derfner, a Tel Aviv journalist who wrote in a June 1997 issue of the *Jerusalem Post*: "Judaism may be a broad, comprehensive culture, but it has one vital organ, and that organ is religion." In this spectrum, apparently, belief is thicker than blood.

Coalition whip Meir Sheetrit has said that this new legislation will be held down in committee, as was the case with its predecessor. Since this is the case, more important than the bills themselves may be the way the Messianic Jewish community is coming together to respond to them. "In 1989," Joel Chernoff admits, "all we had was a loosely formed organization with several great conferences." That has changed. There are now over 50 Messianic congregations and 30 more fellowships in Israel alone, which are being backed by the efforts of Messianic groups around the world. Together, they have formulated a strategy for political involvement to block the law's passage.

Overture to modern Messianic Judaism

The modern manifestation of the MJ movement took almost a hundred years to develop. Its story is one of dogged determination and foresight reminiscent of Abraham himself.

The father of "Messianic Judaism" is Joseph Rabinowitz, a Russian Jew who lived from 1837 to 1899. Rabinowitz became a believer in Yeshua as he sat upon the Mount of Olives, pondering the suffering of the Jewish people. In the waning years of the nineteenth century, Rabinowitz established a Jewish Christian synagogue in Kishineff, Russia.

Just a few years after Rabinowitz's death, Mark Levy, an English Jew, got hold of the same vision and worked to establish a similar movement in the United States. These initial efforts soon waned, but they were revived at a New York City conference in April 1915 in which the Hebrew Christian Alliance (HCA) was officially formed. An early resolution explains that the HCA sought to unite and encourage Jewish believers to come out "openly and boldly" in their confession of the Messiah. In 1925, a worldwide group, the International Hebrew Christian Alliance (IHCA), came into existence.

Though Levy was largely responsible for getting the movement started in the United States, his views regarding indigenous Jewish worship and practice



were not popular until much later in this century. The immediate controversy arose over Levy's insistence that Jewish believers be allowed (and even encouraged) to maintain practices of the Jewish faith. His argument would be forwarded two decades later by Sir Leon Levison, president of the IHCA in the thirties, who said that "Paul stood out against Judaizing the Gentiles; and now [we] must plead against Gentilising the Jews."

As anti-Semitism spread in the 1930s, particularly in European countries, the IHCA encouraged the formation of specific congregations, especially in communities where Jewish believers were not welcome in Christian churches. The Holocaust naturally impeded many evangelistic efforts well into the forties. Many Jewish believers were understandably hurt by the tepid response of Christians to the reports of wholesale Jewish slaughter. Correspondingly, they felt little or no loyalty toward the Gentile churches who turned their backs on such suffering. On an international scale, at least, the once unquestioned practice of assimilation into Gentile Christian churches began to be challenged by necessity as much as anything else.

There was a temporary revitalization of organizational efforts in 1955 when the IHCA held the World Congress of Hebrew Christians in Chicago, but interest cooled off once again, and the early sixties presaged a relatively silent decade.

That changed suddenly in 1967 when, during the Six Day War, Jerusalem was returned to Jewish control. Glasser explains that "with the establishment of the State of Israel, a new wave of Jewish concern came through a lot of American Jewish hearts." Earlier, Glasser points

There is no biblical command to celebrate Christmas, so many Messianic Jews simply do not.

out, assimilation was the "natural" route to take. But after the Holocaust and then the emergence of the State of Israel, "there was something among the Jewish people which made them feel that Israel had a future and that they should be identified with Israel in a different way."

Paul and Bertha Swarr experienced this wave firsthand while living in Israel as Christian workers with the Mennonite Board of Missions and serving in an interdenominational church in Jaffa. The Swarrs had moved to Israel in 1957 as Protestant missionaries with little idea of Messianic Judaism, as Paul explains, but with the directive to "represent Yeshua in whatever way we could." By the early seventies, one of the Anglican congregations was pastored by a Messianic Jew, who decided to use fewer Gentile trappings and create a more Hebraic worship context at the Beit Immanuel Messianic Congregation.

"At that stage, we made a choice to link up with what was happening at Beit Immanuel," Paul says. By 1977, the Swarrs were pastoring Beit Immanuel, a position they continued in for ten years before returning to develop the School of Jewish Studies at the University of the

Nations in Richmond, Virginia.

"In our early years there, if we saw one baptism a year, we saw it as a victory," Paul recounts. "In our last ten years there, the growth came from the university group. When the [university group] made the discovery that Yeshua was a Jew—that they were not leaving their heritage, but discovering their heritage—they 'owned' what was happening. The young Israelis are wide open, and it's now a much more demonstrative witness there."

"Political Zionism has not met the need of their spirits," Bertha adds. "But the young Israeli believers see themselves as a sign of hope in the Middle East."

This explosion of interest erupted among Jewish youth in North America, too, resulting in more aggressive evangelism and more emphasis on indigenous Jewish practice. Joel Chernoff, son of the prominent Hebrew Christian leader Martin Chernoff, joined another believer, Rick Coghill, to form the highly successful recording group Lamb, and soon began pioneering a new, distinctive sound that combined Eastern European and ancient Jewish music with the pop sound of the seventies. Organizations and conferences geared toward the youth were developed to foster the burgeoning interest, and once the youth were included, Messianic Judaism would never be the same.

During this same time, the well-known Jews for Jesus (JFJ) missions organization was founded by Moishe Rosen, raising Jewish evangelism to a new pitch. Some of the Jews who became believers in Jesus were assimilated into Gentile churches. Others began joining Messianic congregations that started to form throughout the United States.

In 1975, the alliance voted to change its name from the Hebrew Christian Alliance of America to the Messianic Jewish Alliance of America (MJAA). Soon after, in 1980, the alliance headquarters moved from Chicago to Philadelphia (where it remains today), the first denominational-type organization. David Chernoff (brother of Joel) was appointed the first chairman of the steering committee, which formed the International Alliance of Messianic Congregations and Synagogues (IAMCS) in 1986. The IAMCS has since developed a program for ordination and the Institute for Messianic Rabbinic Training. In June of 1997, Joel Chernoff was elected president of the International Messianic Jewish Alliance, which represents groups in 15 nations, including Israel.

Toward Jerusalem Council II

The rise of Messianic Judaism is not only stirring religious authorities in Israel; it is also generating interest among Gentile churches. It may even lead to a significant meeting called "Toward Jerusalem Council II," tentatively scheduled during *Shavuot* (Pentecost), 1999. A number of denominational leaders are coming together in an effort to "repair and heal the breach between Jewish and Gentile believers in Yeshua . . . primarily through humility, prayer and repentance." The vision is for a gathering of cross-denomina-



'Despite the evils Jews have experienced at the hands of Gentiles, Jews are more responsive to the gospel today than they have been for a long time.'

tional representatives (Gentile and Jew) to gather in Jerusalem and produce a historic document.

Early goals include recognizing the schism between Jewish and Gentile believers, which culminated in the decrees of the Nicene Council II (A.D. 787). This would involve denouncing that council's decree declaring Messianic Jewish communities had no right to exist.

Toward Jerusalem Council II will also seek to understand and affirm the Jewish roots of Christianity (and the validity of the Messianic Jewish community), while recognizing the "sacrificial, loving effort of true believers from among the Gentiles to share the Good News of the Messiah with the Jewish people."

"The Church is cursed with division, because its rejection of the Messianic Jewish community [in the second century] was the first church split, which led to other church splits," says Daniel Juster, messianic rabbi and leader of Tikkun Ministries. "The resolution of later church splits requires repentance and returning to a first-century understanding of the Bible in its original Jewish context." Of course, some evangelicals might counter that, though the New Testament was written

by Jewish writers, it was produced in a Hellenistic Graeco-Roman cultural context, not a Jewish one.

At Toward Jerusalem Council II, Messianic Jews will be called on to repent of pride. Gentiles will be called to "recognize and to grieve" over the Christian church's sins against Jewish believers in Jesus, including "all forms of 'replacement' teaching" (which treats the first covenant as obsolete and discarded, with the Gentile Christian church inheriting Israel's promises). Finally, the council would call upon the church to affirm a declaration similar to that of Acts 15, affirming Jews who follow Jesus and who want to continue in their Jewish life and calling (within the context of scriptural norms).

The absolute rejection of all forms of replacement teaching will no doubt cause considerable controversy among evangelical churches. While some forms of this teaching have anti-Semitic roots, other forms can be deduced quite easily from the writings of the apostle Paul, not to mention the anonymous author of Hebrews.

A revival from within

The future of the movement is a paramount concern to many MJ leaders. "The

key is the next generation—if [Messianic Judaism] survives, it will remain until the Lord returns,” says Tikvat Israel’s Cowen.

Gentiles also seem mesmerized by future implications. “Jewish people are becoming reminded of Jesus Christ in a way that they haven’t been for centuries,” Glasser notes. “Despite the Holocaust, despite the evils Jews have experienced at the hands of Gentiles, including some Christians, Jews are more responsive to the gospel today than they have been for a long time.

“We have to ask ourselves, what is the significance of this? Is the stage being set for the return of Christ, according to Matthew 24:14? Are we living in apocalyptic times? I’m no prophet, but it seems to me that the church in our day is not paying enough attention to the truths of the coming of Jesus Christ and what that will mean to the nations and to the Jewish people.”

Outside of the Book of Romans, perhaps one of the most insightful comments regarding the turning of Jewish people toward faith in the Messiah was uttered over 75 years ago by John Zacker during a 1921 “Hebrew Christian”

conference in Buffalo:

“The Jew has dwelt in every degree of latitude and longitude. His history cannot be explained by geography, climate, genius, or politics. He was scorched and chilled by the suns of Africa and the snows of Lapland. He has tasted of the Tiber, Thames, Jordan, and Mississippi. These experiences are but characteristic of the wandering Jew. He is a riddle to himself and a by-word to others. He is the paradox of history. He is proud of being a Jew and yet wishes assimilation. He boasts of religion and is an infidel. He cries for Palestine and remains in America. He is the greatest cosmopolitan and the most extreme racist. With unsurpassing ferocity he has been smitten [sic] by papal superstition and Moslem barbarism. . . . Why this miraculous preservation? Because their present experiences and persecutions are but a training and preparation for ultimate conversion and through them the conversion of the human family. . . . But how shall the veil be torn from the faces of this indestructible people? The spiritual revival must come from within.”

What Zacker could only hope for—a spiritual revival from within—is now being witnessed by Jews such as Chernoff and Maass, and Gentiles such as Glasser and the Promise Keepers. This is no homogenous movement (see “Mapping the Messianic Jewish World,” p. 44), nor has it been without its own fights and theological squabbles.

But two things are certain. One, more Jewish people than ever before are coming to believe that the Messiah did indeed appear 2,000 years ago in the Incarnation as a Jewish carpenter. And two, Gentile Christians may find that they no longer “own” the gospel in the way they have since the mid-second century. Jesus the Messiah is for all nations, and now he is reaching back to reclaim the first of the three major Abrahamic faiths. While no one is certain how all this will turn out, it is clear that faith in Yeshua, or Jesus, is breaking new ground. **CT**

Gary Thomas is author of The Glorious Pursuit: Embracing the Virtues of Christ, to be released by NavPress this September. This article included reporting by Carolyn McCulley.

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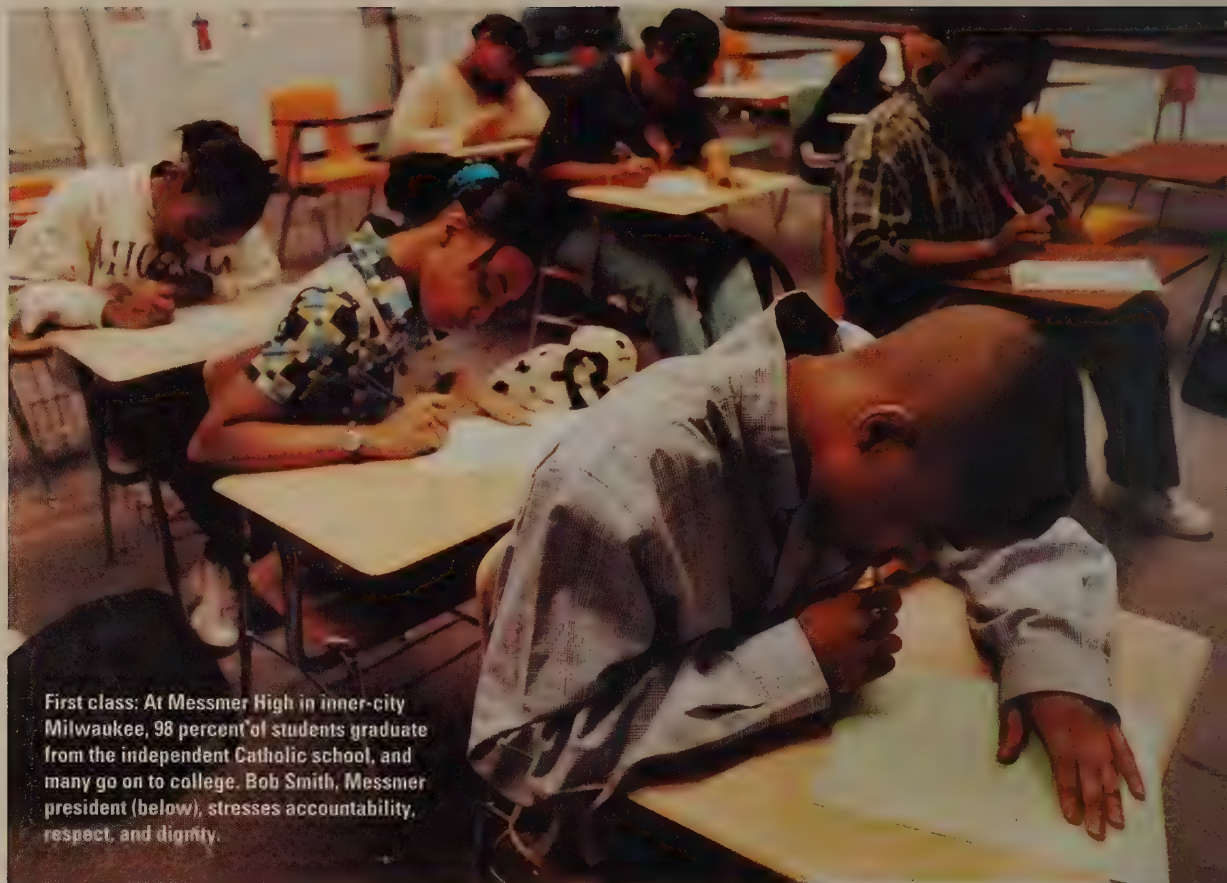
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First class: At Messmer High in inner-city Milwaukee, 98 percent of students graduate from the independent Catholic school, and many go on to college. Bob Smith, Messmer president (below), stresses accountability, respect, and dignity.



Voucher VICTORY

*School-choice advocates win
in Wisconsin, but can
the movement gain momentum?*

SPECIAL NEWS REPORT

TED C. OLSEN in Milwaukee

During the 1997-98 school year, visitors to Milwaukee's Holy Redeemer Institutional Church of God in Christ might not have known that the students playing together actually attended two separate schools. The students wore the same uniforms, took classes in the same building, and even attended morning devotions together. Yet some of those students attended D. J. Young Academy, not Holy Redeemer. The difference? Holy Redeemer was officially a religious school, Young Academy was not.

D. J. Young Academy began in 1996 when a court injunction excluded "sectarian" schools from an expansion of the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program (MPCP), the nation's first city-operated school-voucher system. The Pentecostal church decided to create a school similar to its Christian academy—then filled to capacity—but without the religious-themed textbooks. With parents' permission, the students still received an hour of religious instruction each day, but classroom curriculum remained the same as that of Milwaukee public schools.

On June 10, the Wisconsin Supreme Court ruled that religious schools could participate in the program, expanding the nation's most extensive school-choice program even further (CT, Aug. 10, 1998, p. 28). An appeal is likely.

Jerry Fair, president of both Holy Redeemer schools, says the implications for D. J. Young Academy will not be overwhelming, but the distinction between it and Holy Redeemer Christian Academy will be even more blurred.

Both schools will now use A Beka Book textbooks published by Pensacola Christian College. D. J. Young Academy will no longer need to obtain specific permission from parents for morning devotions and other religious instruction. Parents will still have the opportunity to remove their children from overtly religious activities such as morning devotions. But because every parent has chosen to enroll children in such activities, Fair does not anticipate any opting out.

Beginning with the term that starts this month, the only real difference between the two schools will be in their names.

"LANDMARK DECISION": In recent years, voucher supporters have experienced small successes and setbacks across the nation, but the Wisconsin ruling—the first time a state's highest court has ruled on the issue—is the most monumental victory to date for voucher proponents.

"This is a landmark decision," says Christian Coalition executive director Randy Tate. His organization's members have ranked the importance of school choice as second only to pro-life issues. "For years people have pointed to Milwaukee as an example of a solution that has worked, and this decision reinforces that."

The 4-to-2 ruling draws upon federal and state court rulings dating to 1878, but relies chiefly upon the U.S. Supreme Court's 1971 ruling in *Lemon v. Kurtzman*. Known as the "Lemon" test, the Court ruled that a law does not violate the Constitution's First Amendment if it meets three requirements: it serves a secular purpose; its chief effect neither enhances nor inhibits religion; and it does not create an "excessive entanglement" between government and religion.

Wisconsin Justice Donald Steinmetz wrote for the court

majority: "We hold that the amended MPCP, which provides a neutral benefit directly to the children of economically disadvantaged families on a religious-neutral basis, does not run afoul of any of the three primary criteria the Court has traditionally used to evaluate whether a state educational assistance program has the purpose or effect of advancing religion."

About 1,500 children attended nonreligious private schools under the MPCP during the 1997-98 year. Under the court's ruling, the program can expand tenfold. That will not happen overnight; Milwaukee's 80 religious and 31 nonreligious private schools do not have enough seats to hold 15,000 more students. But both advocates and detractors of the program anticipate a slew of new choice schools to open in the coming years now that the go-ahead has been given.

The MPCP started as an experiment in the 1990-91 school year, with 300 students attending seven nonreligious schools. Proposed by Democratic State Rep. Annette Polly Williams and bolstered by Republican Gov. Tommy Thompson, 1 percent of Milwaukee public-school students were allowed to attend private schools at state expense. Within five years, 1,100 children had enrolled in the choice program. Academic studies on the program came out, and Thompson called the experiment a success (CT, Oct. 23, 1995, p. 76).

At the time, he argued that the trial run should be expanded into a real program, and one that included religious schools. Shortly after the governor signed the expanded program into the budget, Milwaukee teachers, the Wisconsin American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), and others sued to block the program. A deadlocked Wisconsin Supreme Court returned the case to Dane County Circuit Court Judge Paul Higginbotham, who refused to lift the injunction (CT, March 3, 1997, p. 59). During the interim, a provoucher state supreme court judge replaced one who had opposed the program expansion, and he cast the deciding vote when the case, *Warner Jackson v. Benson*, returned.

TOMORROW, WASHINGTON? The voucher detractors who lost the suit, including the National Education Association, the ACLU, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and Americans United for the Separation of Church and State (AU), vow to appeal the case to the U.S. Supreme Court.

"This is as clear a set of facts as we're going to see in a voucher case," says AU executive director Barry Lynn. "Some of the other cases coming up are quirky and don't have the impact that the Milwaukee case does."

The winners are as eager to see the case go to federal court as the losers are. A positive ruling from the U.S. Supreme Court would undoubtedly encourage other states to create voucher programs. And a positive decision, voucher advocates say, is probable.

"We're cautiously optimistic," says the Christian Coalition's Tate. "There's a compelling argument to be made, particularly in regard to precedent."

Last year, the Supreme Court ruled in *Agostini v. Felton* that a



New York program sending state teachers into religious schools to teach remedial classes did not violate the First Amendment's ban on establishing religion (CT, Aug. 11, 1997, p. 53). In the decision, Justice Sandra Day O'Connor noted a "significant change" in "our understanding of the criteria used to assess whether aid to religion has an impermissible effect."

"They couldn't have written a decision more encouraging to voucher advocates," says Dick Komer, senior litigation attorney for the Institute for Justice, which represented the voucher advocates in the Wisconsin case. "The Supreme Court is emphasizing neutrality more. They're saying people who've made religious choices can benefit as much as people who've made nonreligious choices."

Though the *Agostini* decision makes it clear that the Supreme Court's understanding of the First Amendment's Establishment Clause has changed, it might not have changed enough to allow vouchers for religious schools. "The Supreme Court drew a very specific line distinguishing the provision of services and the transfer of funds," AU's Lynn says. The *Agostini* ruling, Lynn says, determined that no funds would ever reach the coffers of religious schools, yet in Milwaukee, vouchers are endorsed to the school.

STATE BATTLEGROUND: Whether the Supreme Court will even accept *Jackson v. Benson* for review remains to be seen. "It depends on whether other voucher decisions come out at the same time," says Komer. "That's one reason we're hoping the decisions come out soon." Vouchers and school-choice issues are on the dockets of at least five state courts.

The Ohio Supreme Court has heard oral arguments in a case regarding a Cleveland voucher program that since its inception has included religious private schools (CT, Oct. 28, 1996, p. 90). The program is similar to Milwaukee's, so the Supreme Court may wait until it can hear both cases together. In May 1997, the Ohio Court of Appeals ruled that the Cleveland program violates church and state separation, but the Ohio Supreme Court stayed the decision. About 2,000 low-income students attend both religious and nonreligious private schools in the state's test program.

States seem to be the most promising battleground for school-choice supporters. According to Nina H. Shokraii of the Heritage Foundation, a conservative think tank based in Washington, D.C., nearly

two-thirds of the states considered a school-choice program of some kind last year, and at least 45 governors expressed support for school choice or charter schools. Many of these declarations of support, however, focused on public-school choice—the ability for parents to choose any public school they wish.

NATIONAL EFFORTS STYMIED: Still, state efforts have fared better than national ones. In May, President Clinton vetoed the first congressional voucher legislation, a plan to provide vouchers for 2,000 needy students in Washington, D.C. "We must strengthen our public schools, not abandon them," Clinton said after the veto. "This bill is fundamentally misguided and a disservice to those children."

Vice President Al Gore had even harsher words for voucher programs, calling them



"fraudulent" and "dangerous" at a July convention of the National Education Association. (As the convention began, a rabbi led a prayer asking God for protection from vouchers and tuition tax credits.)

Voucher supporters did not have enough votes in Congress to overrule presidential vetoes on the issue; so they tried another tack: educational savings tax breaks. But in July, Clinton vetoed the Education Savings Act for Public and Private Schools. It would have provided tax-free education savings accounts for educational expenses of elementary- and secondary-school children in public, private, and home schools.

Clinton is a strong supporter of public-school choice. "Every state should give parents the power to choose the right public school for their children," he said in his 1997 State of the Union address. "Their right to choose will foster competition and innovation that can make public schools better."

But while federal efforts at vouchers and school choice have been thwarted, the private sector has responded with its own pro-

grams to move children out of public schools and into private ones. The most notable example is the Children's Scholarship Fund, which will provide \$200 million for 50,000 public-school students to attend private schools. Financed largely by investment banker Ted Forstmann and Wal-Mart heir John Walton, it will first be open to schoolchildren in New York, Washington, Los Angeles, Chicago, and Jersey City, New Jersey. Forstmann hopes to extend it to another 40 cities. The fund, announced June 9, has earned praise from Clinton as well as voucher supporters House Speaker Newt Gingrich and Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott.

AGAINST PUBLIC SCHOOLS? Many opponents of school vouchers are worried that supporters of the movement are driven by a dislike of public schools as much as anything else. In fact, several conservatives have called for the abolition of publicly financed schools. The Fresno, California-headquartered Separation of School and State Alliance has enlisted more than 5,700 supporters, including conservatives such as R. C. Sproul, Jr., D. James Kennedy, Howard Phillips, and Marvin Olasky. Another group, the Columbia, South Carolina-based Exodus 2000, has asked Christian parents to remove their children from public schools. AU's Lynn thinks such attitudes are more common among evangelical leaders than the community at large.

"I don't believe most evangelicals hate public schools, especially since they see good teachers, and their kids are learning," he says. "But many still think that teachers in public schools are too busy throwing condoms off kindergarten rooftops."

The Christian Coalition has attempted to avoid bashing public schools. "Public education plays a role even though there's some concern that certain values have been taken away from the public-school system," Tate says. "But public schools will represent the values of their communities as long as parents get involved."

Eastern College sociology professor Tony Campolo agrees. "Seventy percent of public-school teachers are regular attenders of churches and synagogues," he says. "Public schools are ragged on all the time, and it infuriates me."

Campolo says there is some justification for rhetoric against public schools. "They have pressure from the ACLU and other groups and have been veering away from the Christian religion," Campolo says. "Secular humanism has become a value system in the public schools, justifiably upsetting Christian parents." Yet

Campolo says Christian parents are pulling their children out when there are signs of improvement. "Across the country, crime is down, scores are up, and schools are getting better."

RIGHT TO CHOOSE: Campolo believes that a voucher system could lead to sectarian attitudes like those that ripped Northern Ireland apart. "They have a program basically the same as a voucher program that allows Protestant students to go to Protestant schools and Catholic students to go to Catholic schools," he says. "It has nurtured the animosity between those groups."

Charles Glenn, professor at Boston University's School of Education and one of school choice's most respected supporters, points to another country: the Netherlands. There, 70 percent of children go to nongovernment schools. It has resulted in great benefits for the children, he says, and has not damaged schools. In fact, he says, "Every other democracy but Italy enjoys educational freedom."

Glenn, a minister in Boston's inner city for 40 years, rejects the argument that vouchers will force public schools to better themselves to compete for students. "Thousands upon thousands leave Milwaukee public schools each year without making it better," he says. "You can't assume that a monopolistic organization will improve with competition."

Market arguments are a mistake for Christians to make, Glenn says, because markets are not always positive. "If Jack in the Box closes because it can't compete with McDonald's, that's one thing," Glenn says. "But we're talking about children here, and it strikes me that we can't be as callous about school closings as we are about fast-food chains."

Instead, Glenn would rather have his fellow voucher supporters argue the justice side of school choice. "School choice already exists, but not for the poorest students," he says. "All parents should have the right to make decisions on what is best for their children."

JUST LIKE PUBLIC SCHOOL: For now, at least, voucher programs have surpassed the experimental stage. For administrators of those schools affected by the programs, battles over whether they should be implemented have been overtaken by how they should be implemented.

In Milwaukee, storms are brewing over the more than 300 pages of state and federal rules—governing everything from admissions and teacher certification to religious activity—that private-school

Milwaukee's Model Choice School

When Milwaukee's advocates of vouchers and school choice talk about the potential of private urban education, Messmer High School is often the school they have in mind. Approximately 75 percent of its students come from impoverished homes. About the same proportion have only one parent. About 85 percent are minorities. In short, Messmer has the same kinds of students as Milwaukee's problematic public-school system.

But Messmer boasts some of the best statistics of any school in the state: 98 percent of its students graduate, and almost all of its graduates go on to a four-year college. Its daily attendance rate averages 97 percent. Even more amazing is the fact that it is the only Milwaukee school to have no gap between the grades of minority students and nonminority students.

In contrast, two local high schools had no black male graduates at all last year. The Milwaukee public-school system dropout rate hovers around 50 percent. On a given day, around 40 percent of the students do not show up.

Bob Smith, Messmer's president, attributes his school's success to strict accountability and respect for personal dignity, pillars based on its Christian commitment. "We don't have a lot of rules, but we do have certain nonnegotiables," he says. "We're really raising children as well as tending to their educational needs."

That means everything from no weapons to no baseball caps. A student caught fighting or possessing a weapon—even outside the school—is likely to be expelled. Each year, only one or two of the school's 330 students are kicked out.

"That's not to say we only want the best students," says Smith, "because we often take kids the public schools have expelled."

But Smith, a black, Capuchin monk from Chicago, credits Messmer's ultimate success to its religious commitment as an independent Catholic school. Only 40 percent of its students are Catholic, and though prayer and mass are optional, students are required to take a theology class every year. For that reason Messmer has been excluded from Milwaukee's voucher program—until this fall.

"I'm a believer in religious-based education," he says. "I've never seen religion harm someone in a classroom."

By Ted C. Olsen in Milwaukee.

administrators are being told they must follow. What angers many private-school officials is that these are administrative—not legislative—restrictions created by the Department of Public Instruction.

"By making us follow each and every rule public schools have to follow, they're trying to create two public-school systems," says Holy Redeemer's Fair. Milwaukee public-schools superintendent Alan Brown has warned that private schools accepting vouchers will "look just like public schools."

For example, Milwaukee's five single-sex private schools have already been excluded from the program because they are not allowed in the public-school system. Even more contentious, however, is the potential threat the "opt-out" clause holds for the religious character of religious schools.

"The primary purpose of most of these schools is to spread the faith," says Lynn. "It's one example of the state entanglements that are just going to get greater and greater."

Jeff Monday, principal of Messmer High School, an independent Catholic

school, says his institution interprets the "opt out" guidelines as covering only practices such as devotions, prayer, and chapel. It does not affect the use of religious texts in the classroom or the teaching of classroom subjects such as science, history, and theology. Messmer will mandate attendance at all-school prayer services, but will allow students to sit quietly at the assemblies without praying.

While schools and administrators clash over the new regulations, observers say they do not anticipate many urban private schools opting out of the program altogether.

Though Fair is fighting the new administrative restrictions, he is no stranger to working with the system. D. J. Young Academy started when the government ruled that his school could not take voucher students. Another school at the church is a partner with the school district to educate at-risk students who were failing.

"Our priority is educating kids," he says. "We go in the hole every year in operating costs, but you can see you're making progress when kids' reading scores are up one-and-a-half grades." **CT**



GOD IS IN THE BLUEPRINTS

*Our deepest beliefs are reflected in the ways
we construct our houses of worship.*

All church buildings tell stories about the people who build them and about their understanding of how God meets his gathered people. To understand the stories new church buildings tell, I started with an old one—Hollywood Presbyterian, built in 1924.

That's not very old as buildings go, but it is old on a human horizon. Our grandparents built such places. Hollywood Presbyterian is a Southern California evangelical monument, where Henrietta Mears inspired future leaders like Campus Crusade's Bill Bright.

You have seen buildings just like this on a hundred urban streets—a neo-gothic brick pile shoe-horned onto a corner, just inside the sidewalk. With its soaring tower, it "looks like a church," but it doesn't make much of an impression on its environment. **2** Step into the grand old sanctuary, however, and a hush comes over the world. In the sacred darkness, stained-glass windows, ornate wooden trusses, stone arches, and a high pulpit unmistakably communicate "holy place."



Dominating the chancel are five ornamented thrones, the center one designated for the preacher to sit in until the moment he ascends the pulpit, ten feet above the congregation. If Moses appeared lugging the Ten Commandments, he would fit right in. This is a church that makes you want to sing "A Mighty Fortress." This is what our grandparents meant when they said "sanctuary."

Now take, by contrast, Saddleback Community Church, the "Purpose-Driven Church" that pastor Rick Warren leads in south Orange County, California. This gigantic Southern Baptist "seeker-sensitive" congregation is hardly obsessed with buildings—they met in a tent for years. When it came time to build a 3,000-seat worship center, Saddleback deliberately chose an architectural firm that had never designed a church. They wanted to avoid creating a "churchy" environment that might put off newcomers.

The most impressive spot in this open, airy campus is outside

TIM STAFFORD

on the main patio, a broad rectangle of concrete, undecorated except for a square of nine large palm trees and some concrete benches. Along one side of the rectangle is the vast, reflective-glass wall of the main church building. Looking at it you see simultaneously three scenes. Through the glass, you look in to the interior of the worship center. Reflected in the glass you see an immense outdoor vista of sky, palms, and patio. And etched into the glass are words, so that a message stretches over the indoor and outdoor scenes. OUR PURPOSES: MAGNIFICATION, MEMBERSHIP, MATURITY, MINISTRY, and MISSION. Clustered around these words are biblical phrases that underscore each word's meaning. **3**

The effect is subtle, since the color is all in the outdoor reflection, while the words are a glass gray. Yet the wall unmistakably communicates that this church is governed by a purpose, inside and out.

Another outdoor patio has the baptismistry as its focal point—an attractive, below-ground fountain, with steps leading into a shallow, splashing pool. It might be in the courtyard of a bank building, a lovely spot to eat a sack lunch. The fountain looks nonreligious, but those who attend Saddleback will soon know its purpose from the frequent baptisms performed after services. The design allows the pool to be filled to a depth suitable for immersions, and the broad steps then give easy access into the water. **4** (The first person baptized in the pool was its architect, Brian Connor.)

For me, the most notable aspect of Saddleback is that all its grace is on the outside. Hollywood's building is like a shell protecting an inner sanctum, but Saddleback's worship center is nothing but a clean, airy exhibition space, with exposed air ducts, retractable bleachers, industrial carpet, giant JumboTron screens, and a stage that looks like a TV talk-show studio without the sofas. **1 5**

As facilities director Karen Kelly explained to me, much of the reason for this utilitarian ethos is practical—trying to seat 3,000 people in a multipurpose facility on a limited budget. Nevertheless, the planners' greatest effort obviously went outside—into the message communicated on entering and leaving. It is not a grand message, such as the one Hollywood Presbyterian delivers. From a distance, Saddleback looks like an office building, and nothing about it would

provoke reverence. Through a pleasant, neutral space, the building reaches out to new arrivals and says: We are people just like you, and you can feel comfortable with us—but pay attention, because we have a unique purpose.

Hollywood carries a different message: This is not the world; you will meet God here.

Hollywood is rooted in tradition and awe; Saddleback, almost devoid of history, is rooted in its clearly communicated purpose. Hollywood prefers darkness and mystery; Saddleback, simplicity and light. Hollywood is most concerned for the atmosphere of worship; Saddleback, for the atmosphere of arriving. Hollywood is pointed up; Saddleback, out. In the contrast between these two churches, one can see an outline of the changing church.

Exegeting new churches

Nobody keeps statistics on church buildings in America, so that, for example, no one can say with any accuracy how many display a cross as a central focus of worship, or how many use pews as opposed to individual seating. I visited new churches

churches, however. I saw a wide spectrum—Presbyterian and Episcopal, Baptist and Christian and Missionary Alliance. I also talked to pastors, architects, and church administrators in other parts of the country, so I have some sense that what I describe is not unique to L.A.



in the Los Angeles area because there are lots of new churches to see and because California continues to influence the nation. In particular, Southern California is a leader in producing what USC's Donald Miller calls the "new paradigm churches"—those like Calvary Chapel or the Vineyard, which have taken a decidedly untraditional path. I did not only visit "seeker sensitive" or "new paradigm"

Churches are built one at a time, on an entirely individual basis. Ordinarily a church committee, most of whose members have never built a church, meets with an architect whose first question is, "What do you want?" Church committees can rarely articulate what they want with much specificity. So they grope toward a design. Incrementally and unconsciously, church designs reveal what

church people are thinking.

Of course, there are vast differences between liturgical, historically attuned churches and seeker-sensitive churches meeting in converted warehouses. My strong impression, however, is that underneath these differences are some fundamental similarities. You will find these trends, as I found them, in all kinds of new churches.

Emphasis on entering

I walked through new buildings that emphasized visual linkages to tradition, such as Romanesque arches and massive pipe organs, and churches that looked precisely like modern office buildings or condominium clubhouses. Yet every building I visited had, like Saddleback, put great energy into the question of how people arrive and depart.

It's not merely a question of parking

TODAY'S CHURCHES ASSUME THAT PEOPLE COME WITH FAR LESS CONFIDENCE AND NEED A CLEAR MESSAGE FROM OUTSIDE SPACES THAT THEY WILL FEEL COMFORTABLE AND CAN FIND FRIENDS IF THEY WANT THEM.

perform this function of making people convivial and comfortable.)

It was not always so. Older churches like Hollywood Presbyterian were built with no concern whatsoever for the transition between sidewalk and sanctuary. Today's churches assume that people come with far less confidence and need a clear message from outside spaces that they are welcome, will feel comfortable, and can find friends if they want them.

Democracy and informality

Hollywood Presbyterian, like many older churches, is at pains to communicate the majesty of its ministry. The pastor sits in a high and lofty place until he rises even higher into the pulpit to preach. Heavy, ornate furniture and a raised, separated chancel communicate

magnificence and hierarchy. This is not like somebody's house, unless that somebody is William Randolph Hearst.

Today's churches, even those that value liturgy and tradition, display understated, modest furniture at or near ground level. The Communion table—if one is visible at all—will be simpler than many dining room tables. The pulpit will be little more elaborate than a lectern. Access to the chancel or platform is usually by broad and central stairs, making little separation from the congregation. **8**

Even churches determined to communicate transcendence show new informality and democracy in their worship space. Roman Catholic churches have pulled their altars away from the wall and out toward the congregation so that what happens there is not so much a hidden priestly

mystery as a shared community ritual.

Todd Hunter, national director of the Vineyard churches, told me that their philosophy regarding buildings is "pragmatic and functional." "We would often say, 'People aren't afraid of a junior high school gym.' It doesn't have the connotation, 'darken the door of a church.'"

Natural light and electronic sound

Most new churches want light, and lots of it. Natural light establishes continuity with the outside world; the Creator God is emphasized, not the God of Mystery and Revelation. Besides, everybody in our age likes windows, as one can see in office buildings, banks, and shopping malls.

Yet not all new churches have large windows. Consider Lake Avenue Congregational Church, a large Pasadena congregation that moved from a dim, neo-gothic sanctuary to a modern, space-age auditorium that depends almost entirely on artificial light. Windows are expensive, both for construction and for heating and cooling. Also, windows fight against another new worship imperative: video.

Most of the large churches I visited have JumboTron screens, which they use to project musical lyrics, announcements, and a larger-than-life simultaneous version of the service in progress (Video clips and sermon notes are also used, but more sparingly.) Video is at war with windows. Projection is less effective in a room full of natural light.

Electronics are a fundamental part of new church buildings. Placement of JumboTron screens and video cameras must be considered as rigorously as where to put the baptismal font. Backstage or underground control rooms, where the video production is orchestrated, are essential. Stage lights and sound systems require elaborate controls. Even modest churches have sound systems that would outdo



and freeway access, though that is a major concern. The greater concern is how people feel as they enter the building. In the "Mother Vineyard" (formerly Anaheim) created from a Rockwell R&D office building, you find large, airy entryways and an extensive coffee bar for those who want to linger and mingle. **6**

At Irvine Presbyterian Church, pastor Mark Roberts told me that the building committee spent as much time thinking about the approaches to the church as they did the interior sanctuary. An outside patio "probably tripled our friendliness quotient. I hear so much more from visitors how friendly we are. I don't have to say, 'Greet each other' so much, because people naturally stop to talk in the spaces designed to bring them together." **7** (In harsher climates, large, well-lighted narthex areas

AN OUTSIDE PATIO HAS “PROBABLY TRIPLED OUR FRIENDLINESS QUOTIENT,” SAYS MARK ROBERTS FROM IRVINE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CALIFORNIA.

entire recording studios a generation back.

Smaller churches may not be able to afford video technology, but they think about it. Irvine Presbyterian's Roberts told me that in planning their middle-sized church, “The hardest thing to give up was video technology.” For him it meant, “We're not on the cutting edge of worship.”

As we talked further, however, he showed considerable ambivalence. “It's not just a matter of good communication. There is a changed ethos.” Roberts mentioned a church that used its JumboTron screens to show baptisms, “so you can get a good view. Does that make the baptism more personal or less? I don't know. I'm of the mind that it is less.”

Such hesitations seem to be a minority view, however. At least in large churches, worship has become something like attending a live recording of a TV show. The platforms are even decorated like TV sets, with their ubiquitous plants and understated “family-room” furniture. In most older churches, you cannot imagine a pastor as a late-night talk show host doing his show. That would seem jarring, even sacrilegious. In many of the newer churches, however, nothing would seem more natural.

Semicircular seating

New church buildings generally seat worshippers so that they surround the platform. That way, even people in the back rows are close. These churches are, in their seating configuration, a throwback to the auditorium churches first designed by evangelist Charles Finney. He wanted to stare every inquirer in the eye and (against architectural tradition of the time) designed his New York Broadway Tabernacle so that his audience surrounded him. That pattern survived to the early part of this century—the holy reverence of Hollywood Presbyterian has the same horseshoe balcony—when it was largely abandoned in favor of the

traditional basilican style (a long rectangle with the chancel at one end).

Why has the semicircle come back? That's easy: it feels more personal, both in relation to the preacher (whose facial

accessible. Each worshiper can keep his or her space, as shown by the preference for theater seating. (In pews—generally less expensive than theater seating—you can't be sure that someone won't sit uncomfortably close.) Yet you can see it will still be easy to make friends if you want to. Even the pastor has a friendly face, which you rapidly get to know via the big screen.

In small to midsize churches, semicircular seating allows a congregation to go beyond relational to communal. Worshipers can hear each other as they speak and pray from their seats; they look each other in the eye as they worship; congregational singing is powerful, if the acoustics



expressions can be seen even without the JumboTron) and in relation to other worshippers, who surround and face you like a family circle. The word, pastor Tod Bolsinger told me, is *relational*.

While this trend makes for good sociological dynamics, it also echoes an important theological issue. The liturgical renewal that took place in churches in the sixties emphasized the church as the “gathered people of God” rather than the church as priestly dispenser of sacraments or preacherly dispenser of truth. This is an important biblical theme that was recovered theologically and is now underscored architecturally.

Modern church buildings generate a congregation that seems friendly and

are right. I talked to several pastors who had, in conjunction with architects and acoustical engineers, spent considerable effort tuning their sanctuary to make it “live” enough for congregational singing yet not so live that the preacher's words were garbled by the echo. These pastors believed “live” acoustics made for a stronger sense of the church as body of Christ.

That does not seem to be the trend, however. In larger, “all-electric” auditoriums, amplified sound overwhelms everything. You can only hear what is generated from the platform. Carpeting and cushions swallow audience noise. This may be true even in very small churches if they use a contemporary “band” sound.

What our churches say

Only churches with public confidence, security, and money construct durable buildings. The early Christians left few stone monuments, for they were a suspect minority. Today's church in China, similarly, will not be remembered for its buildings. Only after Constantine made Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire did European Christians begin to build. Anyone who has traveled in Europe knows how powerfully they published their beliefs in stone. Even today, in dense, modern city centers, cathedral spires speak of another time and another way. European villages are unthinkable without their churches, which seem to hold the crooked streets together, like a fastener at the central node.

From the time of Constantine, these churches often

solemnity and humility before an awesome God. They are suited to a theology emphasizing Christ as ruler and judge. They are also suited to an ecclesiology that emphasizes, as noted above, the church as dispenser of sacrament and/or truth.

This basic form and feeling stayed remarkably constant through the centuries. The Reformation made the pulpit more prominent and downgraded or did away with visual symbols of worship—



statues, paintings, and elaborate ceremonies. *Reform* is the appropriate word, however, not revolution. Right up to the present the typical older church building embodies the traditions of the basilican church. Even at Hollywood Presbyterian, which strays far from the classic form, the fundamental statements remain of the transcendence of God, the authority of the clergy, and the solemnity and holiness of worship.

In a stunning reversal of a 1.5 millennia trend, new churches convey the cheerful, democratic, informal atmosphere of modern American life. Their affections are horizontal. Hierarchy and awe are out. Friendliness and the enjoyment of nature are in. Even where church buildings attempt to connect to tradition, they usually do it in an airy, light-hearted way. They are in close continuity with the outside world.

Most feel as normal as a shopping mall. They don't try to make grand statements; they try to make people comfortable.

For many centuries Christian churches pointed vertically, often erecting the tallest building in town. Today, churches

extend outward, making people-friendly spaces. Look at our new buildings, and you will see our theology of church.

A place to meet the people of God. This is an informal age, in which people wear casual clothes to important affairs, and grocery clerks call you by your first name. So new churches follow that kind of feeling. Transcendence, authority, and solemnity don't fit. Friendliness, naturalness, informality do.

The pastor as one of us. In Protestant churches, the pastor has always been "one of us"—but one called to be an authoritative instrument of God, preaching his Word. Thus the high, ornate pulpits and the chancels cut off from the congregation. That is radically changed. Nowadays, anybody can hop up to the chancel from the congregation—there's no barrier, just some broad steps. Nothing sets the pastor apart from anyone else.

Ironically, the pastor more than ever is crucial to a successful church. Where once churches displayed Jesus in stained glass, now many display the pastor in Jumbotron. The pastor's face is the key image. But—here is where the irony can be ironed out—the video lets us see the pastor as simply one of us. Seeing his winsome smile, we feel that we know him personally, even if we are sharing the view with 3,000 other "friends." He speaks to us less as an oracle of God than as a persuasive friend.

Worship is persuasion. Whereas the Reformers sought to raise preaching to the level of sacrament, they never dreamed of displacing the sacraments. Yet new church buildings suggest that something like this is happening. The ecclesiastical furniture of sacrament—the tables, the baptistries—are less and less noticeable, if visible at all. New churches are designed as spaces for communication, not sacrament or ceremony. We have moved persuasion—with rhetorical flourish, the pastor presents a "message" to the people—to the center of our worship. The people come to hear the pastor.

Second, they come for music. That's why video is such a natural fit in the new churches. TV is, after all, the mode of communication Americans know best. Similarly, it is the mode of entertainment Americans know best. Many modern church buildings are clearly intended to house a video spectacle—a service that can be captured well on tape but is fun to see "live."



borrowed the form of the basilica, an oblong Roman building designed for public and imperial ceremonies and for law courts. Just as Roman basilicas cultivated respect and awe for the public authorities, basilican churches lend themselves to



What's new and what's ageless

Once for six months I worshiped in a fourteenth-century French cathedral. I found that as the weeks passed its beauty penetrated me deeply, elevating my soul toward God. Yet I also noticed that the cathedral was nearly empty. I am therefore not an alarmist about the new churches. I regret losing the reference to transcendence, the stillness and awe that the best older churches provoke. The diminishing of sacrament troubles me. Yet I like very much the simplicity, lightness, and ease with my neighbors that the best new churches can evoke. I can't see any claim

that we connect with one another, building our identity as disciples together. In a way that our grandparents did not, we need to go to church to express our identity as the people of God and to be persuaded anew that Jesus is Lord. The new churches help us do that. They remind us we're not alone. They also help us appeal to outsiders in a way that is reassuring and doesn't seem cultic.

Having said all that, it helps me to know that new churches do not necessarily have to look like a shopping mall. At the end of one day touring churches, architect Lew Dominy asked me whether I would like to see one more building. He took me to the coastal city of Carlsbad, where we stopped at Saint Elizabeth Seton Catholic Church, which he designed.

As with every new church I saw, the approach to Saint Elizabeth's is important—a lovely patio and garden area underneath twin Spanish towers. The interior, though, is what captivated me. It makes the statements of a horizontal church in a simple but exquisite way. The sanctuary is very simple, filled with light from high windows. Pressed concrete, formed and colored to look like rough sandstone, makes the floor. Overhead are exposed wooden trusses and tension members (steel rods, like those you sometimes see in old barns, holding the walls together across central spans). It looks like a working building, but with a style completely unlike the industrial air ducts and steel girders I had seen elsewhere.

I think the pastor was a little offended when I told him it reminded me of a barn. What I meant is that an old barn is often a peaceful and living place—high, quiet, cool, with a pattern of light and darkness descending from its cracked boards, and the smell of sweet straw and warm active creatures. Saint Elizabeth's put me in mind of moments I have paused in such barns. **9 10**

Or perhaps I may put it more simply: Saint Elizabeth Seton is a lovely place to be. As such, it says something ageless—that beauty belongs to God, and when we build in his name we want to make something beautiful. Some new churches strike me as very ugly, and many strike me as ordinary and uninspired. I have seen a few that are exquisite. I found it comforting that amid the modernity of video churches and secular entryways, with the toned-down informality of chancels and the loss of grand statements, people still manage to create beautiful new places in the name of Jesus. **C1**

It is true that praise music remains vital to worship, but mainly by way of electronic sound broadcast from the platform. The congregation participates, but in most new churches their voices are neither needed nor heard. The music functions as an auxiliary to the pastor's persuasive message. The congregation expresses agreement by singing along.

Church is for evangelism. The last thought occurring to builders of medieval cathedrals was whether "unbelievers" would feel comfortable. Yet that is the first thought behind many new churches. They consciously draw from secular architecture, assuming that unbelievers will feel most comfortable with that. Mark Roberts, pastor of Irvine Presbyterian Church, told me that the church's building committee spent large amounts of time discussing the values of Fashion Island, a nearby mall. Architect Lew Dominy, who designed the Irvine church, said that "there is a generation coming up with values generated by retail shopping. They expect places to sit. They expect plantings."

George Whitefield, then John Wesley, took preaching out of the churches because they wanted to reach the unsaved where they were—in the coal fields. This scandalized the church leaders of the time. Now the church is being turned into a place, and public worship into an occasion, where the unsaved feel comfortable. This too scandalizes some church leaders. Still, the church-growth movement has won. Its theology is seldom forgotten by those building new churches.



that vertical is necessarily better than horizontal. Scripture emphasizes that one is inextricably linked to the other. Loving my neighbor is closest kin to loving God. The new churches are not decadent, it seems to me. They are just different. They are suited to a new time.

I would define the newness this way: Christianity is reaping the fruits of disestablishment. For the first time since Constantine, we are truly on the periphery of Western civilization. We have lots of people, money, sophistication, and security, but we can no longer assume that other Americans sympathize with or understand what we are doing. For that matter, we ourselves easily forget.

The very meaning of "the people of God" has a fragile hold on Christians' consciousness. It is extremely important

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Take the Pledge

A practical strategy for loving the poor.

Ronald J. Sider

Generous Christians are changing the world. Habitat for Humanity will soon be the largest private house builder in the world. They have already built 60,000 houses for the poor around the globe. World Relief Corporation has resettled over 125,000 refugees. Christian micro-loan organizations have made hundreds of thousands of small loans to very poor people.

Opportunity International alone will make loans to one million families in the next five years. On average, each loan costs about \$500, which includes training costs, and these loans are repaid with interest. Often a loan lifts the standard of living for a family of five by 50 percent within one year.

Christians today have a total annual income of over

organization funded by Opportunity International) gave her and her husband, Vijay, a small loan of \$219. They purchased a small, inexpensive sound system and a bicycle. With this equipment, the Kumars are able to provide the sound system for weddings, funerals, and other celebrations for poor villages in several surrounding communities. They now own three sound systems and hire a couple of employees.

Mrs. Kumar proudly showed me the new lighting equipment and the bicycle loaded down with their third sound system. Their little one-room cement house with a thatched roof has no indoor plumbing, but I could see many improvements. Family income had grown significantly. Most important, the Kumars had new dignity, hope, and confidence.

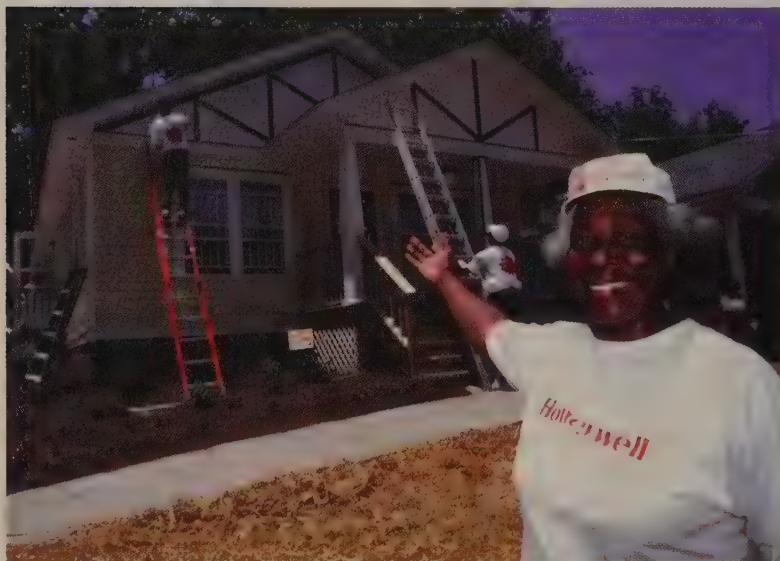
Most of the poor want to earn their own way. They have enormous social capital: intact families, a desire to work, pride, and integrity. But, like the Kumars, they need some help.

Globally, we are making progress. In 1970, 35 percent of all people in developing countries were chronically malnourished. Today that figure has dropped to 20 percent. In 1980, only 20 percent of the children in developing nations received immunization for typical childhood diseases; today—thanks in part to Bread for the World's advocacy work to set in place a U.S.-funded Child Survival Fund—80 percent do.

There is still a lot to do. About 34,000 children die every day of hunger and preventable diseases; almost one person out of four in our world—1.3 billion people—lives in grinding poverty, struggling to survive, the World Bank says, on a dollar a day; 1.45 billion have no access to health services; and 1.33 billion lack safe water.

According to the United Nations, it would cost only \$30–\$40 billion a year to provide all people in developing countries with basic education, health care, and clean water—the same amount spent on golf every year.

I think many more American Christians would find a way to give \$500 this year to help a poor family with a small loan if they could look into the eyes of Mrs.



Generous Christians: Organizations like Habitat for Humanity are working to eliminate poor housing and homelessness.

\$10 trillion. Let's suppose the Christians of the world gave just 1 percent of their income for microloans of \$500, the average loan needed to help a poor family of five. Assuming the efficiency ratio of Opportunity International, it would take just one year to improve dramatically the lot of the poorest one billion, often by 50 percent.

I'll never forget Mrs. Kumar's joyous, confident smile. She lives in a tiny one-room house in a poor village in South India near Bangalore. A couple of years ago the Bridge Foundation (a Christian microloan

Kumar and see her joy and gratitude. I believe many more Christians want to be generous—if they can discover successful programs that really work. And if they can take concrete, doable steps without the feeling they must solve all the problems of 1.3 billion poor people.

Nobody can do everything, but everybody can do something, and together we can change the world. That is why World Vision, Bread for the World, Opportunity International, Compassion International, Christian Community Development Association, World Relief Corporation, The Evangelical Environmental Network, MAP International, and Habitat for Humanity have joined Evangelicals for Social Action in the Generous Christians Campaign.

At the center is this simple pledge: the Generous Christians Pledge.

I pledge to open my heart to God's call to care as much about the poor as the Bible does.

Daily, to pray for the poor, beginning with the Generous Christians Prayer: Lord Jesus, teach my heart to share your love for the poor.

Weekly, to minister, at least one hour, to a poor person: helping, serving, sharing with, and, mostly, getting to know, someone in need.

Monthly, to study, at least one story, book, article, or film about the plight of the poor and hungry and discuss it with others.

Yearly, to retreat, for a few hours before the Scriptures, to meditate on this one question: Is caring for the poor as important in my life as it is in the Bible?—and to examine my budget and priorities in light of it, asking God what changes he would like me to make in the use of my time, money, and influence.

Some of us can make more microloans or support a needy child. Others can volunteer more time in the inner city or make sure everybody has a share in the fish ponds. Together we can do all the different things needed. United we can become a mighty movement that future historians will call the Generous Christians Generation.

I dream of a Generous Christians Campaign that sweeps through the Western church. Missions agencies, prayer networks, Christian social ministries, and others could all implement what the Bible says about the poor. Rallies, conferences, re-

treats, small groups, contemporary music, and creative art could be used as part of the Generous Christians strategy.

The Generous Christians Pledge is not intended as a legalistic straitjacket. When appropriate, for example, the weekly hour for sharing with a needy person could be done less often in larger blocks of time. Those who take the pledge should stay centered on their love for Christ and his kingdom, not their own deeds, however noble. Gratitude for God's astounding love, not guilt, should energize our generosity.

This Generous Christians Pledge is not complicated. Every Christian could make it—and keep it. Let's not kid ourselves, however. Conceptually, the pledge is simple, straightforward, doable. But actually implementing it would involve intense spiritual warfare. As Rodney Clapp reminded us recently, the Devil takes Visa, and he would not be amused (CT, Oct. 7, 1996, p. 18). The global forces promoting consumerism are enormously powerful.

Each one of us must engage in a personal struggle with materialism. Each individual must look into the face of our Lord and answer his question: "Do you love me more than these things?" Faithful discipleship in an age of cascading materialism will be difficult and costly.

But it will also be joyful and successful. The ironic truth is that Jesus was right—it is better to give than to receive (Acts 20:35). Mother Teresa knew more joy than Donald Trump. We cannot gain happiness by seeking it directly; it follows as a by-product when we give ourselves to others. Generous Christians will live what they speak. They will joyfully follow the biblical call to love God and the poor more than possessions. And their generosity will glorify God and transform the world. **CT**

Ronald J. Sider is president of Evangelicals for Social Action. For information on the Generous Christians Pledge, contact: Generous Christians Campaign, 10 E. Lancaster Avenue, Wynnewood, PA 19096.

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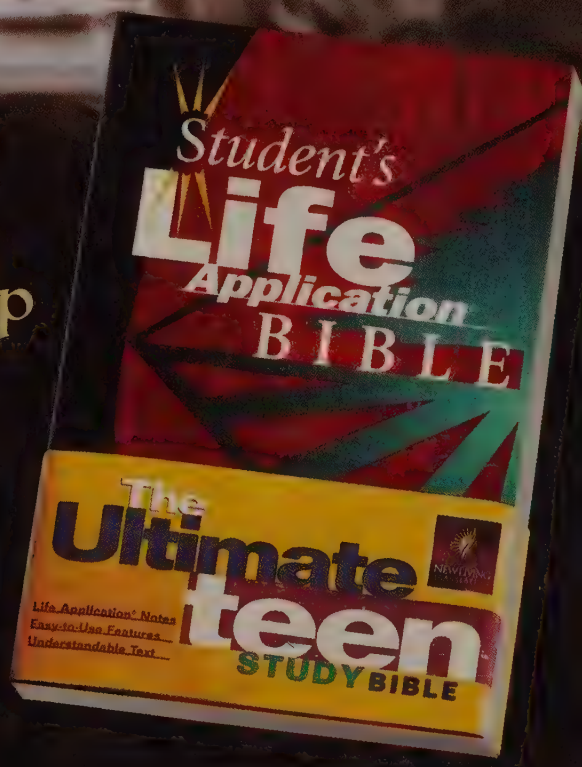
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The Rest of the Story

Evangelism is not simply a matter of bringing individuals to personal faith, though of course that remains central to the whole enterprise. It is a matter of confronting the world with the good, but deeply disturbing, news of a different way of living, . . . the way of love.

—N. T. Wright in
For All God's Worth

Bleak Satisfaction

We are disgusted by the things that we desire, and we desire what disgusts us.

—New York Gov. Mario
Cuomo in a speech
(Newsweek, Oct. 24, 1994)

No Home Here

Heaven is not *here*, it's *There*. If we were given all we wanted here, our hearts would settle for this world rather than the next. God is forever luring us up and away from this one, wooing us to Himself and His still invisible Kingdom, where we will certainly find what we so keenly long for.

—Elisabeth Elliot in
Keep a Quiet Heart

Eternity's View

A man has made at least a start on discovering the meaning of human life when he plants shade trees under which he knows full well he will never sit.

—D. Elton Trueblood;
posted on A.Word.A.Day e-mail
(July 19, 1998)

Abundance Means Reliance

Material affluence in no respect lessens my need to rely on God. Actually, it increas-

es it. I am in greater spiritual danger when I have plenty than when I have nothing. Hence the almost greater need of the wealthy to cry to God for mercy that they may not fail to trust him.

—C. Stacey Woods in
Some Ways of God

The Whole Truth

To worship God in spirit and in truth means to worship God as we should worship him. . . . To worship God in truth is to recognise him for what he is and to recognise ourselves for what we are.

—Brother Lawrence in
The Practice of
the Presence of God

Wrong Cure

Religion was [once] a set of obligations owed to God. Today people regard religion as a species of therapy; a dimension of individual self-

consciousness, individual meaning and reaffirmation. Religion is about what God owes them.

—Edward Norman in the
Spectator (July 4, 1998)

Respect What God Has Made

God treat[s] His Creation with integrity: each thing in its own order, each thing the

way He made it. . . . If God treats the tree like a tree, the machine like a machine and the man like a man, shouldn't I, as a fellow-creature, treat the machine like a machine, the man like a man, the plant like a plant—each thing in integrity in its own order? And for the highest reason: because I love God—I love the One who has made it! Loving the Lover who has made it, I should have respect for the thing He has made.

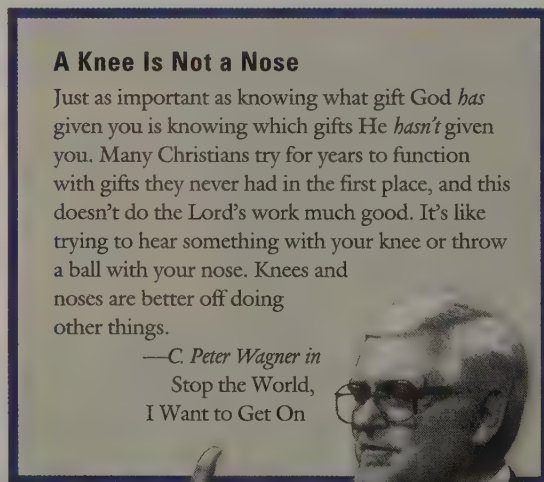
—Francis Schaeffer in
Pollution and
the Death of Man

God's Great Gift

You, eternal Trinity, are the craftsman; and I your handiwork have come to know that you are in love with the beauty of what you have made, since you made of me a new creation in the blood of your Son.

O abyss! O eternal God-head! O deep sea! What more could you have given me than the gift of your very self?

—Saint Catherine of
Sienna in Teachings of
the Christian Mystics



A Knee Is Not a Nose

Just as important as knowing what gift God has given you is knowing which gifts He *hasn't* given you. Many Christians try for years to function with gifts they never had in the first place, and this doesn't do the Lord's work much good. It's like trying to hear something with your knee or throw a ball with your nose. Knees and noses are better off doing other things.

—C. Peter Wagner in
Stop the World,
I Want to Get On

Opening Minds to God's World

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Denominations—Divided We Stand

Q: Why do we have denominations when Jesus prayed for the unity of believers?

—Lydia Miller
Carol Stream, Illinois

**Many
are surprised
to learn that
denominations
were created
to make peace
in the church
possible.**

A: Many people see the existence of denominations as a blot against the church's witness to unity. So they are surprised to learn that denominations were created with quite the opposite intent—to make unity in the church possible. To understand this counterintuitive historical reality, one has to look back 400 years to the century following the Protestant Reformation.

The Reformers had glimpsed a coming day by insisting that the true church could never be identified exclusively with a particular institution (contra Constantine in the fourth century). Still, the Reformers failed to follow this lead; like the Catholics, the Protestants continued to believe that Christian truth held societies together and that only one side in a religious conflict could have the truth. Nonconformity could not be tolerated, and the truth was worth fighting for. And fight they did.

It was not until sheer exhaustion—not victory for any party—brought an end to the religiously motivated Thirty Years War (with the signing of the Peace of Westphalia in 1648) that something of a truce over territorial religion began to take shape. This truce allowed Calvinism to join Lutheranism and Catholicism as a recognized expression of the Christian faith. But this new “peace” retained the territorial concept—those who weren’t Calvinist, Lutheran, or Catholic, such as the nonterritorial Anabaptists, or who lived in the wrong territory, continued to be persecuted.

At about the same time in England, the first clear philosophy of denominations was being articulated by the Independents (Congregationalists), who represented the minority voice at the Westminster Assembly (1642–49). In contrast to the majority who held to Presbyterian principles and expressed these convictions in the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Independents followed congregational principles. Keenly aware of the dangers of “dividing the godly Protestant party,” these “Dissenting Brethren of Westminster” looked for some way to express Christian unity even in disagreement.

The result was a denominational theory of the church that was based on the following principles: First, considering the human inability always to see

the truth clearly, differences of opinion about the outward form of the church are inevitable. Second, even though these differences do not involve fundamentals of the faith, they are not matters of indifference. Third, since no church has a final and full grasp of divine truth, the true church of Christ can never be fully represented by any single ecclesiastical structure. Finally, the mere fact of separation does not of itself constitute schism. It is possible to be divided at many points and still be united in Christ.

Though drafted in old England, these principles found their fullest expression in New England. To be profitable, the American colonies needed people to settle the land, and the promise of religious toleration provided a powerful incentive. Also, many of those who came from Europe brought with them the lesson of the Thirty Years War—that the price of enforced religious conformity was too high.

Inevitably, immigration patterns and the lack of a state religion led to the flowering of a multiplicity of religious groups—traditional and novel—living side by side in the New World. In such a setting, the denominational theory seemed a plan from heaven. “Denominationalism” came to be set against “sectarianism,” which denoted groups claiming the authority of Christ and truth for themselves alone and believing that they alone constituted the true body of Christ. Against this exclusive connotation, *denomination* became an inclusive term, implying that any Christian group “denominated” by a particular name was but one member of a larger group—the church.

As we know, the denominational concept prevailed—not because it was considered ideal, but because it was better than any alternative the preceding years and centuries had offered. Today, in the United States alone, there are almost 2,000 denominations and associations representing 385,000 congregations.

At a personal level, many of us have at times experienced denominations as sources of conflict, not unity, proving that no organizational solution can of itself fulfill the oneness for which Jesus prayed. Organized unity is only possible if there is an experienced unity, a oneness of spirit or attitude. The apostle Paul once said of those who differed with him, “Christ is preached and in this I rejoice.” Apparently it is possible to find our unity in Christ and the gospel even as we agree to disagree over some finer points of doctrine and traditional practices. **CT**

By Bruce Shelley, church history professor at Denver Theological Seminary and author of Church History in Plain Language (Word). Send questions to be answered by evangelical scholars to “Directions” at CTedit@aol.com.

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Gagging on Shiny, Happy People

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Christian
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I flipped back the corners of the rugs, one after another. It was a clammy, rainy day, and these hand-knotted wool specimens from Iran, Pakistan, India, and China were giving off a fresh-from-the-sheep smell.

I didn't know what I was doing; I'd never shopped for a rug before. But the one thing that struck me as I gazed at one gorgeous carpet after another was that they looked too perfect.

Then I peeled back one more layer and saw a rug that won my heart. It had humility, I thought. The red color was warmer, less chemically uniform. Though tightly knotted, the pattern was less rigid than that of the other rugs. They were all handmade, but this one *looked* it.

There was a time when "looks handmade" meant "looks shabby." The advent of machine manufacture has raised the ante; now products are strictly uniform, more so than the most skilled hands can make them. They are cheaper, too. Today anyone can own dishes, clothing, furniture, and rugs of a perfection previously available only to kings. But when I went looking for a rug, I didn't want perfect.

I'm not alone in this quest. Hangtags from clothes reassure us that the "the subtle slubs and flaws in this garment are a mark of its uniqueness." In a world where the seamlessness and predictability of machine manufacture makes us feel small and lost, we search for traces of the immediate and the real.

Demographer Paul Ray caused a stir not long ago with his research on an emerging segment of American society, the "Cultural Creatives."

In contrast to Traditionalists and Modernists, Ray says, Cultural Creatives are interested in feminism, the environment, and a complex package of "altruism, self-actualization, and spirituality."

They also are hungry for the real; as Ray puts it, they make "an angry demand for authenticity." Cultural Creatives, he claims, lead the widespread consumer rebellion against anything imitation or fake. It's a sensibility that is growing in influence; it obviously influenced me. We have "reality hunger."

What if it's not rugs or clothes or yogurt people are shopping for? When they head to Ye Olde Spiritualite Shoppe to pick out a faith, how does Christianity stack up against the other brands? Not so well, if you ask the Cultural Creatives. Churchy types, they say, present the Chris-

tian experience as blandly perfect. It doesn't appear to have those subtle slubs and flaws that assuage reality hunger.

This complaint would be easily answered by actually spending time inside a Christian community, where the failures and sorrows of the faithful are all too obvious. But when a customer is looking at the outside of the package, it can appear to be (as in the R.E.M. song lyric) "shiny happy people holding hands."

The movie *The Truman Show* presented this kind of world in its portrayal of Seahaven Island, that biodome of artificial bliss. The developer of Seaside, Florida, the real town used in the film, reports that the movie's designers cut down real trees and put up plastic ones in order to enhance the location's feeling of impossible perfection. Seahaven might have charmed an earlier generation, but it makes modern viewers uneasy and wary. When we suggest that becoming a Christian will be the equivalent of living in Seahaven, customers stay away in droves.

How do we get real? A reflexive reaction is to do the opposite and showcase angst. I was once on a retreat for clergy families, led by the pastor of a large metropolitan church, who would regularly announce he was "putting his guts out on the table" and confess to low self-esteem and generalized "brokenness."

He never looked more cocky or confident than at those moments; those bursts of confession were, he knew, when his wide-eyed audience was in the palm of his hand. During the breaks he flirted boldly with any available wives and reveled in his celebrity. He didn't look all that darn broken; in fact, he looked in dangerously good repair and set to hit overdrive. "You know how novelty shops sell fake rubber 'accidents' to 'fool your friends'?" I complained to my husband. "That guy's got a set of rubber guts."

The "real" in Christianity doesn't have to do with our emotional burdens, but with the raw fact of our sin. The good news is not that God makes us feel better, but that he is King and Lord.

We won't win reality-hungry converts by being shiny-happy or by displaying rubber guts. It's a third approach that most directly speaks forth our imperfections, in the embrace of a perfect and forgiving light. In receiving mail and E-mail from Christians of the Eastern hemisphere, I've encountered a way they have of bringing this truth to constant remembrance: they sign themselves "the unworthy Catherine" or "the sinful Andrew," and they often close with the injunction, "Please pray for me, a sinner." Those who constantly recall that they have been *forgiven* much *love* much and fear little. That's the kind of reality the world is hungry for.

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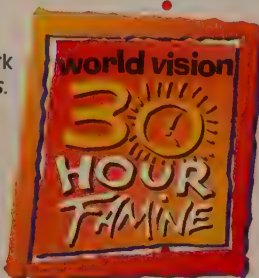
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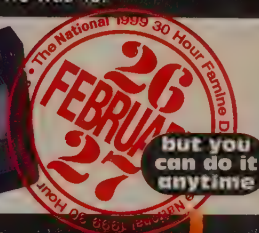
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A Library in a Book

Raymond Brown provides an excellent synthesis of contemporary New Testament scholarship.



An Introduction to the New Testament, by Raymond E. Brown (Doubleday, 878 pp.; \$42.50, hardcover). Reviewed by Michael J. Gorman, professor of New Testament and dean of the Ecumenical Institute of Theology at Saint Mary's Seminary and University in Baltimore. He is the author of *Abortion and the Early Church* (InterVarsity).

Of the making of books introducing the New Testament there is no end; some 25 sit on the shelves of my office, many more in the seminary library. Each is helpful and useful in its own way, and a few have become classics, issued in several editions over decades; Kümmel and Guthrie, for instance, are household names in New Testament circles because of their New Testament introductions.

The late Fr. Raymond Brown, S.S. (Society of Saint Sulpice, whose members teach in Catholic seminaries worldwide), is already a household name not only in the field of New Testament studies but in religious and academic circles more broadly. Father Brown, Auburn Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Biblical Studies at Union Theological Seminary in New York, is best known for his work on the Johannine literature—especially the classic two-volume Anchor Bible commentary on the Gospel of John and a study of the Johannine community (*The Community of the Beloved Disciple*)—and for his exhaustive studies, *The Birth of the Messiah* and *The Death of the Messiah*. He began his illustrious career at Saint Mary's Seminary and University in Baltimore, the Sulpician institution that I serve, teaching courses like those I now teach in his shadow. His sudden death on August 8 was a great loss.

A monument and a foundation

As anyone familiar with Brown's earlier writings would expect, his *Introduction* is a comprehensive, clear, balanced, ecumenical, and centrist work that



leads the reader through the New Testament documents in their historical context. Brown had the credentials to write for the "scholarly majority" in the field of New Testament at the close of the twentieth century, and his "consensus" approach to basic issues does in fact reflect the positions of many specialists in the field.

It comes as no surprise, then, that numerous scholars—Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish—endorse the volume with very high praise, as inscribed on the book's dust jacket. What we have here is a synthesis of the results of biblical scholarship in this century and a starting place for the century to come. This *Introduction* is both a monument and a foundation.

The plan of the book is clear and simple. Following a few opening comments, chronological tables, and maps, Part 1 covers the "preliminaries" for understanding the New Testament: its nature and origin (including canon); methods of interpretation; manuscripts; and the political, social, religious, and philosophical worlds of the New Testament. Parts 2–4 deal with the Gospels and related works (Acts, epistles of

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John); the Pauline letters and the other NT writings. Each NT book has a chapter devoted to it, ranging in length from about 50 pages each for the Gospels and Acts to 20 or 25 pages for longer letters and 10 or fewer for shorter ones.

Appendixes on the historical Jesus and on relevant noncanonical Jewish and Christian writings, as well as indexes to authors cited (23 pages) and topics, conclude the volume. Each chapter has an ample bibliography and footnotes, so that

students and scholars can follow up on topics of interest. The student (formal or informal) is, in fact, Brown's primary intended audience.

An especially helpful and appealing aspect of the chapters in Parts 2-4 is the (usually) first and main section of each chapter, entitled "general analysis of the message." This section, occasionally encompassing more than half of the chapter, provides a "mini-commentary" on the entire book in question. While some

other NT introductions also do this, none to my knowledge is as thorough or as engaged with other scholars (in the notes) as Brown's.

The rest of each chapter is devoted to more traditional introductory issues (date, authorship, community, etc.), which are also summarized in a neat one-page chart early in the chapter, and to "issues and problems for reflection." This section concluding each chapter, briefly addresses a handful of particularly significant critical, textual, theological, and even spiritual and pastoral topics raised by each writing. In this section we get a glimpse into the mind of Raymond Brown: of all the issues raised by a writing, which ones really mattered to him?

A work of such scholarly breadth and depth has many excellent features, some of which have already been mentioned. I wish especially to highlight three: clarity and readability; attention to theological and spiritual concerns; and engagement with diverse religious and scholarly perspectives.

Clarity and readability

Among the book's chief virtues are its clarity and readability. Unfortunately, many scholars cannot write well for the educated, interested laity or the busy pastor; Raymond Brown could and did. I have used the book as the main text in an introductory master's-level New Testament course for laypeople. Carefully studying the entire New Testament while reading a 900-page introduction at the same time is a daunting task. All of my students, however, praised the book's readability, even when they found the quantity of reading overwhelming. (Other colleagues in the field have used it, with greater ease, for courses on the Gospels or the Synoptics.) For the layperson or minister who wants a clear "lay-of-the-land" regarding any NT book or the NT as a whole—whether for the first time or as a refresher course—this book is a gem.

It is also encyclopedic. Indeed, it may function just as well as a reference book (it is part of the Anchor Bible Reference Library), something to which one can turn again and again for clear presentations about New Testament topics. As some of the endorsements claim, this may indeed be the book to buy if one is only going to own one scholarly volume on the New Testament.

For some potential readers, this *Introduction* will necessarily function more as an encyclopedia than as a book to read cover-to-cover. Although there are some helpful charts scattered throughout the volume, it

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is not excessively reader friendly, especially when compared to other NT introductions on the market. There is no color and no photography, and the text is dense and traditional in appearance. Were it not for Brown's engaging writing, this format might have proven deadly.

Theological and spiritual concerns

A surprising and very welcome feature of this introduction is Brown's attention to the theological and spiritual dimension of his topic. This has been, again unfortunately, something of a rarity in New Testament scholarship. Too often, especially in introductions, the material is presented only as (largely irrelevant) historical data "like pages of an ancient telephone book," according to one former student). Brown's interest in the religious dimension of the text comes through in three ways.

First, he devotes part of an introductory chapter to questions of revelation and inspiration. After surveying modern methods of biblical study ("criticisms"), he anticipates the reader's question: How does his historical approach correlate with a belief in the divine inspiration of the Scriptures? Brown's own approach is "centrist," rejecting both a literalist inerrancy, on the one hand, and a refusal to acknowledge inspiration or allow it to be considered in scholarly discussions of the New Testament, on the other. He attributes inspiration to all of Scripture, not just certain parts, and quotes with approval (as one might expect) the Second Vatican Council's appealing understanding of inerrancy and inspiration: "The books of Scripture must be acknowledged as teaching firmly, faithfully, and without error that truth which God wanted put into the sacred writings for the sake of our salvation." Brown finds the guiding hand of the Spirit in the production of the NT writings, and this allows him to acknowledge cheerfully the diverse, fully human conditions in and through which the writings came into existence, as well as their power to speak today.

Second, Brown deliberately draws attention to texts and themes in the NT writings that have provoked, and still provoke, differing interpretations and thus differing beliefs and practices in the Christian churches. For instance, he comments on the difficulties in reconstructing the function of deacons and elders in the various Pauline communities whose letters mention those offices, and in understanding the precise significance of actual or possible references to "sacraments" in both Gospels and letters.

Third, Brown dares to probe (with questions or comments) controversial and otherwise significant topics raised by NT texts. Regarding Paul's view of homosexual relations, for example, he argues that Paul condemned all sexual activity outside marriage and that "Paul and indeed, Jesus himself, walking among us in our times, would not be frightened by being considered sexually and politically 'incorrect'" (p. 530). In his discussion of Philippians, Brown tactically criticizes selfish "upward mobility" and

raises questions about the meaning of "taking the form of a servant" and anticipating the resurrection of the dead today.

Throughout the book, Brown reveals himself as a scholar who actually believes in his subject—the content of the NT writings. A theme of the book is the wisdom and plausibility of New Testament affirmations (i.e., Christian orthodoxy) in the face of modern challenges to them. He (usually gently) affirms the resurrection of the body, the "existence of an intelligent

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principle of evil" (the Devil, p. 746), and other dimensions of the New Testament that many scholars either shun or dismiss. Not Brown.

Ecumenical engagement

A third strength of Brown's *Introduction* is that it is thoroughly ecumenical and inclusive of diverse perspectives. This strength appears in two ways. First, Brown interacts with, and clearly respects, scholars of all denominational and theological traditions. As both he and Princeton's Bruce Metzger have independently said at recent public events at Saint Mary's Seminary and University, biblical studies has made great contributions to ecumenical understanding in this century. Readers of *CHRISTIANITY TODAY* will be happy to see that Brown's one or two favorite commentaries for each NT book include works by the late Robert Guelich (Mark), Dallas Seminary's Darrell Bock (Luke), the late F. F. Bruce (Acts), Wheaton's Gerald Hawthorne (Philippians), Regent's Gordon Fee (1 Corinthians), James Dunn (Romans), Andrew Lincoln (Ephesians), William Lane (Hebrews), and Richard Bauckham (2 Peter and Jude). Many of these works are part of the highly respected and thoroughly evangelical Word Biblical Commentary series. Indeed, Brown's favorite commentary series appear to have been the Anchor Bible and the Word sets.

Second, Brown reminds his readers that various parts of the NT speak to the needs of the church and the churches at various points in their existence. For example, the two concluding paragraphs of his section on the canonicity of James deftly but non-judgmentally explain both Luther's (and Protestantism's) hesitation about the "epistle of straw" and the letter's rehabilitation in the last half of this century, thanks to liberation theology and to a general concern with Christian social ethics, particularly with respect to questions of wealth.

Brown, then, is open to a variety of religious and scholarly perspectives—though not *all* perspectives. He is suspicious of much supposedly "cutting-edge" scholarship, especially the kind that attracts media attention, finding its adherents idiosyncratic at best and self-aggrandizing at worst. Though he does not explicitly identify all the culpable scholars or schools of thought, he is critical of the well-known Jesus Seminar. On the other hand, in discussing various interpretive approaches to the New Testament, Brown invites his readers to acknowledge with him the valuable contributions made by "advocacy" scholars—non-First World,



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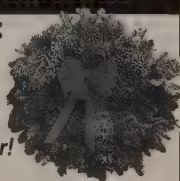
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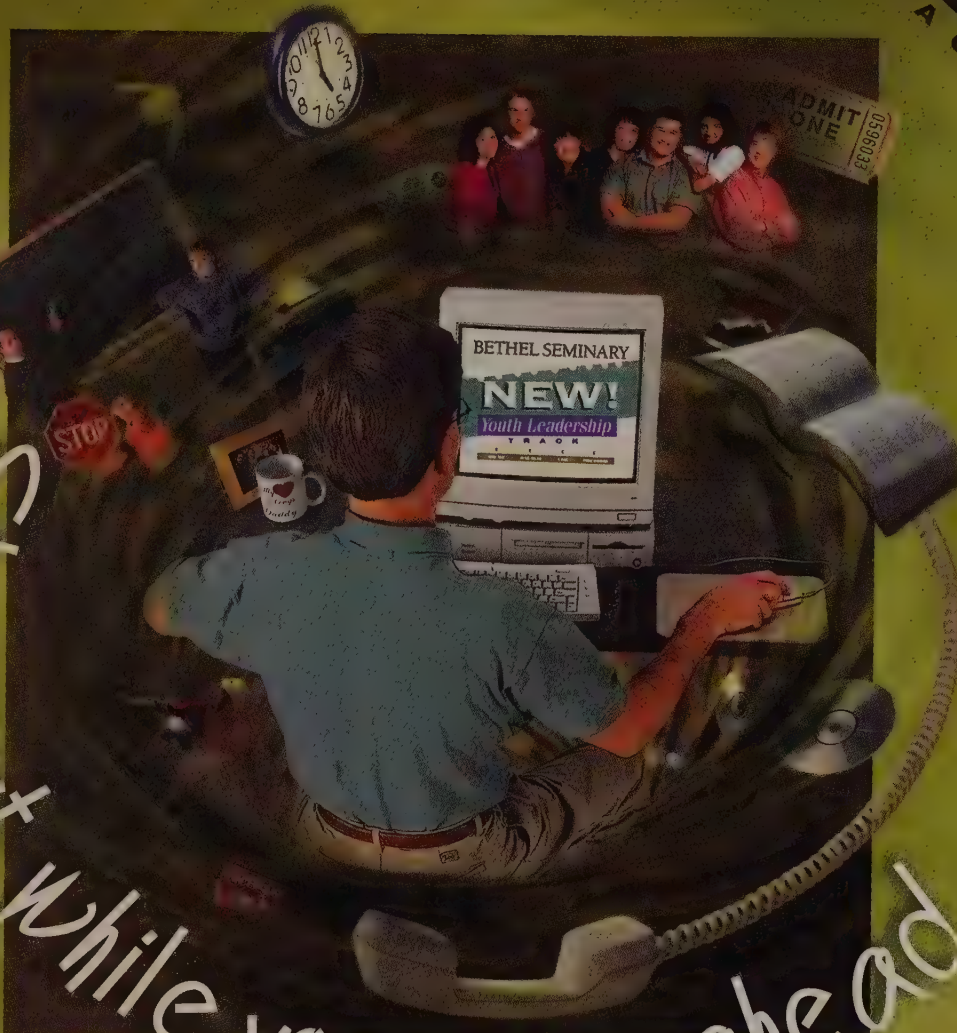
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nonwhite, and nonmale interpreters of the New Testament, particularly those with a liberationist perspective.

Similarly, Brown recognizes the importance of newer methods of NT study, including literary approaches (structuralism and narrative criticism), rhetorical criticism, and "social" criticism (i.e., sociological analysis and social-scientific criticism). For seasoned, expert practitioners of the more traditional methods of twentieth-century scholarship like Brown, simply acknowledging these new approaches is significant, and to Brown's great credit, he clearly intends to take them seriously.

Where is NT studies heading?

Reading Raymond Brown's *Introduction* might lead readers to conclude that despite all the bibliographical entries and footnotes, there really is a significant consensus among a great majority of NT scholars, with respect to both method and results in NT study. To some extent, this conclusion is correct.

But behind the consensus that Brown represents lie much more variety and disagreement than one might suspect, particu-

larly regarding the history of Jesus and of early Christianity. The distinctive and controversial views of the "cutting edge" interpreters minimized by Brown probably exercise more influence in NT studies than he cares to admit. (Glancing at the program of the annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature should prove my point.)

In reality, NT studies is currently a highly diverse field, with various methods and agendas vying for prominence. Some NT scholars, such as Stephen Fowl of Loyola College in Maryland, would say it is not merely diverse, but "fragmented." Candler School of Theology's Luke Timothy Johnson has gone even further, arguing that the discipline is in crisis. Whether merely diverse, fragmented, or in crisis, NT studies is experiencing the same kind of predicament that all fields of study are undergoing in this postmodern era. Old certainties have collapsed, the possibility of "objective" interpretations is denied, and venerable scholarly methods are supplanted or supplemented. No method or perspective is judged inherently preferable to another.

But if the field of NT studies is diverse, or even fragmented, the variety afforded

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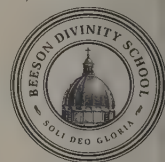
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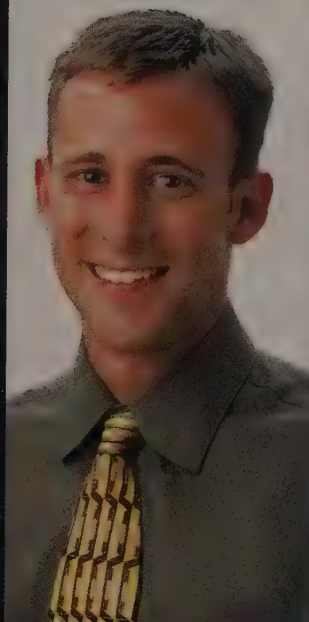
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by our present context can be the occasion for hope, not despair. One reason for hope is that the complex dimensions or "textures" of the Bible require a variety of interpretive approaches, like the proverbial diamond whose beauty can be fully appreciated only from a variety of angles.

Frances Taylor Gench, who teaches at the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, calls this new interdisciplinary era a "time of ferment," after which the historical-critical method will not be replaced but enhanced, putting new tools into scholars' pockets.

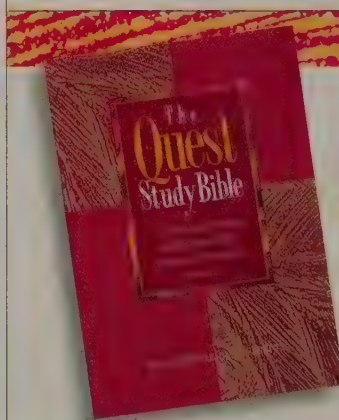
Gench finds an additional reason for hope in the current diversity, which is not merely varied with respect to method but also with respect to the practitioners. The entrance of women and of ethnic and racial minorities into biblical studies has enriched our reading of the Bible, she says. "People from different social locations bring different questions to the texts and see different things in them," she contends.

Still another reason for hope is that the postmodern situation allows us, scholars and students alike, to own up to our real

(and diverse) purposes in reading the New Testament. For most of us who are confessing Christians, these purposes are spiritual, theological, ethical, and practical.

The media lead us to believe that the "hot" topics in NT study are historical in nature: the historical Jesus, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and so on. In my experience of teaching NT primarily to adults, however, people are primarily interested in responsible interpretation of the *text* so that it may be heard again as the Word of God for this time. James Brownson, academic dean and professor of New Testament at Western Theological Seminary, points out that a similar preoccupation with the historical Jesus ended the nineteenth century and led to a deluge of work in NT theology at the beginning of the twentieth century. It may well be that the end of this century will also lead us to a healthy outpouring of NT scholarship in the twenty-first century—scholarship that has a theological, missional, and ethical focus. If so, that outpouring could be one not only of scholarship but of the Spirit. And for that, Raymond Brown would be both grateful and, in part, responsible.

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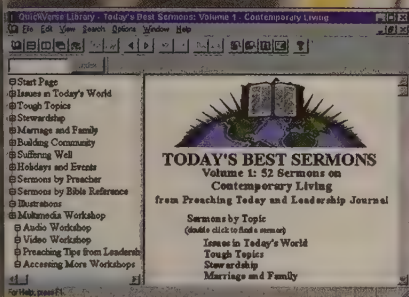
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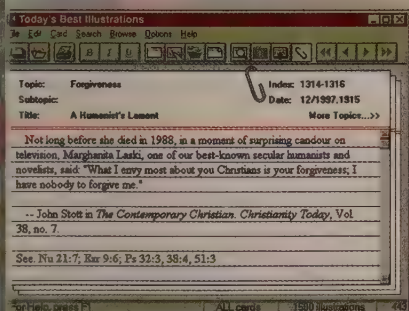
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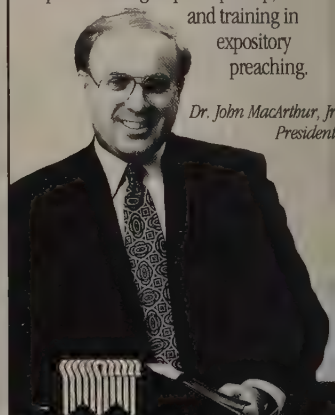
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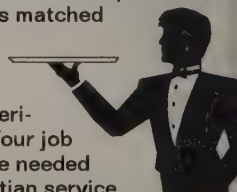
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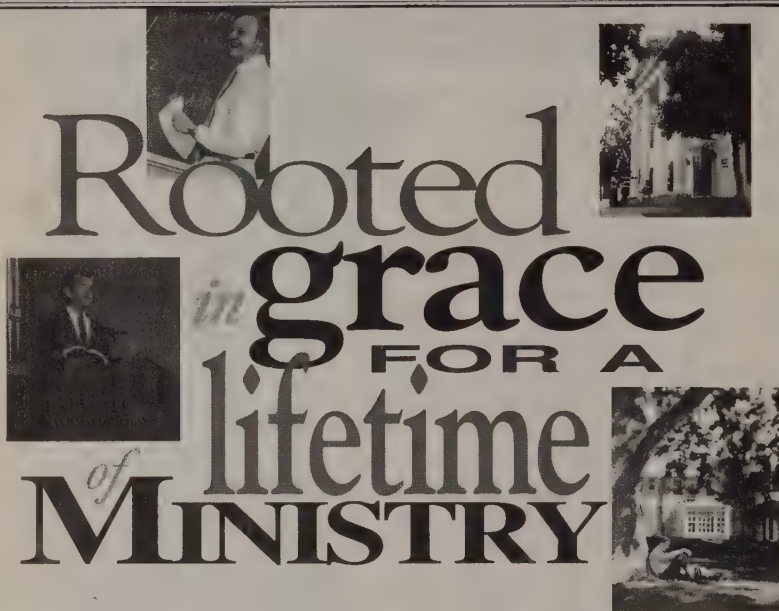
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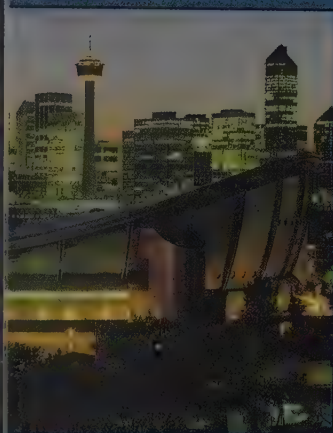
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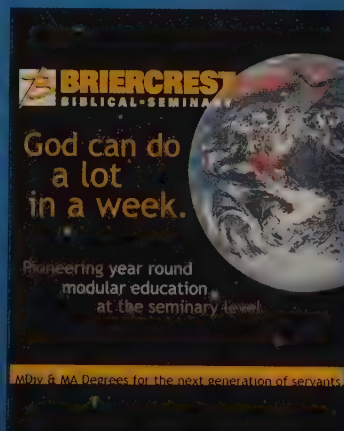
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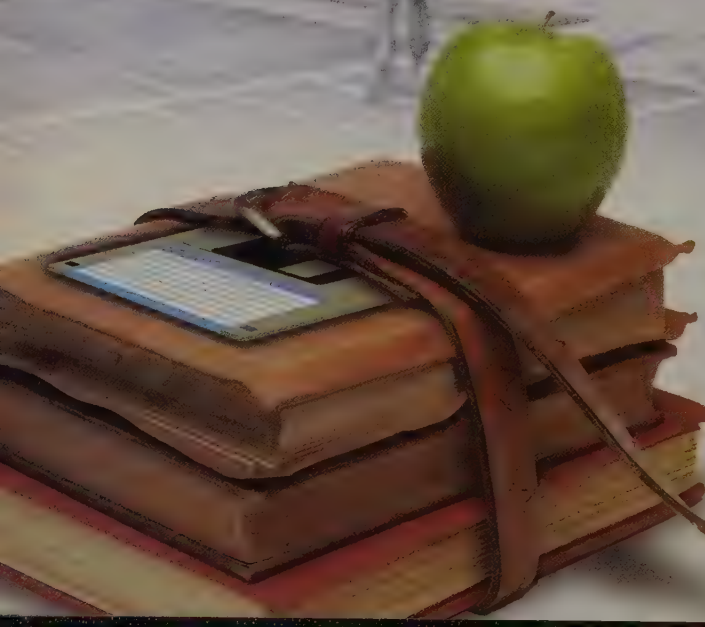
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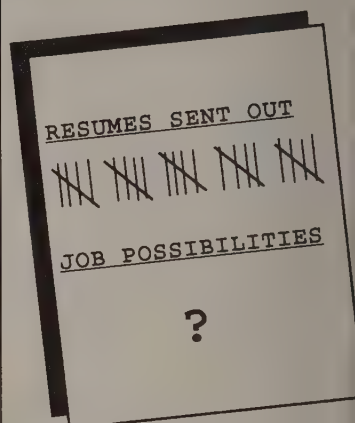
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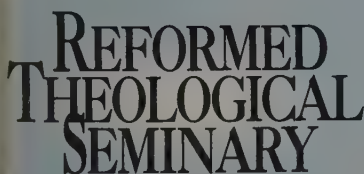


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The Fox and the Writer

**I felt
a thrilling
flashback
to Eden, when
the barrier
of fear had
not yet arisen
between
the species.**

Last spring, three kits were born in a fox den visible across a ravine from my driveway. I watched the early progress through binoculars: the kits nursing, sunning themselves, playing, and frantically diving for cover if a large bird sailed overhead.

Fancying myself a latter-day Saint Francis, I decided to befriend them. I took daily walks in the vicinity of the den, whistling softly and leaving small gifts—a bone, a raw egg, a handful of cat food. Purists frown on such interference with nature, I know, but I figure houses like mine, built in the foxes' territory, have already disrupted the natural order.

The first few weeks the kits scrambled into the den whenever they saw me. As they grew accustomed to my presence, though, they retreated to rocks nearby. They peered at me inquisitively, golden eyes alert, ears twitching to every sound, their unscarred red coats glistening in the sun.

Eventually the three began following me. I felt like the Pied Piper. If I stopped, they stopped and hid behind a rock or bush. If I ran, they ran too. If I sat for a picnic lunch, they surrounded me. Once I tossed an apple core into some bushes and in a flash all three pounced. Quivering, frozen in a hunting posture, they waited, and I realized that they were waiting for it to move, like all their food.

As the Colorado summer progressed, I would stand in my driveway and whistle; on command, the three handsome young foxes came bounding across the ravine. They stalked butterflies in a patch of wildflowers. They gave futile chase to wily squirrels. They stood on their hind legs and lapped water from our birdbath—once jumping back in alarm when a skim of ice reflected their own images.

In order to keep the deer, elk, and rabbits out of flower gardens, we have connected water hoses to sprinklers activated by motion sensors. Walk in front of the sensor, and water sprays out with a loud, startling noise. (Neighborhood kids love to introduce their unsuspecting friends to this technology.) The first time the foxes wandered in front of the motion sensor, setting off the water, they high-tailed it, literally, all the way back to their den. Soon, though, they were playing games with the sensor, dashing in front of it to see if they could set it off without getting wet.

If I threw a tennis ball, one would chase it down and run, with the other two in hot pursuit. Like

some dogs, though, they never learned to relinquish the retrieved object.

The three had very different personalities. We named the bravest Mr. Bold, the most fearful Shy Guy, and the third Black Socks because of his distinctive leg markings. If I put out food, I started with one pile, which Mr. Bold immediately gobbled up, then moved a few feet away and put down another pile, which Mr. Bold dashed over to investigate.

By the time I set out a third pile, Shy Guy would cautiously approach the dregs left in the first pile—until Mr. Bold charged over to chase him away. Poor Shy Guy—his personality kept him in a state of perpetual hunger.

In animals as in humans, cleverness can help one surmount personality obstacles. Shy Guy prevailed after I started putting food in a metal dog dish. Foxes track food with their noses, not their eyes, and the three could not seem to distinguish the food from the dish. They would smell the food and bite the dish, which didn't taste at all like cat food or lamb bones. Plus, the sound of a metal dish scraping across gravel startled them. They would stare at the dish and circle it for half an hour, smelling the food but not knowing how to get it.

Shy Guy, however, mastered the dish, assuring that from then on he got a fair portion. I would put down two piles of food and leave some in the dish. The other two might chase him away, but, unable to solve the mystery of the dish, they ultimately left its contents to a grinning Shy Guy.

All summer I had three constant companions. As I weeded the garden, cut the grass, or read the mail in a hammock, they followed my every move. If I ate lunch on our wooden balcony, they would climb the steps to join me.

Mr. Bold, especially, seemed without fear. On fine summer days I tote my laptop computer outdoors and sit on a lounge chair in the shade. Mr. Bold would observe me for a while, then curl up, his white-tipped tail folded across his eyes, and go to sleep.

At such moments I felt a thrilling flashback to Eden, when the barrier of fear had not yet arisen between the species, and a flash-forward to heaven, when the lion shall lie down with the lamb and the fox shall curl up with the writer.

Naturalist John Muir once sighed, "It is a great comfort . . . that vast multitudes of creatures, great and small and infinite in number, lived and had a good time in God's love before man was created."

It can still happen, John.

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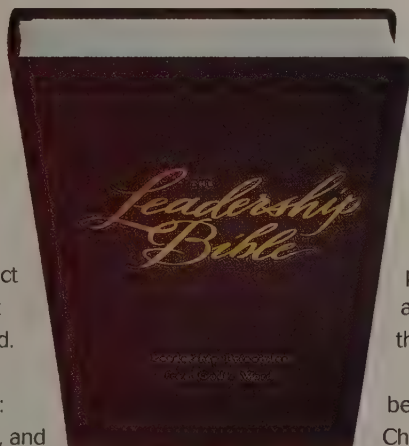
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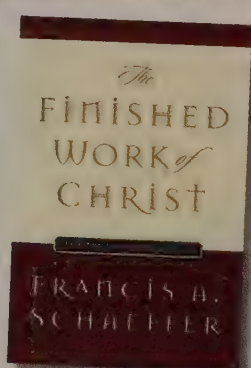
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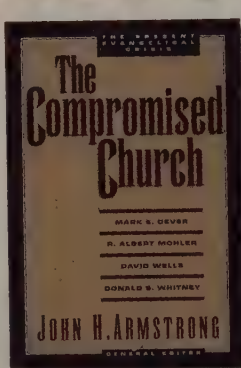
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Michael G. Maudlin,
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Obsessed with the End Times

INSIDE CT

Was Hitler the Antichrist? (Some still think so.) Or was it Gorbachev? (He had a mark on his forehead.) Not too many evangelicals think of the pope as a good candidate, though he topped the list among Protestants for several centuries. Then there's Bill Gates.

I told one evangelical leader that CT was marking the fiftieth anniversary of the modern State of Israel. He was excited. I then explained we were exploring how dispensationalist eschatology shaped America's pro-Israel stand (see "How Evangelicals Became Israel's Best Friend," p. 38). He winced. He was embarrassed by the prophecy charts, Rapture movies, and Antichrist spotting of his youth. He didn't relish being reminded how this end-times obsession has characterized popular Christianity.

If you hang out among evangelical leaders or at our colleges and seminaries (including even today's Dallas Theological Seminary), you seldom hear end-times scenarios discussed or see Daniel's prophecies charted. A few years ago, you might even have imagined that Scofield's notes had been, uh, marginalized. But then there was a Gulf War and suddenly Christian bestsellers told how Saddam Hussein and Iraq (ancient Babylon) had

been foretold in the Bible. And the latest Christian publishing sensation is a seven-volume post-Rapture, dispensational soap opera.

I understand why my friend winced. There are dangers to end-times obsessions: a disinclination to work toward long-term solutions, a propensity to focus on prophetic fulfillment at the expense of ethical concerns (something Israel's prophets were never accused of), and a perverse satisfaction in cultural decay. However, these problems don't compare with what should be celebrated.

I remember when I first read Revelation's portrayal of the saints' heavenly worship. I realized then that I was part of that crowd. My pulse quickened. *Did John see me? Was I in the Bible?*

I was, and I am. The most important contribution of dispensationalists' eschatology is their emphasis that we worship an active God who intervenes in history, judges nations, and works out his purposes on earth. Our God is the Lord of history, and everything else.

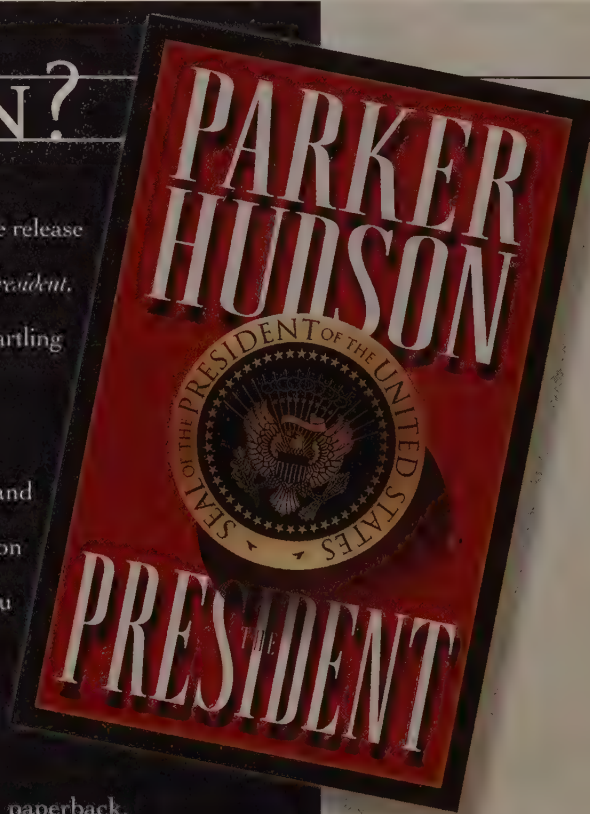
Many of my dispensational friends will not be surprised if God surprises them at how Jesus returns. Prophecy literature is famous, after all, for changing with the circumstances. But what shines through the details of their scenarios is a bold confidence that God is actively preparing his church for Christ's return. And this is a ministry to us all. **CT**

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— Dr. Stephen F. Olford

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— Dr. Stephen F. Olford

Dr. Stephen F. Olford (right)
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Confronting Negative Influences

✉ I had just returned home from visiting two teenagers recently sentenced to life in prison for murder when I found my issue of CT with the cover story "Trained to Kill" [Aug. 10]. It was a wise choice to include this informative article. I have often cautioned our church families to employ discretion in what they allow their children to watch on television, and I found this article by David Grossman to supply additional and factual evidence for what many of us have suspected for a long time.

Though the most productive role of the church in influencing culture lies in the proclamation of the gospel, the church should be proactive in directly confronting the negative influences in our society. I concur with the opening comments stating "that parents, the church, scholars, and the government must come together" to address this issue. As a result of reading this article, not only do I intend to share this information with our church families, but I have scheduled an appointment with our state senator to discuss how we can encourage limits to the "probing lenses" of the network news media. Thank you!

*Pastor Jack W. Bruce, Jr.
Elizabethton Alliance Church
Elizabethton, Tenn.*

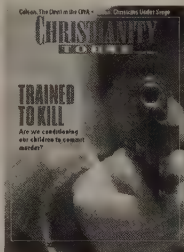
✉ Though I have spent many hours thinking about and discussing this issue with my friends and family, Lt. Col. Grossman shed new light on it. I have a much greater understanding of how violence specifically affects children (and the rest of us) and numbs them (and us).

*Alison Rhodes
Tinker AFB, Okla.*

✉ Grossman loses focus when it comes to charting a response to the problem raised. Curiously, after describing the dangers of extensive exposure to violence on TV, he minimizes the impact of an individual's decision to "just turn it off." If we agree that exposure to TV violence is a causal factor contributing to violent crime, it is obvious that if fewer people were exposed to TV violence, we would experience somewhat less violence at large. Although the remaining victims would still be real people with real hurting loved ones, it is fallacious to say that "it wouldn't have done a bit of good."

I applaud Grossman for gathering and summarizing research and raising awareness on this issue. However, considerable work must be done towards charting a comprehensive and effective response to the problem.

*Wayne Iba
Redwood City, Calif.*



Grossman says, "But it [killing] does not come naturally, you have to be taught to kill." Sounds good. Who taught Cain to kill?

*Jack Knauer
Larue, Ohio*

Seldom do I reread articles. This one I have read three times. Thanks to David Grossman for boldly speaking out to the TV networks, calling for them to assume responsibility for the evident impact that violent programming has on the lives of our children and to "have the moral courage to censure people who think that violence is legitimate entertainment." This is an article that every parent should read and apply in ways that change the destructive trends in our culture. This is an article that calls for reprints for distribution to families in our churches and to the media that want to ignore the evidence of the effect of violent programming.

*Pastor Richard Gerbrandt
Mennonite Brethren Church
Reedley, Calif.*

✉ I think it's time to quit arguing and address the real issue. It isn't gun control or TV violence or violent computer games. They simply represent the serious and tragic consequences of the sin and godlessness that pervades our society worldwide. Whether we agree or disagree with some of Grossman's findings, it is clear our generation is becoming more and more violent. I've turned off my TV in the evenings simply because of the violence and sexual situations. My Bible tells me to think on those things that are lovely, pure, wholesome, etc. Where is the insatiable hunger for God today?

*Dick Olsen
Sunnyvale, Calif.*

✉ While reading "Trained to Kill" I was reminded of my experience while watching *Saving Private Ryan* the day before. In one scene covering the invasion of Normandy, a bullet struck a soldier's helmet, but mercifully did not pierce it. In a daze, the soldier pulled his helmet off to inspect

it and to feel the back of his head. While his head was uncovered, the soldier was struck in the back of the head and killed instantly by another bullet. The man sitting next to us in the theater laughed—and did so several more times during the movie, at equally horrifying moments. And he was not alone.

*Brian Wells
Oak Park, Ill.*

Using Our Minds

✉ I was so pleased to read the article "Pray the Lord My Mind to Keep" [Aug. 10]. I have taught classes in church on the basis of CT articles and teaching guides, and then a less structured class, "Faith and Reason," also drawing from CT articles. I am a scientist, and I worship Christ who created what I research, and I struggle with the tensions between beguiling worldly philosophies and Christianity. This article articulates my beliefs and concerns better than any I have ever read. Praise God for Cornelius Plantinga, Jr., and for CT for delivering this important lesson! The image in which we were created requires that we use our minds, that we love with our minds, that we worship with our minds. It is a joy to let God reveal his truth to me, not only through the Word, but also through creation and to do so in proportion to how submissive and adoring I am of him!

*Patrick S. McIntosh
Boulder, Colo.*

What We Need to Know

"In Search of the Lost Churches of Paul," by Wendy Murray Zoba, is a choice piece of writing [Aug. 10]. She reminds us of Turkey's involvement in New Testament history and lucidly brings us up to date on why and how the present government operates. This is information the present generation of Christians needs to know.

*Udell Smith
Alexandria, La.*

Christians are discriminated against in Turkey, and they experience many obstacles in simply trying to survive. The article refers to the Armenian genocide during 1915–16 which took the lives of over one million Christians. My father, a mayor of one of the Christian communities, was arrested, his family murdered, and the entire village completely destroyed. He managed to escape, and with the cooperation of British forces, saved hundreds of orphans by taking them to Cyprus.

The genocide is well documented in

primary historical sources, yet the Turkish government denies it. Not only are Christians persecuted even now, but Turkey does not permit any criticism of the government and routinely arrests and holds dissenters without the benefit of a trial.

Turkey has much to answer for, and as Christians we must pray that it will really follow the teachings of the Qur'an, which preaches equality. Presently equality exists only for nondissenting Turkish citizens.

Jerry G. Keshian, Ph.D.
Winston-Salem, N.C.

Those Proxy Baptisms

The new "Directions" feature adds a welcome practical relevance to CHRISTIANITY TODAY.

One point needs to be added to D. A. Carson's otherwise fine explanation of 1 Corinthians 15:29 and the Mormon practice of baptism for the dead ["Directions," Aug. 10]. Carson concluded that, "In any case, Paul's clear emphasis is that people are justified by grace *through faith*, which demands a personal response." In

fact, Mormon teaching does include the need for a faith response to the gospel on the part of the deceased for whom proxy baptism is performed. But it teaches that they can make this faith response in the spirit world, where the gospel is offered to all (Doctrine and Covenants 138). According to Mormon teaching, their vicarious baptism ordinance has efficacy only for those deceased persons who respond positively to the gospel in the spirit world.

To really shut the door to this Mormon error two points must be made: (1) The biblical teaching that our eternal destiny is fixed at death (Luke 16:19-31; Heb. 9:27; 2 Cor. 6:2), and (2) The fallacious nature of the Mormon interpretation of 1 Peter 3:18-20 and 4:6, which they say establishes that the gospel is offered to all in the spirit world.

Rev. Luke P. Wilson
Institute for Religious Research
Grand Rapids, Mich.

I would like to add an opinion I have reached by researching this verse of Scripture since two of my children have been

married to those of the Mormon faith.

In Walter Bauer's *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, *hyper* is stated to mean "for, in behalf of, for the sake of someone or something." Since there is no historical proof of anyone being vicariously baptized in the place of someone who is dead, can Carson's "most plausible interpretation" really be the most plausible? I contend that the most plausible interpretation is that if Jesus has not been raised from the dead, then why are we baptized "for his sake" or "on his behalf?" After all, it is common for Christians to pray "for Jesus' sake." Could Carson be wrong about his "most plausible interpretation?" After all, I was baptized "for Jesus' sake" to make his vicarious atonement efficacious for me.

Rev. Marvin L. Ellis
Canton, Ga.

A False Dichotomy?

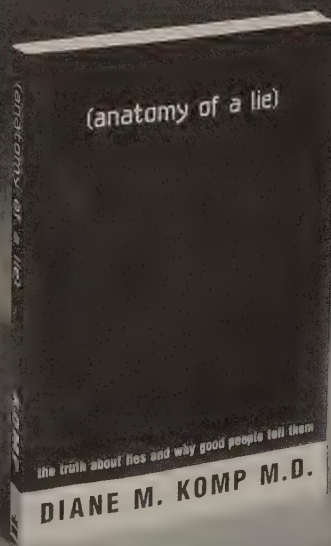
After reading Chuck Colson and Nancy Pearcey's "The Devil in the DNA" [Aug. 10], I'm continuing to discover (as I also found in Phillip Johnson's *Defeating Darwinism*), that in regard to human origins, I'm left with two choices. Either I accept the naturalistic explanation with its "purposeless," "materialistic," "arbitrary" processes or I adamantly reject naturalism in favor of intelligent design. And by design, apparently one immediately decides that, in spite of a universe that seems to exhibit endlessly complex processes, human existence itself must have been the result of an "instantaneous" and "supernatural" event (another first cause which came after the first first cause). Consequently, I can investigate origins in some "atheistic," "secular," and "cynical" academic arena, or I can abandon the study of origins, arguing that explaining the means by which humans came into existence lies beyond the scope of scientific investigation. Can a false dichotomy be any more obvious? Evidently not. Clearly there is no middle ground, absolutely no possible harmonization. Is life this simple?

Forgive my "liberal" Christianity and my contentment with some ambiguity, but the descent of humans from other animal ancestors does not necessarily lead one to apostasy and "moral nihilism." Buying into evolution isn't surely boarding a one-way flight to the land of atheism any more than enjoying a hot fudge sundae certainly leads one to purchase a lifetime supply of ice cream.

Korey D. Kwilinski
St. Louis, Mo.

Colson properly recognizes that evolutionism is inimical to Christian theism. But he

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also constructs a straw man, for no proponent of genetic determinism claims that the genes are the sole causes of actions. Even strict determinist B. F. Skinner recognized the place of environment in *Walden Two*. Others have noted that, were an adult cloned, the result could not be an exact duplicate of the original because the environment during development would be different. Further, genetic tendencies may be battled: most genetic determinists claim only that heredity plus environment predisposes, not that they produce unconditional consequences. The straw man was unnecessary and improper, for there are more than enough genuine problems in evolutionism and evolutionary psychology and silly claims by adherents, and Christians must be strictly truthful. *David F. Siemens, Jr., Ph.D.*
Los Angeles Pierce College
Mesa, Ariz.

A True American Hero

Your article on Sen. Dan Coats highlights the important question of what is the proper role of faith in public policy or, put differently, whether the church (or synagogue) should be *in* and also *of* the world. Senator Coats who, together with Sen. Joseph Lieberman serves as chairman of our Center for Jewish and Christian Values in Washington, D.C., is truly an exceptional individual whose heightened sense of morality and evangelical Christian faith make him most worthy of lionizing.

What is not always recognized is that Senator Coats's ethical ethos and public-policy posture stems from his distinctly religious sensibilities, not just political motivations. He is a congressional treasure, a true American hero, and a model public servant, precisely because he so effectively expresses his religious convictions in the public square. Moreover, he does so in a manner that is tolerant and respectful of divergent viewpoints and civil toward individuals with whom he disagrees. This demeanor should not be seen as the suspension of religious values but their greatest manifestation.

It is the affirmation of Coats's Christian faith that shapes his morality, not faith's denial. He is, in my book, a paradigm for public servants. The Senate, and our nation as a whole, will not be quite the same, bereft of his leadership. *Rabbi Yechiel Eckstein*
International Fellowship
of Christians and Jews
Chicago, Ill.

Male/Female; Left/Right

With regard to John Stackhouse's article on evangelicalism today ["The Perils of

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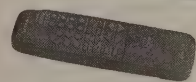
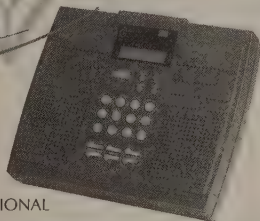


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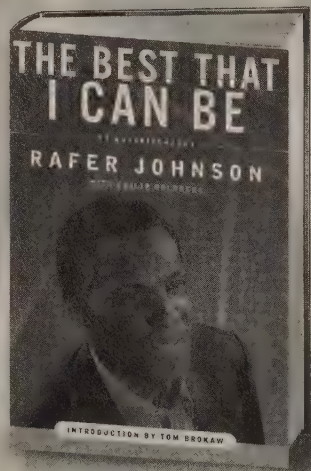
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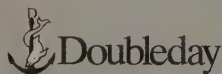
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Left and Right," Aug. 10], I oppose a gender egalitarianism that erases real differences between men and women but holds to the full equality of both sexes under God and to women in ministry. There is no cleavage between Barth and myself on this issue (as Stackhouse's remarks could imply), but we do part ways in some other areas of theology.

Donald G. Bloesch
University of Dubuque Theological Seminary
Dubuque, Iowa

Stackhouse misrepresents my delineations of the evangelical theological landscape. I specifically avoided labeling the ideal types of which I wrote (in my essays in *Christian Century* and CT) with the polemical labels "left" and "right." Furthermore, I do not see how calling for greater inclusivity through dialogue leading to mutual understanding and acceptance can fairly be called "divisive."

Roger E. Olson
Bethel College & Seminary
St. Paul, Minn.

Orthodox "Converts"

In "Universities Question Orthodox Conversion" [Aug. 10], Scott Swanson continually states that evangelicals convert to Orthodoxy. In common parlance, conversion refers to changing religions. When Christians change churches, it is more appropriate to say that they joined another church. One could say that an evangelical converts to Orthodoxy if the Orthodox Church did not consider evangelicals to be true Christians. This emphasis defines salvation in terms of belonging to the right church. Inherently, this violates the ecumenical spirit. Since the Orthodox communion participates in the World Council of Churches, I doubt that it would publicly subscribe to this opinion.

In my dealings with Orthodox "converts," most were attracted by the church's colorful liturgy, rich tradition, and ecclesiology. They did not feel they were any less evangelical simply because they became Orthodox. As such, they were not converting from their old faith; rather, they were augmenting it. If Orthodoxy seeks to be more receptor oriented and less culture bound, it will attract many more searching evangelicals.

William P. Payne
Parrish, Fla.

Two errors should be corrected: On page 18, column 3, paragraph 1, Swanson misquotes me by writing "He joined the Orthodox Church, even though he detected 10 points of difference between Orthodox theology and CIU's doctrinal statement." What I said was that I joined the church

believing that there were no significant differences between the CIU ten-point doctrinal statement and my own understanding of Orthodox theology. Since I could still sign the CIU doctrinal statement and since that statement is the standard used to define the theological parameters of the university, there was no doctrinal reason for asking me to resign.

On page 18, column 3, paragraph 2, Swanson writes, "In November, the school agreed to allow Rommen to teach for a two-year trial period." The veracity of this statement depends on how the terms *school* and *university* are used. If *school* refers to the seminary (CBS, a school within the university) the statement could be considered true, since the dean of that school and his provost approved and champion the proposal. If *school* refers to the university (CIU) the statement is false, since the university's president rejected the two-year proposal and it was never brought to school's board for approval.

Edward Rommen
Columbia, S.C.

War and Drought in the Sudan

Thank you for your News article [Aug. 10] drawing attention to the tragic situation in the southern Sudan where war and drought have put 2.5 million people at risk of starvation. A word of caution, however. To portray this interminable war as Muslim persecution of Christians is to oversimplify a very complex situation. Religion is a factor. But differences in culture, language, race, and politics are also responsible for the conflict between the peoples of northern and southern Sudan. One key issue, for example, is control of the country's centrally located oil fields.

No one's hands are clean in this war. Fratricidal fighting among the Christian and animist "rebels" who claim to represent the Dinka, Nuer, and other peoples of the southern Sudan has also wreaked havoc on the civilian population. We can end the famine if we can stop the fighting. We can stop the fighting if we can deal with all the issues in all their complexity.

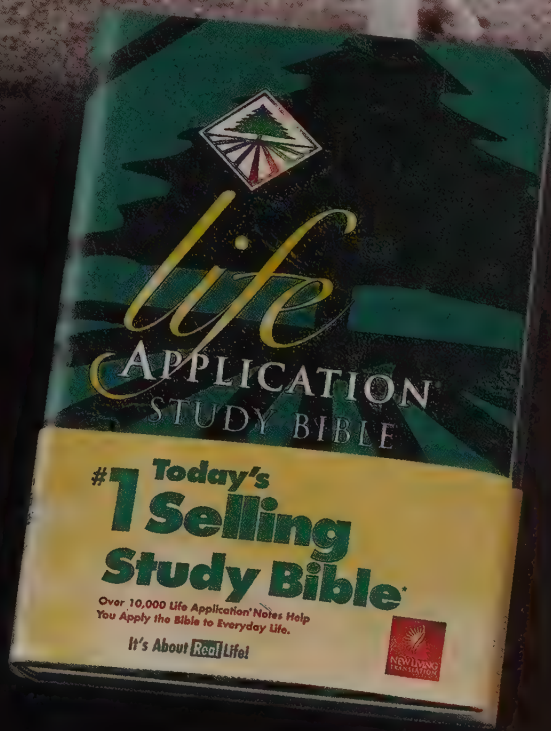
Dean R. Hirsch, President
World Vision International
Monrovia, Calif.

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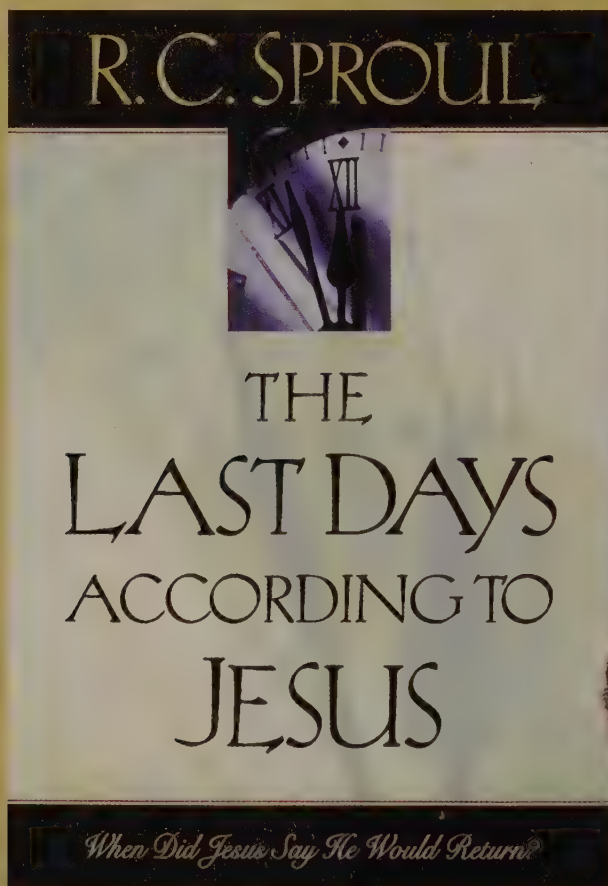
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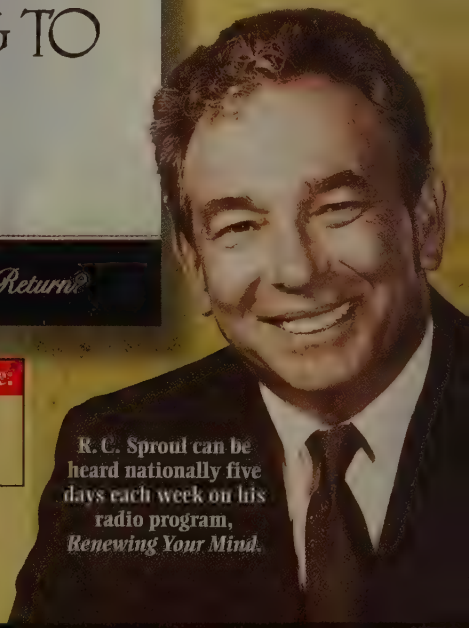
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TELEVISION

PAX TV off the Ground

Viewers fed up with televised sex, violence, and crudity have a new alternative. PAX TV launched its slate of "pro-family" programming August 31, immediately becoming the nation's seventh national over the air network.

Network founder Lowell "Bud" Paxson, 62, has been buying up broadcast rights to shows such as *Touched by an Angel*, *Promised Land*, and *Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman*. Meanwhile, he has purchased 86 television stations. That, along with deals negotiated with

But Paxson, who co-founded the Home Shopping Network and is based in West Palm Beach, Florida, believes he will have another reason for success.

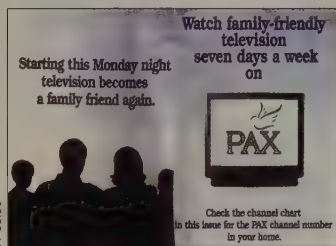
"This is very highly God-driven," says Paxson, who experienced a dramatic Christian conversion in 1986 after years of pursuing deals at the expense of his family (CT, April 27, 1998, p. 20).

As Paxson sees it, "Each of us has three threads, or elements, of life we need to get through the needle's eye: the business or career thread, the spiritual thread, and the family thread."

In PAX TV, Paxson says he has found a formula that combines all three: a profitable business that gives families positive TV alternatives while "planting the seed that God loves us." But don't dare call his network "Christian TV."

"Christian television stinks," he says. "I think *Touched by an Angel* does more for the kingdom of God than all of the televangelists combined."

Paxson is paying nearly \$1 million per episode for reruns of the CBS program, the anchor of the new network's weeknight prime time schedule, which also features *Dr. Quinn*, *Diagnosis Murder*, and *Life Goes On*. Daytime programming includes *Here's Lucy*, *The Love Boat*, and *Eight Is Enough*. Several



of the shows formerly had a home on Pat Robertson's Family Channel before it became part of Rupert Murdoch's media empire (CT,

July 14, 1997, p. 60).

Twenty percent of PAX TV will be original programming, including a talk show developed in partnership with *Woman's Day* magazine, and a live entertainment program from Universal Studios.

From midnight to 5 A.M., PAX TV will air *Worship*, a low-cost combination of onscreen Bible texts and Christian music.

By Steve Rabey.

RACE RELATIONS

Reconcilers Fellowship Folds

Reconcilers Fellowship, following the death of founder Spencer Perkins, has decided to close, as cofounder Chris Rice goes to seminary.

Rice is leaving Jackson, Mississippi, where he has lived for 18 years, to seek a new direction. Rice, 38, originally came to do volunteer work for Voice of Calvary Ministries, a Christian community-improvement ministry. "For the first time in my life, I saw people making very radical decisions because of their faith in God," says Rice. "Blacks and whites were working together to make a difference in the community."

Rice soon developed a friendship with Spencer Perkins, son of Voice of Calvary founder John Perkins. Their families lived down the hall from each other in a Christian community they called Antioch. Six black and white families lived under one roof, shared incomes, and ate together each night.

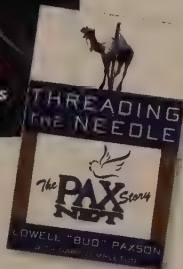
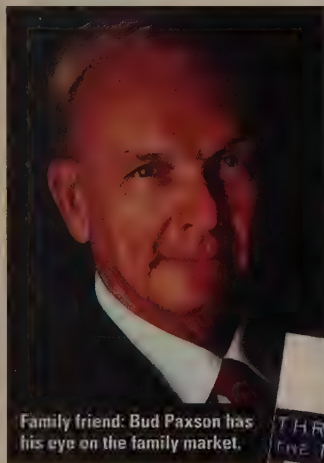
In addition, Rice and Per-

kins became business partners and wrote *More than Equals: Racial Healing for the Sake of the Gospel* (InterVarsity Press, 1993), later taking their message of reconciliation across the country. The twosome also founded Reconcilers Fellowship, which published *Reconcilers* magazine.

In January, Perkins died of a heart attack at age 43 (CT, March 2, 1998, p. 73). "Spencer and I were more than friends," says Rice. "We had a real relationship that dealt with race, but transcended race. We were truly reconciled."

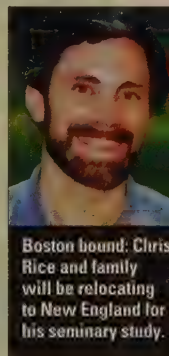
Reconcilers will soon publish its final edition. Also, the Antioch Community will disband and sell its six acres and two homes as families go their separate ways.

By Charlotte Graham.



cable companies, means PAX TV (the name has been changed from the original PAX Net to avoid confusion with the Internet) is available to nearly three-fourths of American TV viewers.

"Frankly, when I look at the deluge of trashy programming that's flooding the market today, I don't believe for a second we can fail," he writes in his new book, *Threading the Needle* (HarperBusiness).



MONEY

LifeLine Subscribers Get Busy Signal

LifeLine, a Christian-based telephone company that donates 10 percent of its customers' domestic long-distance bills to nonprofit organizations, has changed its check-distribution policy. Some of its members are unhappy with the new arrangement.

Since its inception in 1990, LifeLine had mailed monthly donation checks. But in July, the company announced a plan to send checks semiannually to subscribers earning under \$25 a month and quarterly payments to those earning between \$25 and \$500. Subscribers receiving under \$25 a month make up about half the participants, most of whom are drawn by LifeLine's biblical values commitment (CT, Oct. 4, 1994, p. 69).

Nonprofits earning more than \$500 a month in Life-

Line donations will continue receiving monthly payments.

Jeff Cato, LifeLine's director of marketing and sales, says the move reduces the heavy administrative costs associated with mailing 35,000 checks each month. "It wasn't very cost-efficient," Cato says. "We didn't think we were good stewards. We've even sent checks for 50 cents."

LifeLine's decision has its critics. Ron Corber heads Town and Country, a Christian performing arts center in Norwalk, Ohio, and has been a LifeLine subscriber since 1995. "They have not kept

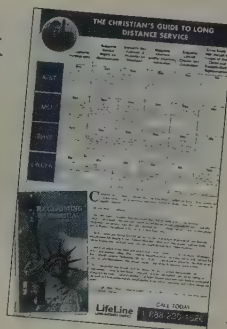
their word," he complains.

Corber, whose monthly check from LifeLine averages \$31, believes a shift to quarterly and semiannual payments will negatively affect smaller ministries. "It's not a lot of money," he says, "but it's still money we're counting on."

Cato acknowledges LifeLine has received complaints but rejects the notion the company has broken its promise. "It's not that the 10 percent isn't going to the min-

istry," he says. "It's just not as frequent." Headquartered in Oklahoma City, LifeLine provides phone service to 700,000 customers nationwide and has approximately 35,000 subscribing ministries. In early 1999, Cato says, the company plans to go public.

By Greg Clugston.



ENVIRONMENT

U.S. Churches Join Global Warming Debate

Environmental stewardship is an act of compassion toward the poor, say mainline Protestants and evangelicals, who are joining with other faith groups to reduce the effects of global warming.

In an uncommon display of unity, the religious groups are supporting the controversial Kyoto Protocol. Thirty-eight nations met in Japan last December, agreeing to reduce fossil fuel emissions by 7 percent of 1990 levels.

Clergy and lay leaders are gathering in Columbus, Ohio, October 25-26 for the Midwest Interfaith Climate Change conference to prepare a grassroots lobbying effort.

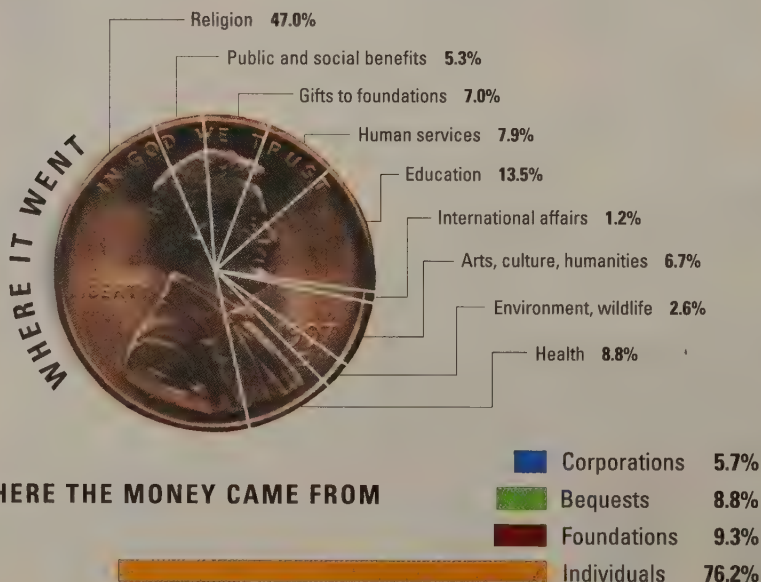
"Our main goal is to protect God's creation and the less powerful through climate change," says Jim Ball, director of the Evangelical Climate Campaign, which formed in January to push for adoption of the treaty. The poor in developing countries are most at risk from global warming, Ball says, because of decreased agricultural output and increased threat of disease. "Our role here is to speak about principles, not percentages," says Paul Gorman, executive director of the National Religious Partnership for the Environment, which includes the National Council of Churches (NCC), the U.S. Catholic Conference, the Coalition on Environmental and Jewish Life, and the Evangelical Environmental Network.

"When evangelical Christians take a position on the environment, it's noticed," says Gorman, referring to evangelicals' influential support of the Endangered Species Act in 1995.

By Christine J. Gardner.

Giving and Getting in 1997

Donations in 1997 rose 7.5% to \$143.5 billion. Individual gifts to religious causes were the most common.





Urban Kids Meet Wilderness and Christ

A wilderness camp in the Missouri Ozarks that offers a free week of fun—and evangelism—to inner-city kids who live in gang-infested neighborhoods has just finished its twenty-fifth year with a record number of attendees and converts. This summer at Camp Penuel near Ironton, Missouri, 90 miles southwest of Saint Louis, 2,403 kids ages 7 to 11 attended, with 1,180 of them making decisions to become Christians. The trip and stay in the cabins and dorms cost about \$200 per child, but the entire amount is subsidized by donors.

"Our whole mission is to go into gang areas, take kids to the camp, win them to Christ, and get them in church before they join gangs," says the camp's founder and director, Harry H. Douma, 65. Workers from neighborhood churches and

parachurch groups, particularly inner-city missions, select the participants. Three-fourths of the children receive follow-up ministry from churches and parachurch ministries once they return home.

The camp encompasses 650 acres. A second facility, Camp Penuel East, covers 100 acres and has been operating for five years at Eldred, Pennsylvania, in the Allegheny Mountains, serving 730 children annually. In the past quarter-century, 33,000 kids have been bused in from Saint Louis, Kansas City, Memphis, Chicago, Buffalo, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Rochester, and Washington, D.C., to the two camps.

The camps cost \$500,000 a year to operate, and a \$1 million building program is in progress.

By John W. Kennedy.

◆ County supervisors in San Francisco voted unanimously August 10 to expand the city's **domestic partners policy**, making it the only U.S. municipality to order private businesses to provide the same customer discounts offered to married couples. The passage of the ordinance came on the heels of the U.S. House voting 214 to 212 to prevent the city from obtaining federal housing funds because of an ordinance passed last year that forces businesses with city contracts to extend health benefits to partners of homosexuals.

◆ Roman Catholic Bible scholar **Raymond E. Brown**, 70, died August 8 after suffering a heart attack. Brown, the first Catholic to hold a tenured position at New York's Union Theological Seminary, wrote nearly 40 books, including *The Birth of the Messiah*, *The Death of the Messiah*, and landmark commentaries on the gospel and epistles of John. His 1996 book *An Introduction to the New Testament* responded to liberal theories emerging from the Jesus Seminar.

◆ Due to an outcry by nearly 100 religious schools, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) on August 11 voted to accommodate schools that had objected to playing **Sunday championship games**. In April, the NCAA had decided not to give colleges an option. That sparked protests from Campbell University, a Southern Baptist-related school in North Carolina, and Brigham Young, the Mormon institution in Utah. Dozens of other schools joined in complaints.

◆ Kay Ward, 56, a pastoral theology professor at Moravian Theological Seminary in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, on August 10 became the first woman elected as bishop among the 700,000 members of the worldwide **Moravian Church**. The Moravian Church of America has ordained women since 1975.

◆ Church music composer and choral director **Fred Bock**, 59, died of cardiac arrest on July 31. Bock, music director at First Presbyterian Church of Hollywood, California, at age 24 founded the music publishing division of Word, Inc. There are more than 400 compositions and musical arrangements by Bock in print.

CT

PERSECUTION

60,000 Churches Join Prayer Effort

More than 200 million Christians worldwide continue to face persecution for their faith, but the church's support of their plight is growing.

This year's International Day of Prayer (IDOP) for the Persecuted Church on November 15 (www.persecutedchurch.org) will involve prayer vigils and worship services in at least 60,000 U.S. churches, but that number could grow to as many as 100,000.

Internationally, a total of

180,000 churches from 115 countries are expected to participate. Two special worship services are scheduled in Rome and Barcelona, sponsored by the Italian and Spanish national fellowships of the World Evangelical Fellowship. In Brazil, which is home to nearly half of all evangelical churches in Latin American, local IDOP coordinators plan to reach 70,000 evangelical churches with the message of the persecuted.

"I'm amazed at how far the

awareness has come," says Steve Haas, president of Prayer for the Persecuted Church, the organization coordinating the day of prayer, who acknowledges that for many Christians, "These persecuted Christians don't show up on our personal radar screens." Haas believes Christians may have a limited understanding of today's typical believer, who is not a "white, Anglo male." Instead, she is "a dark-skinned female living in a restricted access world with difficulty finding biblical material."

As IDOP grows in popularity, Haas is concerned about the

potential for disunity among supporting organizations. He has worked to build bridges with both Christian and secular advocacy groups that promote human rights.

North American Christians may feel inadequate to pray for the needs of the persecuted, but Haas encourages individuals to pray for similar needs as they pray for their own families: food, shelter, and encouragement in their faith. He asks why Christians aren't "praying for the Sudanese mother who just lost her child?"

"It's the same Lord who's listening."

CT

Methodist Court Affirms Ban on Same-Sex Rites

Conservative United Methodists are relieved, but not overconfident, after the recent ruling by the church's highest court that a prohibition against ministers performing same-sex unions for homosexuals is binding church law.

"We cannot be too jubilant," says James V. Heidinger II, executive director of Good News, the oldest conservative coalition of United Methodists, based in Wilmore, Kentucky. "We know the fight is not over. But it is a bit of encouragement that we have at least clarified this."

After a special session in August in Dallas, the nine-member United Methodist Judicial Council ruled that a statement saying ministers "shall not" conduct homosexual unions is ecclesiastical law. Methodist delegates approved the statement at the 1996 general conference in Denver.

"Conduct in violation of this prohibition renders a pastor liable to a charge of disobedience to the order and discipline of the United Methodist Church," the decision states.

Heidinger expects more battles, though. The 8.5 million-member church is deeply split over the issue, he says, noting that 240 United Methodist ministers earlier this year signed statements saying they would conduct same-sex unions if asked.

"I'm going to guess someone will try ecclesiastical disobedience and push a test case," he says.

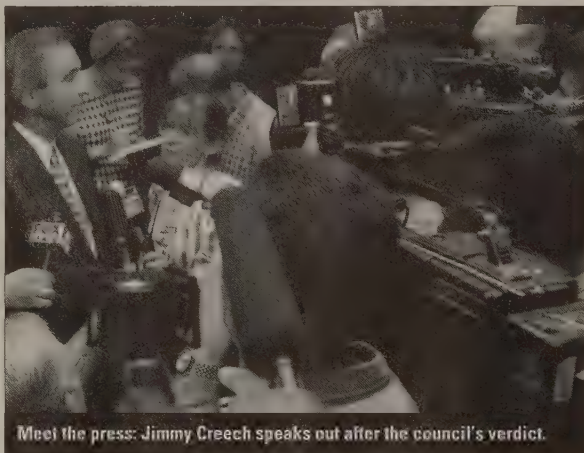
CREECH VERDICT FOLLOW-UP: Controversy over the ban erupted when Jimmy Creech, former pastor of the First United Church of Omaha, Nebraska, was narrowly acquitted in a church trial earlier this year after he defied the church's ban and conducted a same-sex ceremony (CT, April 27, 1998, p. 14).

Conservative groups roundly condemned the jury's verdict (CT, June 15, 1998, p. 15), and several Methodist bishops asked the Judicial Council to review the case.

During the council's hearing, Creech and his supporters made emotional pleas, arguing that the prohibition was merely

advisory. It appears in the Social Principles section of the Book of Discipline, the Methodist book of rules. And Creech said the Social Principles historically have been considered advisory.

Creech's attorney, Mike McLellan of Omaha, argued that enforcing the ban would mean church leaders would be forced to invade the privacy of individuals. "Don't allow the church to be drawn into a witch-hunt over this," McLellan said.



Meet the press: Jimmy Creech speaks out after the council's verdict.

Speaking to council members, Bishops Bruce Blake of Oklahoma City and Dan Solomon of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, argued that if the edict were ruled "advisory," it would call into question the entire disciplinary system of the nation's second-largest Protestant group.

"This embraces the very integrity of the denomination," Blake says.

"Integrity means following a code. The strength of the United Methodist Church is that we have a code that binds us together." Blake and Solomon represented the South Central Jurisdiction College of Bishops, which had requested the ruling.

In pondering its ruling, council members gave much weight to the "shall not" language of the same-sex union ban. Also, they cited the democratic nature of the general conference to make laws. They declared the statement is clearly prohibitory "notwithstanding its placement" in the Social Principles.

WARNING TO VIOLATORS: The ruling puts pressure on church liberals, such as Bishop Melvin Talbert of San Francis-

co. He has not disciplined ministers in the California-Nevada conference who have conducted same-sex unions.

Talbert says he is "deeply saddened" by the ruling, but he will abide by the discipline and action of the Judicial Council. No action will be taken against ministers who have performed same-sex ceremonies in the past, Talbert notes.

Creech is urging ministers to defy the ruling. "The church of John Wesley, founded upon principles of social justice and piety, will now be prosecuting pastors for praying God's blessing upon same-sex couples who make covenants of love and fidelity," Creech says. He is hoping those who disagree with the prohibition will organize to change it at the next general conference in 2000.

SECOND-CLASS STATUS?

Homosexual-rights activists are discouraged by the ruling. "This is a sad day for United Methodism," says Mark Bowman of Chicago, director of a nationwide Reconciling Churches program for 150 congregations that intentionally reach out to homosexuals.

"Lesbian and gay persons continue to be second-class members of United Methodist churches," Bowman says. "They can sit in the pew and give their money, but their loving relationships cannot be recognized."

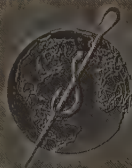
But United Methodist bishops who backed the ruling say it does not mean homosexuals are not welcome. The ruling simply proclaims the validity of a church statement adopted by the general conference, the church's highest legislative body, they say.

Another advocate for homosexual rights, Kathryn Johnson of Washington, D.C., president of the Methodist Federation for Social Concerns, says the church is regressing.

"At a time in history when gay and lesbian persons are gaining . . . greater acceptance in society, it is tragic that the United Methodist Church would be a place where they cannot experience full acceptance."

Conservatives hope the decision signals a trend in the denomination. "This issue has been debated a long time, and this ruling makes it unquestionably clear what the position of the church is," says Dean Posey, a United Methodist pastor in Bedford, Texas.

By Jim Jones in Dallas.



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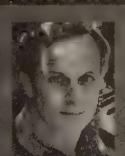
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Growing smaller: Bill McCartney addressed thinner, but more racially diverse, crowds in 1998.

More PK Downsizing

McCartney admits staff morale problem.

In a major ministry realignment, Promise Keepers (PK) will trim its full-time staff by 28 percent, from 250 to 180, as of October 31.

Last fall, the men's movement, which is now eight years old, announced plans for a radical transition from fee-based to donation-based operations along with a shift in emphasis from emotionally charged stadium events to working in closer partnership with denominations, local churches, and grassroots networks.

"It's a case of tapering and posturing ourselves so that we can be poised to move quickly and do what we were called to do," PK founder Bill McCartney told CT. "As we see more clearly our vision, we don't think we need as many staff to pull it off."

That vision includes helping spark similar movements abroad, staging a simultaneous gathering at state capitol buildings on January 1, 2000, and continuing to promote racial reconciliation.

McCartney, who earlier served as chief executive officer of the Denver-based ministry, is now overseeing three divisions as president and founder. Randy Phillips has moved from president to the new position of vice president for global ministries, and Tom Fortson from chief operating officer to executive vice president of administration and operations. Raleigh Washington is now vice president of reconciliation.

ROLLER COASTER EMPLOYMENT:

Following PK's climactic Stand in the Gap rally in Washington, D.C., one year ago (CT, Nov. 17, 1997, p. 62), McCartney promised his staff they would stay together through the 1998 conference season. In February, McCartney announced that all 345 workers would be laid off on March 31 unless donations made up for a shortfall caused by eliminating the conference fees (CT, April 6, 1998, p. 18). The layoff came, but most of the workers returned two weeks later as \$4 million in contributions gushed into the ministry (CT, May 18, 1998, p. 29). Through attrition the staff decreased to its current total of about 250.

Fortson says that last fall PK employees were told to expect downsizing, though the exact number of jobs had not been determined.

"We have identified core positions that we need for what we call 'Team 2000,'" Fortson says. "We will give employees here at Promise Keepers the opportunity to interview for those positions."

Some PK observers think the organization may have fulfilled its purpose as a catalyst for bringing men back into their families and their churches and should avoid the temptation of self-perpetuation.

Ken Abraham, author of *Who Are the Promise Keepers?* (Doubleday, 1997), says

he looked for such a temptation in researching his book but could not find it. "I found a hands-off attitude [within PK], saying: 'Hey, whatever the Lord wants us to do here, that's what we want to do.' I still hear that from many who signed on with Promise Keepers: 'This is where I'm going to serve for the next five, ten years.' Now suddenly they're out of work."

McCartney concedes that the changes will not be easy. "Morale is kind of up one day and down the next," he says. "But I think God's going to do this in a way in which people will feel like they've heard from God and are doing what they're supposed to be doing."

RALLY ATTENDANCE DIPS: Attendance is down at stadium events this year despite—or perhaps because of—elimination of fees, an attempt to encourage men to invite their non-Christian friends. Through 14 of the 19 scheduled conferences, half of the events have paid for themselves, but PK says it will meet its \$48 million budget through additional income from resource sales, corporate sponsorships, and individual donations. Last year's budget, supporting 452 workers, amounted to \$117 million. "Our lifeblood is the month-to-month gifts," says PK spokesperson Steve Chavis.

Abraham thinks that making the events free has not had its desired effect. "There is a perceived value when guys were paying \$60 to go to an event; that's not there when you take away that fee," he says. "And for those who say, 'Well, you were excluding certain parts of society,' I was amazed at how many free admissions PK used to provide."

This year, PK has attracted a different slice of the demographic pie. First-time attendees are more ethnically diverse, have lower incomes, and are slightly younger, Chavis says. Through the mid-August conference in Houston, 5,707 men have made decisions to become Christians.

PK will continue holding conferences, but they will be smaller and based on a Billy Graham crusade model that requires an invitation from a local network of churches that do most of the groundwork.

"In the past, convention and visitors bureaus may have been the leaders in soliciting a PK conference and church unity might have been a component of that presentation," Chavis says. "We'd like to flip that around and see churches leading the charge."

Some of those invitations may come from overseas. PK has launched national organizations in Australia, Canada, Germany, New Zealand, South Africa, and

the United Kingdom (CT, June 16, 1997, p. 58).

In June, weekend conferences in Europe drew mostly favorable national media attention. In Denmark, 500 men attended what organizers believed to be the largest gathering of Christian men in the country's history. Some 1,800 men met in Bern, Switzerland. Many came from other countries, including the Czech Republic. About 250 men gathered in Dijon, France.

Smaller scale activities, including training, have begun in Austria, Brazil, Costa Rica, Ghana, Kenya, Mexico, Peru, Sweden, and Zimbabwe.

FUTURE EVENTS: The organization has also formed strategic alliances with groups such as Campus Crusade for Christ and Christianity Today, Inc., providing a ready-made network of contacts and support.

But PK still has a penchant for high-profile events such as Stand in the Gap, possibly the largest religious gathering in U.S. history. At stadium events this year, participants are being recruited for a turn-of-the-millennium gathering of families at state capitols across the country. Some 90 percent of conference attendees say they will show up January 1, 2000, and most promise to invite 10 other families.

Racial reconciliation remains high on the agenda. Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen, resident scholar at the Center for Christian Women in Leadership at Eastern College in Saint Davids, Pennsylvania, says, "I give them credit for doing better than just about any other evangelical organization in keeping [reconciliation] front and center and not changing their message when they go to the South—simply saying: 'God wants this, get used to it.'"

But she wishes the message on gender reconciliation would be equally as clear. "They would never dream of trying to pull off racial reconciliation by having only white males speak for them," she says. "But they think they can advance a new model of gender reconciliation without any input from women. I see it as being inconsistent."

Fortson says that no women participate in top-level strategizing, but PK has female input from many sources, including his administrative assistant.

Van Leeuwen thinks Promise Keepers is fulfilling a continuing need. "The kind of questions that helped to bring about organizations like this still haven't been resolved," she says. "Men are still saying, 'What does it mean to be masculine in a postfeminist, postindustrial world?'"

By Art Moore.

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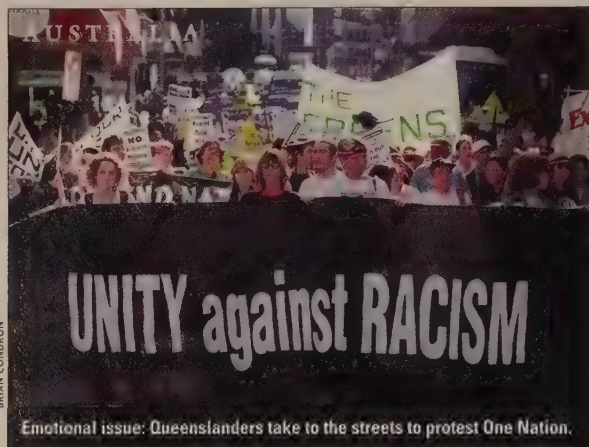
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Emotional issue: Queenslanders take to the streets to protest One Nation.

Party Calls for Immigration Cuts

Church and religious leaders are divided over the rapid rise of a right-wing political party that is inflaming tensions over racial issues.

Australians go to the polls October 3 in a sharply contested federal election in which the controversial One Nation party may gain enough seats to wield influence in Parliament.

One Nation's founder, Pauline Hanson, an outspoken former fish-and-chip shop owner, advocates abolition of the government's policies favoring multiculturalism. Hanson also wants severe cutbacks in immigration.

One Nation was widely assumed to be just another minority group with extremist views and little influence, until June elections in Queensland. The results shocked Australia: One Nation gained 23 percent of the vote and may now gain 10 to 15 percent nationally.

Bill Feldman, the leader of One Nation in Queensland, openly professes to be a born-again Christian.

Feldman's regional success is due partly to the Christian vote. Anglican minister Alan Colyer says, "None of the other candidates had any Christian conscience or morality about them, so I voted for somebody who I knew was prayerful and biblical." Feldman says his

party wants equality for all, regardless of color, but squadrons of police are assigned to protect One Nation's Hanson from antiracism demonstrators.

Asian tourism to Australia has fallen 23 percent since May 1997, and tourism industry leaders blame Hanson's comments that Australia is "in danger of being swamped by Asians."

A One Nation branch president, Brendan Bogle, recently resigned, claiming One Nation has been infiltrated by the Confederate Action Party, which he says advocates racial segregation.

Some Australians fear that One Nation aims to revive the White Australia Policy, which from 1901 to the 1960s prohibited non-Caucasian immigration. But Feldman says the immigration policy is not about race but about economics. Once high unemployment figures drop, Feldman says, "We as a country with so much to offer can open up our borders again and be generous."

In late August, church, welfare, business, and union leaders issued a joint statement saying that One Nation's policies "threaten both our internal cohesion and our international reputation."

By Belinda Pollard in Brisbane.

UZBEKISTAN

Religion Law Jeopardizes Evangelism

Despite provisions for religious freedom in the Uzbekistan constitution, a harsh new law bans all religious activities not certified by the government and threatens the closure of small churches.

Under the new legislation, it is illegal for anyone in Uzbekistan—except government-certified clergy—to talk about religion. Private religious instruction, including Sunday school, home Bible studies, and summer camp, is also formally banned. Any church with fewer than 100 members must close its doors and stop all activities.

The Ministry of Justice required churches and religious organizations to register formally by August 15. Church leaders who failed to comply could be subject to criminal charges, including heavy fines, jail sentences, and eventual confiscation of church property.

Uzbekistan's 15,000 Protestants in a nation of 20 mil-

lion people are trying their best to meet the state's stringent legal requirements. But they are also preparing to campaign vigorously against the inevitable closure of most, if not all, of their churches.

"The government has told us repeatedly to stop evangelism to the local, indigenous Muslim people," one church leader points out. "Somehow, Muslim extremist leaders have convinced our government that Uzbek converts to Christianity are a problem, and that this must be stopped." (The country is about 65 percent Muslim.) For this reason, most of the small Uzbek convert fellowships meeting quietly in the country have not even attempted to register.

"This law is very discriminatory," one pastor concludes. "I think we'll have a hard time."

By Barbara G. Baker, Compass Direct.

In Brief

◆ **The Cambodian government** has granted the first license to a Christian radio station in the country, which is 95 percent Buddhist. Far East Broadcasting Company will begin local programs at Christmas.

◆ **More than 8,000 people in Burundi** converted to Christianity during a five-day crusade in the capital city of Bujumbura, conducted by San Antonio evangelist Sammy Tippit. In all, 95,000 people attended the meetings, which concluded August 2. It marked the first crusade in the city in a decade.

◆ **Lars Dunberg** has resigned as international president of **International Bible Society (IBS)**. Dunberg had earlier been international president of Living Bibles International, which merged with IBS in 1992.

◆ **Sidney DeWaal**, president of Jerusalem University College, has been elected chancellor of the **International Council for Higher Education**, a new Zurich-based organization geared to "pursuing excellence in academic programs and promoting sustainable models of higher education, particularly in countries where educational opportunities are restricted or are in need of enhancement." Seventeen delegates from theological institutions around the world held an inaugural meeting in Switzerland.

CT

Signs of Canaanite Jerusalem Found

Archaeologists are revising their understanding of the earliest days of the city of Jerusalem following two seasons of excavations in an area surrounding the spring of Gihon.

The spring at the foot of the hill crowned by the Temple Mount is one of the few water sources in the Judean Hills. Archaeologist Roni Reich has found evidence, mostly from Canaanite pottery, that as early as 1800 B.C. Canaanite residents dug a tunnel inside the hill to give access to the spring.

The new information adds

interesting detail but ultimately fails to clarify the biblical account of David's conquest of Jerusalem approximately 800 years later. "It just means the water systems of ancient Jerusalem are much earlier than people thought and were not first created by the ancient Israelites but simply reused from Canaanite times," says archaeologist William Dever of the University of Arizona.

According to 2 Samuel 5:8, David challenged his soldiers to enter Jebusite Jerusalem through the *tsinnor*, a



Ancient discoveries: Silwan village is located in the city of David area.

word that occurs only once in the Bible. In modern Hebrew, it is translated as a plumbing conduit.

The lack of clear archaeological evidence to the time of David and Saul has led some archaeologists to question biblical accounts.

Earlier in the summer, Tel Aviv University archaeologists

directors of a new excavation at Megiddo where they contend the construction traditionally attributed to Solomon was actually done later by King Ahab. Other archaeologists disagree, saying there is a lack of excavation opportunities in politically sensitive areas of Jerusalem.

By Gordon Govier.

EGYPT

New Coptic Church Forcibly Closed

Three weeks after the new Church of Saint Bishoi opened its doors to the Coptic Orthodox faithful in Cairo's poor district of Tora, a large security contingent forcibly closed it.

Since the surprise July 15 closure, the church's doors and windows have been sealed with wax, and a police car remains stationed in front, preventing anyone from entering. The police raid in Cairo's southern district of Tora near Maadi was led by officers from several security forces.

The reason for closing the church, a security forces spokesperson said, was that it had been built without an official permit. Egyptian law requires all congregations to obtain official permits to build new churches or repair existing ones, a process that has often taken as long as 10 years. Built on a 700-square-meter plot donated by local Christians, the church is in a rapidly expanding quarter of the city east of the Helwan-Cairo metro line.

Local Christians said they asked their bishop for a church

in the Tora district because the nearest church was five kilometers away; transportation was difficult and expensive.

The local Coptic Orthodox prelate, Bishop Daniel, never applied for a church permit when the construction began four years ago. Since a permit was obtained in 1994 to build a kindergarten on the site, no problems occurred with the security police or the local population. According to Ramzy Zaklama, a prominent Coptic leader in Egypt and member of the Supreme Board of the Wafdi party, Bishop Daniel could never have built the church if he had asked for a permit.

But Nabil Osman, head of the Egyptian State Information Service, claimed that since Hosni Mubarak became president in 1981, "not one single request for building a church has been refused."

Yet for Zaklama, the whole government procedure takes "far too much time," making it possible for extremist Muslim groups to cause difficulties and even block building procedures.

Compass Direct News Service.

C. S. LEWIS

Birthday Bash Draws Crowd

The one-hundredth anniversary of the birth of C. S. Lewis drew more than 800 participants to Oxbridge '98, the largest gathering ever of the C. S. Lewis Summer Institute in England.

With the theme "Loose in the Fire," academics and professionals representing evangelical, Catholic, and Orthodox traditions gathered July 19 to August 1 on the campuses of Oxford and Cambridge Universities to discuss the impact of Lewis on such diverse topics as health care, the performing arts, public policy, and the



ethics of human cloning. Presenters included Tony Campolo, Charles Colson, Madeleine L'Engle, George Marsden, Dallas Willard, and Philip Yancey. While at Oxford, the conference convened at the Sheldonian, the Christopher Wren-designed lecture hall where Lewis, then an atheist undergraduate, gave his first public address.

"It was in every sense an historic convocation," says C. S. Lewis Foundation president Stan Mattson.

Lewis's popularity persists. In honor of his birth, the Oxford Royal mail issued a postage stamp (above) based on Lewis's *Chronicles of Narnia* stories. Thirty-five years after his death, Lewis's books continue to sell more than 1.5 million copies each year.

By Christine J. Gardner.



Enduring legacy: Lamb's Players of San Diego perform a Lewis work at Oxbridge '98.

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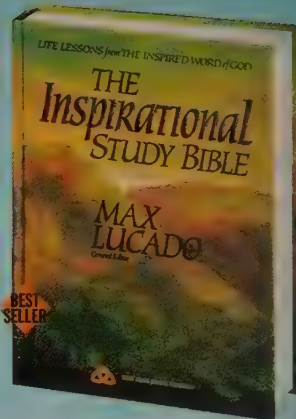
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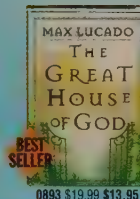


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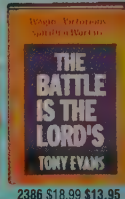
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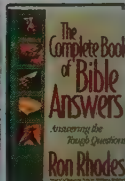
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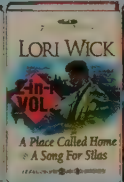
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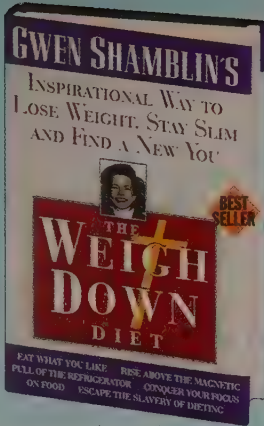
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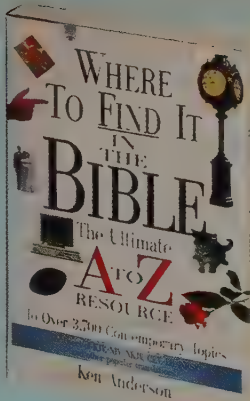
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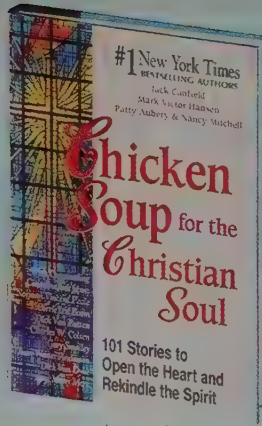
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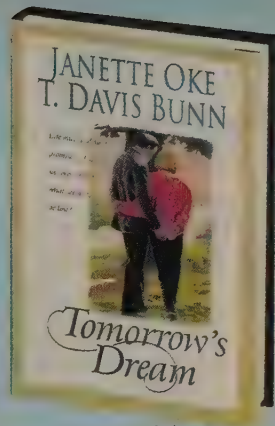
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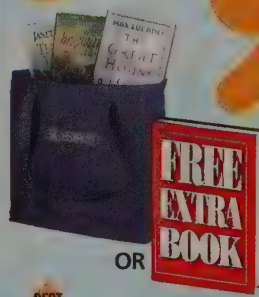
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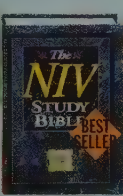
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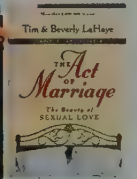
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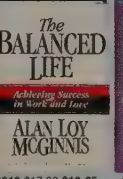
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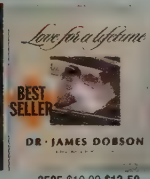
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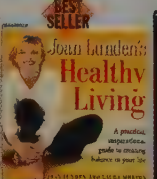
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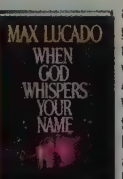
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Religious Persecution Bill Encounters Stiff Resistance

The International Religious Freedom Act, introduced by Sen. Don Nickles (R-Okla.), lingered near extinction as lawmakers returned last month after their summer recess.

Supporters claim that new political strategies would revive the bill to passage, while opponents declare it moribund. "The reports avidly peddled by the administration that the bill is dead are overstated," says Hudson Institute's Michael Horowitz, a key figure in the campaign against religious persecution.

The Nickles bill was introduced in March (CT, May 18, 1998, p. 20) after the U.S. House had already considered passage of the Freedom from Religious Persecution Act, commonly known as the Wolf-Specter bill after its cosponsors Rep. Frank Wolf (R.-Va.) and Sen. Arlen Specter (R.-Penn.). There had been talk of a possible merger of the two pieces of legislation (CT, Sept. 7, 1998, p. 27).

According to Senate staffers working for the Senate bill, Nickles believed that the Wolf-Specter bill's provisions for automatic sanctions against the worst persecuting countries would lead to fruitless confrontations, negative fallout on indigenous Christians and missionaries, and an America isolated from its allies. He also figured the Senate would never pass the Wolf-Specter bill.

Supporters of Wolf-Specter asserted that Nickles's alternative allowed the White House the option of doing very little in the face of religious persecution. Under the Nickles bill, the President could do as little as sending a private protest to the persecuting government.

Mistrust of the White House fueled intense resistance to watering down the sanction provisions against religious persecutors.

POORLY WRITTEN? The debate over the religious persecution bills reflects ongoing tensions between economic conservatives who favor greater free trade and social conservatives who press for better protection for global religious freedoms. Some conservative Christian leaders lament that elected officials are still caught up in a Cold War

orientation, preoccupied with the military, atomic weapons, and terrorism, not religious freedom. Consequently, bills are not well crafted, nor persuasively presented. Drafters of the Nickles bill, who criticize the Wolf-Specter bill as poorly written, admit that there has not been a vigorous debate on the floor of Congress on religious persecution.

Some evangelical leaders have also felt abandoned by otherwise supportive business leaders who put profits ahead of

tional confrontation, Grams's chief of staff expressed her concerns over what the senator perceived as Bauer's and Colson's hardball tactics. And the lines dividing the parties have since hardened.

TRUCE DECLARED: Supporters of the Wolf-Specter bill and supporters of the Nickles bill decided that they should join forces in the uncertain atmosphere. Horowitz, who works closely with Wolf, declared a truce. "It is a shame that matters hadn't been resolved earlier, but they are on the road to resolution. The strategic objective has always been to make sure that religious persecution can't be swept aside." In a July meeting with Colson, GOP Senate leader Trent Lott committed to bring the issue to a vote. But supporters also started to lay the groundwork for alternative approaches, like tacking a religious persecution bill onto a House appropriations bill.

The White House has strongly opposed any type of bill against religious persecution. At first, presidential opposition centered on the automatic sanctions of the Wolf-Specter bill. Later, according to a source close to the congressional Republican leadership, the administration shifted its most intense opposition to the Nickles bill requirement that there be an annual report on countries

that discriminate against or persecute religious people. In discussions with Congress, administration officials have decried "naming names" on "a bad boy list."

Through early September, supporters of the two bills still disagreed on how to counter the administration. Steve Moffitt, assistant to Nickles, worries that "a lot of groups didn't throw their weight to the bill until August." Wolf-Specter supporters such as Focus on the Family complained that they had been kept in the dark by Nickles.

According to Senate staffers, supporters of the Nickles bill want to force the fight public so that opponents would be seen also as opponents of helping the persecuted. Otherwise, the bill may never be voted on by the full Senate before Congress's early October adjournment but be dragged out of view and killed. The bottom line for evangelicals, says Richard Cizik of the National Association of Evangelicals, is "We want something passed, not just a vote."

By Tony Carnes.



Silent protest: Pakistani Christian children in May protest the Muslim-majority country's severe blasphemy law, which has been used against church leaders.

morality. USA Engage, a business coalition of big exporters, has footed the expenses for lobbying against the religious persecution acts, including financing trips of friendly overseas religious leaders. The National Foreign Trade Council paid for a National Council of Churches delegation of Christian leaders from Pakistan, Lebanon, and Indonesia to come testify against the Wolf-Specter bill.

In July, free-trade Republican Senators Rod Grams of Minnesota and Chuck Hagel of Nebraska blocked a vote on the Nickles bill. Supporters of the Nickles bill were angered by Grams's opposition opinion piece in a Saint Paul newspaper and by what they perceived as stall tactics.

Although Grams has been supportive of evangelical concerns in other matters, Charles Colson of Prison Fellowship openly criticized him on a Focus on the Family broadcast, and Gary Bauer of the Family Research Council sent out critical mailings.

This summer, supporters of the religious persecution act met with Grams and his staff to try to patch matters up. In an emo-

Religious Liberty Bill Stalls

Although the Religious Liberty Protection Act (RLPA) was created to withstand a constitutional challenge such as the one that knocked down the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) last year, a widening rift between social conservatives may ensure the bill never makes it onto the law books.

At issue is RLPA's use of the government's commerce and spending powers to protect religious freedom (CT, Aug. 10, 1998, p. 15).

"[It is] both constitutionally dangerous and religiously offensive to me to treat the worship of God as a commercial transaction," says Mike Farris, president of the Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA), a strong critic of RLPA. Farris calls religious conservatives' support of the bill "hypocrisy," because he believes the bill promotes an expanded government. "To me, it's an end-justifies-the-means philosophy at its worst," he says.

Under pressure from HSLDA and its supporters, Rep. Charles Canady (R-Fla.), House leader of the stalled bill, withdrew the inclusion of interstate commerce

provisions in August in an attempt to broaden congressional support. He says he was disappointed to see the provision removed, because it expanded the bill's scope. The Senate version maintains the original wording.

The House version still relies on congressional spending powers, which are used in other legislation to protect religious freedom. The Equal Access Act of 1984 protects student religious groups because public schools receive federal funds.

Steve McFarland, director of the Center for Law and Religious Freedom, says the bill has been "crippled" by Farris's efforts: "The far Right has done a big favor for the far Left. It's a real irony." The homosexual lobby, which is concerned about religious exemptions to antidiscrimination laws, will be the largest beneficiary, McFarland says.

More than 80 organizations continue to support RLPA, including the American Civil Liberties Union, National Association of Evangelicals, the Christian Legal Society, Focus on the Family, and the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

By Christine J. Gardner.

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The Signs of the Times: Women and the Future of the Family in a Postmodern World

ELIZABETH FOX-GENOVESE
Scholar and Historian,
Emory University

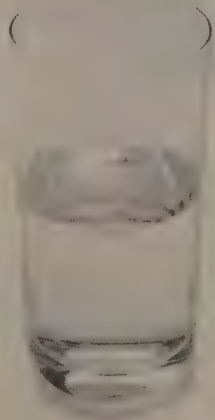
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Christian Science Aims to Shine Tarnished Image

After two decades of withering battles over money, medicine, and media, the First Church of Christ, Scientist, the "mother church" of the Christian Science movement, is angling for new ways to promote its theology and controversial healing practices.

During the past 20 years, the group has been embroiled in several high-profile cases in which members were prosecuted for withholding medical treatment from children who later died (CT, Oct. 4, 1993, p. 53). These cases were generally reversed on appeal, and the group has waged a successful fight to strengthen legislative protections for Christian Science parents. A foray into mass media—buying a television station in Boston, financing a cable TV news network, and launching a mass-market monthly magazine—resulted in hundreds of millions of dollars in losses and a need for the church to borrow from its pension-fund reserves (CT, April 26, 1993, p. 54). In July, the group announced those debts had been repaid. The church also reported \$302 million in cash on hand, up \$51 million from the year before.

Christian Science is gaining fresh exposure thanks to the aggressive marketing of *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, the 132-year-old seminal work by the movement's founder, Mary Baker Eddy. The textbook has sold more than 100,000 copies annually over the past five years, with a 10 percent gain in sales reported for 1997. According to Eddy's teaching, God is "all-in-all." *Science and Health* states: "The only reality of sin, sickness, or death is the awful fact that unrealities seem real to human, erring belief, until God strips off their disguise. They are not true because they are not of God."

INTEREST IN HEALING: In August, 1,800 college students gathered in Boston for a conference on spiritual healing. Tony Lobl, a spokesperson for the church, says the conference attracted many nonmembers who were introduced to the distinct beliefs of Christian Science and its "scientific system of divine heal-

ing" in which disease is considered merely a "mental concept."

In addition, Virginia Harris, a Christian Science practitioner who chairs the group's board of directors, says interest from clergy and medical doctors in Eddy's book has accelerated as medical researchers have explored the role of prayer and religious devotion in connection with recovery from illness (CT, Jan. 6, 1997, p. 20).

"Nary a day goes by that I don't hear from a minister or a doctor that says they're using this book," she told CT.

The church's "reading rooms" and lec-

(www.christianscience.org), the Christian Science Endtime Center (www.endtime.org) in Denver, and the Aequus Institute in Claremont, California, have published tracts decrying the group's methods and beliefs.

Some dissidents assert that the church has ignored Eddy's church manual directing the board of directors to disband following her death (in 1910) and of minimizing Eddy's "prophetic" role in bringing forth Christian Science. They also blast the group for closing churches and allowing a significant decline in the number of Christian Science practitioners.

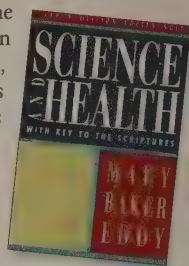
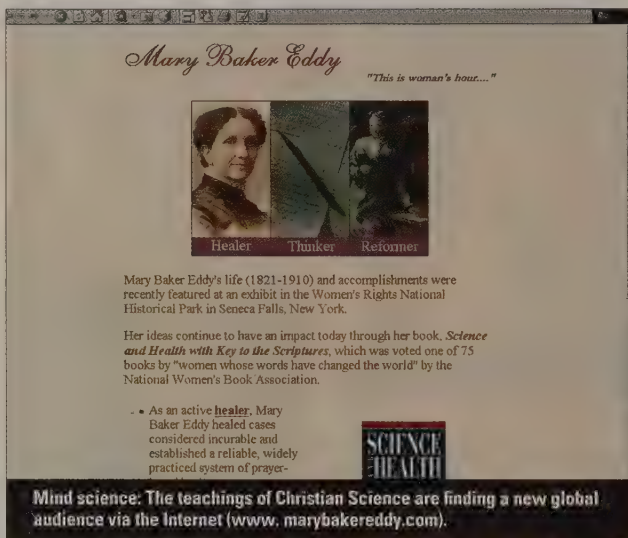
Paul Carden, a third-generation descendant of Christian Scientists and now executive director of the Centers for Apologetics Research (CAR) in San Juan Capistrano, California, thinks dissidents may inhibit some of the "Mother Church's" growth: "Because of the Internet, [the dissidents] pose a significant if not overwhelming threat. We know how hard the [Boston] church has fought to keep its followers from anything unauthorized, but the Internet age has rendered them all but powerless to prevent seekers from encountering every variety of Christian Science."

A potential renaissance of the movement gives Carden pause. "Time will tell how extensively and to what degree it will succeed in revitalizing the movement," Carden says. "It will to whatever degree multiply the confusion in our culture regarding who Jesus is and what he came to do for us."

Carden says that along with the upswing in the church's promotion of its beliefs, it is also taking a less rigid viewpoint on doctrine. A recent church statement indicated that Christian Science members are not to be ostracized for seeking medical attention.

But Carden adds, "Because the Mother Church presents such a closed system and the American religious consumer is so accustomed to choice, this may be one of the biggest factors working against the revitalization of the church proper."

By Mark A. Kellner.

tures have been traditional ways of reaching out to individuals. But the Christian Science church continues to use mass media as a way to leverage its public visibility from its 90-year-old newspaper, the *Christian Science Monitor*, to its two-year-old World Wide Web site (www.tfccs.org), which offers a complete church directory.

The church's weekly radio and cable television programs focus on exposing listeners to Eddy's writings paired with Scripture. An estimated 1 million people tune in weekly. And in a fresh bid for new members, the church sponsors discussions about *Science and Health* in bookstores across the country, including Barnes & Noble and Borders.

DISSIDENT VOICES: In turn, the movement's new visibility has stimulated critics of Christian Science from within the movement. Healing Unlimited in Seattle

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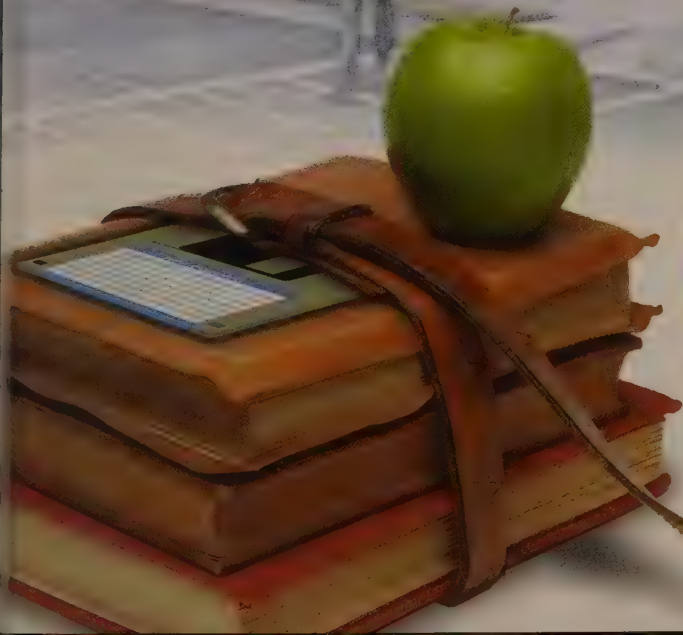
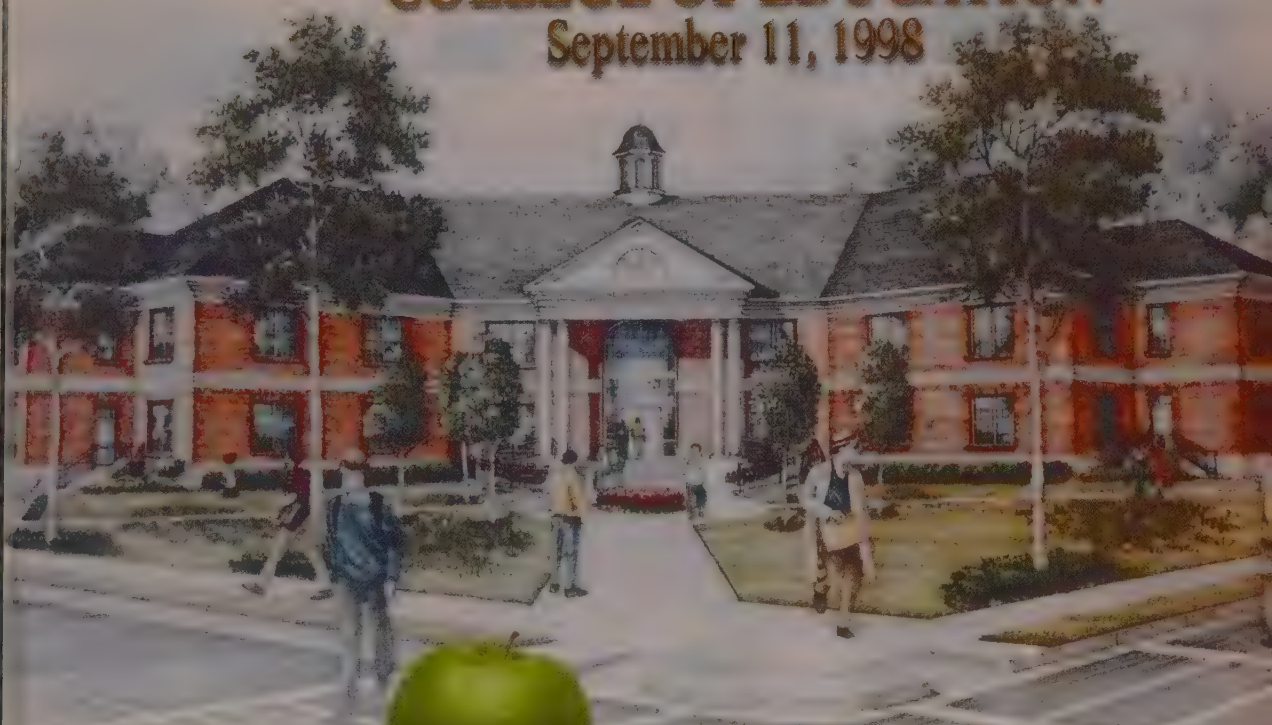
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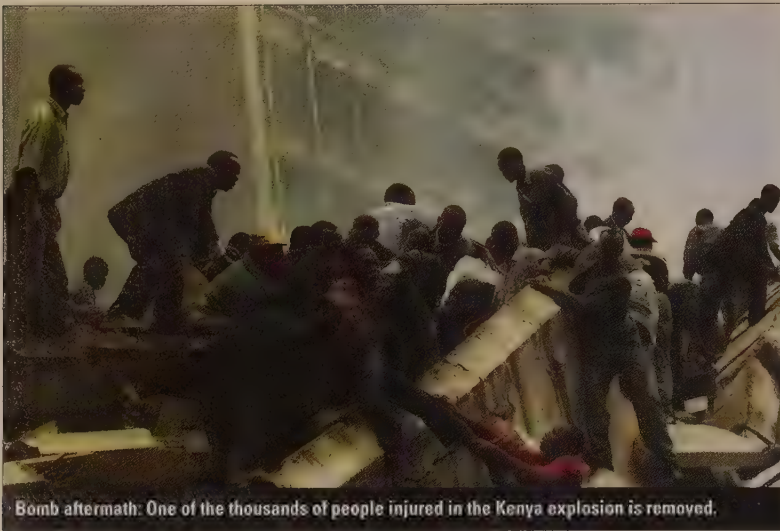
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Bomb aftermath: One of the thousands of people injured in the Kenya explosion is removed.

After Terrorist Bombings, Christians Aid Victims

Muslim-Christian tensions remain high.

Enoch Oroo's life hung by a thread as he arrived at the emergency ward in Kenyatta National Hospital on August 7, shortly after terrorists bombed the U.S. embassy in Nairobi, Kenya.

Oroo, 22, had survived but was gravely injured. The bombing claimed 257 lives, among them a dozen American nationals working at the embassy. More than 5,000, mostly civilians, were wounded. A simultaneous terrorist bomb in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania, killed 10.

"As the team of doctors and nurses worked trying to save my life," he recalls from his hospital bed, "I heard the doctor tell the nurse, 'This one is not going to survive.' The nurse later repeated that to another, [but] I responded, 'Just do your best. God is great.'"

On the day of the bombing, Oroo was riding on a bus near the U.S. embassy and witnessed an unforgettable scene of screams, blood, and death.

"Some people were calling their mothers or fathers, but I cried to God," says Oroo. The passenger seated next to him on the bus died instantly. The bus caught fire, and several riders perished in the flames. Oroo sustained multiple injuries.

Oroo admits that for the past three years he had turned away from his childhood Christian faith, even though he

says he never forsook God completely. "My life was not stronger than those who died. It was a miracle I survived. I immediately knew God had spared me."

Oroo's faith in God has been revitalized and, much to his surprise, as he recovers he finds himself sharing the gospel with fellow hospital patients and staff.

SURVIVAL STORIES: Kenyatta's Ward 7A is one of dozens of hospital wards throughout Kenya with people recovering from the blast. Many show a remarkable determination to move on with their lives without bitterness.

During an interview with CT from her Kenyatta Hospital bed, Grace Kiuna, a secretary whose collapsed office building was next to the embassy, remembers hearing gunshots and the sound of a grenade.

"At first, I was thinking it was all bullets, then I ducked under the table not knowing I had been badly injured," she says. "An office colleague who was not injured helped me to run down staircases for ten floors as I constantly prayed: *Please, God, don't take me away, you have given me children and I have a lot to do.*"

Kiuna, who had been an orphan herself, cares for foster children belonging to her deceased sister. The bomb blast severely scarred Kiuna's face and upper body.

Many survivors, including Oroo and Ki-

una, suffered eye and facial injuries from the bombing. The main blast that brought down one building next to the embassy had been preceded by gunfire, which drew people to windows. Doctors say 40 of the bombing victims are blind in both eyes and another 50 have lost all vision in one eye.

Douglas Sigalo no longer has the use of one eye and has lost significant vision in the other. "The doctor tells me the retina is badly damaged," says Sigalo, who remains optimistic. "The doctors are doing their best." The 27-year-old father may never see again, but that has not altered his view that God spared his life for a purpose. "I feel ready to serve God in a big way when I get out of here," says Sigalo, a marketing manager with Saint Paul's Publishers. He also writes for African magazines and sings in his church choir. "Even if I don't see again, I desire to learn to play the guitar and the kayamba and sing for the Lord. Of course, I will continue to write somehow. My wife can scribble and edit for me."

LONG-TERM IMPACT: Christians make up 80 percent of the 28.3 million people of Kenya, making it one of the most thoroughly Christian nations in Africa. There are more than 40,000 congregations, and evangelicals represent at least one-third of the populace.

In the aftermath of the bombing, Christian ministries quickly moved alongside government and relief agencies in helping victims and their families cope. The Salvation Army, which runs four schools for the blind in Kenya and has programs for the physically handicapped, is assessing the vision needs of the injured.

In addition to injuries, many patients and thousands of other Kenyans, especially those who witnessed the event, are still emotionally traumatized. For the first weeks after the bombing, church leaders found themselves working long hours counseling families, burying the dead, and visiting victims in recovery.

Kenyan leaders say that the attack dealt a stunning blow to the nation's sense of well-being and has been described in the media as "the day the Devil visited Kenya." Hundreds are suffering from severe to moderate traumatic stress disorders, according to Kenyatta Hospital nurse counselor Rhoda Mburu. "Many bomb victims who flocked to the hospital's free trauma counseling services center are still experiencing nightmares."

Christian therapist professor David Ndeti, head of the psychiatric department at Kenyatta, believes the long-term traumatic consequences could rival those

of the 1994 Rwandan genocide (CT, Feb. 6, 1995, p. 52).

Ndeti says, "Of those survivors or eye-witnesses who actually brushed shoulders with death or were physically present in that potentially deadly situation of the bomb blast, whether they received injuries or not, 50 to 80 percent will likely develop posttraumatic stress disorders."

Mburu says some victims wake up at night screaming "Fire!" Some cannot turn off lights at night to sleep. Others are too fearful to re-enter Nairobi. Some face intense feelings of "survivor guilt," which may occur when a person witnesses someone else killed.

At the All Saints Cathedral, Oasis Counseling Services is training volunteer counselors and conducting daily counseling sessions for bomb victims.

Apart from comforting the bereaved and preaching hope to the survivors, church leaders have initiated fundraising efforts to help with burial expenses.

Pastor Boniface Adoyo says his Nairobi Pentecostal Church collected money to be pooled in the National Bomb Victims Fund. Adoyo's church has an ongoing visitation ministry. The benevolence minister, Martin Bandu, reports that the hearts of the victims are softer toward the gospel. Several became Christians after the blast.

RELIGIOUS TENSIONS: Bishop Arthur Kitonga of the Redeemed Gospel Church in Nairobi says follow-up services from the Christian community will be vital because of the many tensions within Kenyan society.

"People are so frightened that scores working in the city and new migrants have begun to move away to their rural homes," Kitonga says. "They fear another bomb might come."

Apart from the political and economic ills that are shaking the country (CT, Oct. 6, 1997, p. 82), Kitonga says religious tensions are "boiling up and posing great danger to the church."

In February, 50 were killed in the coastal city of Mombasa during riots connected in part to Muslim-Christian tensions. And one week before the bombing, Muslim youth burned churches in Kenya's northeast province.

"We are not waiting for comfortable times in Kenya," Kitonga says. "Whatever will plague our country further will likely be religious."

Abdul Malik, director of Sheep Ministries, an evangelistic outreach, notes that Muslims have been entering Kenyan government and politics and push-

ing for the adoption of Islamic law.

"Even though the bomb incident may not directly be linked to current religious tensions, it is not coincidental that the blast occurred in the wake of mounting religious hostility by Muslims," says pastor Adoyo. "This hostility is a phenomenon that must not be ignored."

Kenyan President Daniel Arap Moi has issued a public call for religious tolerance between Muslims and Christians.

The head of the Supreme Muslim Council in Kenya has pointed out that

Islam does not condone acts of terrorism and murder. Following Moi's appeal, on August 25, the leaders of the Catholic church and Muslims in Kenya sat together to chart a path for peaceful dialogue. Bishop Kitonga, however, cautions Christians not to count on short-term solutions. Kitonga says believers should be grounded in the Word of God. "Whatever comes, be ready and 'Let not your hearts be troubled,'" he told his congregation after the explosion.

By Connie Kisuke in Nairobi.

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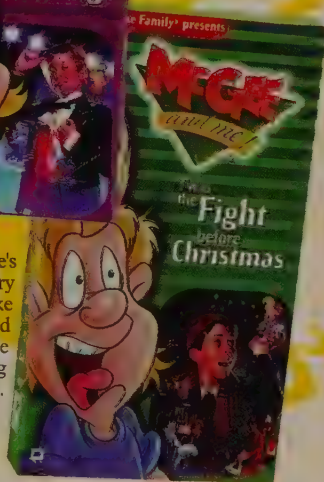
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Coffee That Cares

A Costa Rican church underwrites an urban outreach effort with premium coffee sales.

Sandy-haired Cuco, 2, lives on the streets of Alejuelita, a lurid, decaying area west of Costa Rica's capital, San José, where crack addicts and street gangs roam and rob. Cuco's mother peddles drugs and sex in the neighborhood, while Cuco and his five siblings are left on their own to survive.

Until six months ago, Cuco's one daily meal came from a friendly neighbor. Then a 4-year-old friend brought him to Hogar Zoe (House of Life), a Christian drug rehabilitation center that, as best it can on scarce resources, also ministers to needy children.

REACHING KIDS: Two years ago, Chris Dearnley, pastor of the Vineyard Church of Escazú, near San José, asked Zoe's director, Carlos Córdoba, how Dearnley's church could support the program. Córdoba responded simply, "Help us reach the children."

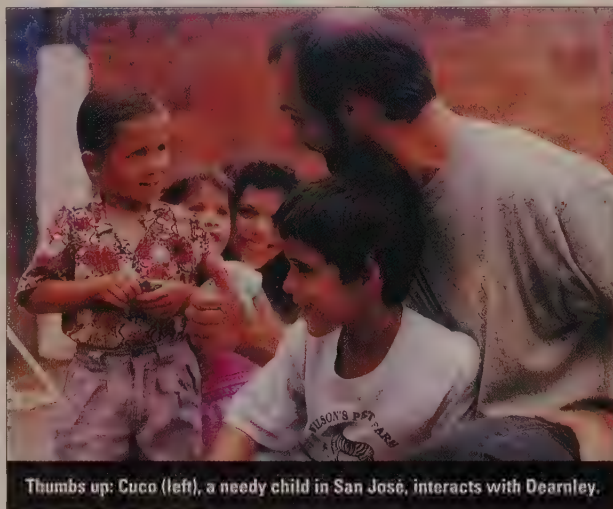
Hogar Zoe serves meals to neighborhood youth every other day, so the Vineyard of Escazú took charge of the kitchen every other Saturday and added an evangelism outreach. But soon Dearnley came to understand what Córdoba already recognized: It would take more than beans and rice to keep these children from perishing on the streets of San José. Dearnley wrestled with the problem of how to assure a steady stream of funds for Zoe so it could expand programs to have greater impact on young lives.

Dearnley, whose background includes a Harvard MBA, started thinking about coffee. He recalls visiting university friends in California in July 1997: "We were sitting around discussing our financial need and situation, and I said, 'Hey, I brought you some coffee from Costa Rica.'" At that moment, he envisioned a coffee export operation, with the profits financing social outreach. "We looked at each other and said, 'Hey, why don't we do this?'"

Now Pura Vida Coffee Company (www.puravidacoffee.com; 1-888-577-4JOY) supports Pura Vida Ministries,

established to finance not only Hogar Zoe, but other ministries in Central America as well. The name comes from a Costa Rican colloquialism, figuratively meaning "great, terrific," but literally meaning "pure life."

"We believe this coffee is about pure life: Offering the life of Christ to people who are struggling," Dearnley says.



Thumbs up: Cuco (left), a needy child in San José, interacts with Dearnley.

John Sage, Dearnley's Harvard housemate who attended that California meeting, is also a founding member of Pura Vida Coffee Company. Sage was creator of Starbucks' Red Ribbon Sampler coffee/music gift package that generates funds for AIDS research. Sage, whose brother died of the disease five years ago, says the Starbucks project should raise at least \$40,000 this fall for AIDS organizations around the country.

Pura Vida Coffee began operations in January with no advertising budget. Instead, it is relying on word of mouth to spread news of the product. Dearnley says Pura Vida's coffee supplier is supportive of its mission and has allowed the company to start with low volume and use its Miami call center. Dearnley's vision is that Christians and churches would buy Pura Vida for their in-house use or as gifts.

While interest and sales have been strong, so far the money generated by sales has been reinvested in more coffee,

Dearnley says. But Sage believes that for Pura Vida Coffee, which features the world-renowned premium variety Tarrazú, profits could approach \$40,000 its first year.

Todd Hunter, national director of the Anaheim, California-based Association of Vineyard Churches—USA, lauds Dearnley's approach to ministry as "spiritual entrepreneurship." "I would encourage it if it became a trend," Hunter says.

DRUG REHAB: On Saturday morning at Hogar Zoe, Vineyard of Escazú members scatter through the neighborhood to gather children for the day's program. Meanwhile, two young men enrolled in Zoe's 15-month drug rehabilitation bustle around a dark kitchen, chopping vegetables and boiling cauldrons of water for rice in preparation for the interns' lunch. Allan, 24, clad in a baggy black T-shirt and jeans, leans against a refrigerator for a few minutes to talk about himself.

Allan joined a street gang, and at 11 committed his first robbery. His mother, a drug dealer, would pay him four grams of cocaine for babysitting his two brothers. Crack was Allan's drug of choice. But when he ran out, he often drank rubbing alcohol, which could have killed him.

Eleven months ago, following a drug deal that turned violent, an old friend

from the streets who had become a Christian and graduated from Hogar Zoe brought Allan to the center. Director Córdoba, a one-time addict who founded Zoe, interviews candidates and rejects the applications of those he believes are simply seeking food and shelter rather than a drug-free life. Of the 60 percent accepted, almost all graduate. The program includes intense prayer and Bible study, group worship, counseling, and learning a trade, such as carpentry, welding, or greenhouse gardening. Some 40 interns receive housing, medical attention, and three meals a day; 60 others live off-campus but also participate. Its success has prompted Costa Rican courts to send convicted addicts to Hogar Zoe as an alternative to prison.

"Every day is a fight, but I feel at peace," Allan says. "God comes first. Nothing else interests me. I want to stay here and help others."

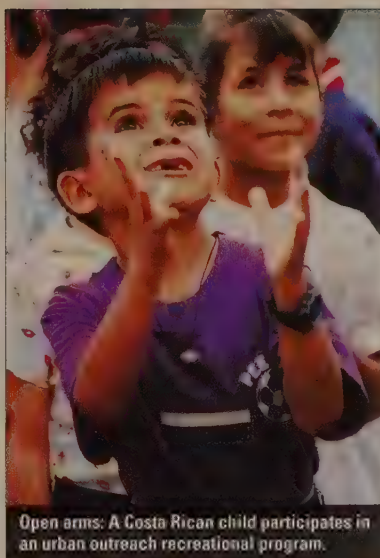
Allan is a portrait of what the toddler Cuco could become without intervention.

Six months ago, Cuco was violent and aggressive toward others, often hitting and kicking, wholly unafraid of reprisals. "He was the angriest child I've ever seen," says Hans Wust, Vineyard's worship leader, who helps with the children's program. "[Cuco's] eyes are not a 2-year-old's eyes."

Near the food-serving area, the little boy glares at Dearnley, who begins to play a hand game with him. But within minutes, Cuco's countenance softens, then he touches Dearnley's hand and smiles. Without this program, Wust says, "I can't imagine what he could turn into."

HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT: Sometimes as many as 200 children ages 3 to 13 gather on Saturdays for lunch and fun-but-meaningful Bible-focused activities. Almost all of these children suffer from parental neglect or abuse or exposure to the hostile streets of Alejuelita. "Through our Saturday program, Cuco has learned about the love of Jesus and that some adults care enough to spend time with him," Dearnley says.

Until coffee sales begin perking up, a weedy lot adjacent to the back fence is a



Open arms: A Costa Rican child participates in an urban outreach recreational program.

poignant reminder that many others could be reached. Dearnley and Córdoba imagine building a community center and gymnasium to expand the neighborhood ministry and serve more meals, as well as to extend an existing clothing-distribu-

tion program and launch "medical Saturdays" for the children. They want to establish an intern mentorship network and equip them with prime job skills; to that end Dearnley and Córdoba hope for a computer bank and an English teacher.

Hogar Zoe receives some money from Costa Rica's Evangelical Alliance and individual churches, such as the Vineyard of Escazú. Until Pura Vida turns more of a profit, Hogar Zoe is mostly self-supporting through interns' carpentry, painting, and plumbing, Córdoba says.

"I believe they can be rescued," Córdoba says of the youngest children. "But if we had more resources, we'd be able to reach more of them."

Dearnley says that one Saturday before Easter, the children sealed in his heart the purpose of Pura Vida. "I asked the kids, 'Who is the central figure of Easter?'"

"Judas!" they shouted in unison, much to Dearnley's astonishment. But Dearnley says, "He's the one who got the money, deceived, and stole. Their lives are about Judas, and we want to make their lives about Jesus."

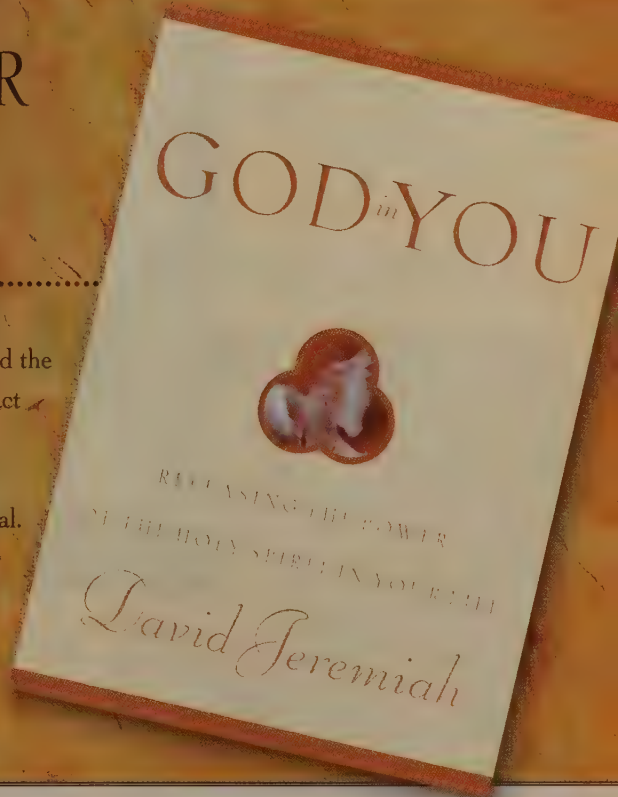
By Deann Alford in San José, Costa Rica.

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Champions for Christ Pulled into NFL Convert Controversy

After 13 years of relatively low-profile outreach to professional athletes, the Austin, Texas-based Champions for Christ (CFC) ministry received big publicity in a blitz that included *Sports Illustrated*, ESPN, and several newspapers and magazines.

Under other circumstances, the ministry would have welcomed the attention, but CFC has been accused of demanding a tithe from its members and improper involvement in contract talks between players, agents, and teams. "Ludicrous and untrue," says Dave Jamerson, CFC national representative, adding that the allegations reflect "a lack of understanding of Christian culture."

COMPLAINTS FILED? The brouhaha started with summer contract negotiations involving Chicago Bears rookie Curtis Enis, who, after being converted to Christianity in a CFC outreach, fired his agent, former Raiders' safety Vann McElroy, and hired a Christian financial planner who is a friend of CFC leaders.

By some accounts, McElroy's firm lodged complaints with the National Football League (NFL) about CFC's influence and tactics. By other accounts, the Chicago Bears and Jacksonville Jaguars asked the league to investigate the ministry out of concern that CFC was asking players to give huge amounts of money to the organization.

The management of both teams declined interview requests, but NFL vice president of public relations Greg Aiello says CFC is "not an issue with this office—we don't deal with them." Aiello says the NFL has more concern about finances than faith issues. "There is a history of athletes being taken advantage of financially," he says.

Both the charges that CFC officially represents players and that it requires tithing from members have rankled the leadership of the nonprofit ministry, which emphasizes it does not negotiate contracts and makes no financial requirement for membership.

"Our sole mission is to promote the gospel of Jesus Christ to athletes and to

build disciples for Christ," says Jamerson. "The majority of the athletes we do minister to never give a dime to us."

CFC's 1996 tax filings show that the ministry received \$805,249 in donations. Jamerson says the 1997 figures are still

who gives to CFC, we give them a year-end report," he says.

CFC has 20 chapters with 300 college athletes from 27 campuses. CFC began as a campus ministry, Jamerson says, and one of the first fruits of its efforts was the National Basketball Association's A. C. Green, a former Los Angeles Laker and current Dallas Mavericks forward, now a CFC vice president.

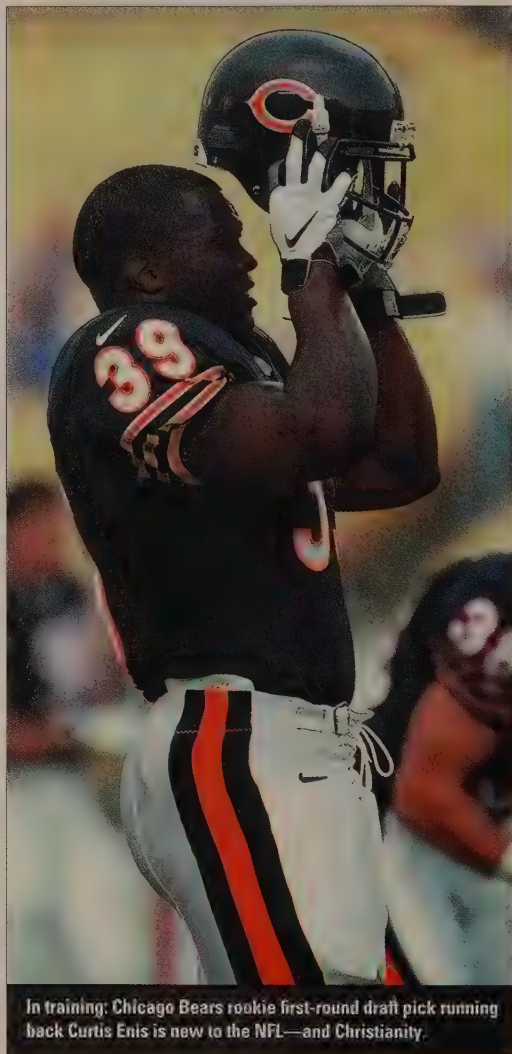
Jamerson asks, "Why not reach athletes out there not only to be champions on the field, but champions in life?"

So why has CFC attracted this scrutiny? Washington Redskins cornerback Darrell Green, a non-voting CFC board member and a part of the ministry for more than ten years, says it is a spiritual battle. He says "the enemy" does not "like the advance of the kingdom in an area where the Devil has ruled for years—professional athletics. I've done an in-depth investigation of Champions and these people are right [standing]," Green says. "This [controversy] is all about money—greed and money."

Greg Feste, founder of the Malachi Group in Sugar Land, Texas, is the new agent for Enis. The Malachi Group consists of three separate operations providing financial planning and investments, career management, and a venture capital corporation. Feste's publication, *Wealth: By the Book*, explores biblical views on money. He says sports media have misunderstood that his various operations promote biblical financial stewardship and principles. "They're thinking I'm this religious Bible thumper who's using that to promote his own agenda," Feste says.

Feste says he is not affiliated with CFC, although he and CFC founder Greg Ball are good friends. Feste says referrals have brought him the two pro athletes he represents in contract negotiations, the four he has for marketing and endorsement deals, and the 45 he has helped with full-service financial planning. "Clients breed clients," he says. "What is wrong with being referred by godly men and women?"

PAST PROBLEMS: Enis and Feste both had problems in their pasts before becoming Christians. Last year, Penn State declared Enis, now 22, ineligible to play in the Citrus Bowl because he illegally



In training: Chicago Bears rookie first-round draft pick running back Curtis Enis is new to the NFL—and Christianity.

being audited. "But it's probably around a million dollars," he reports. Though it is not a member of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability, Jamerson says CFC is in the process of joining the watchdog organization and does follow its guidelines, submitting to an independent board and an annual audit. "Everybody

accepted a \$1,000 suit from an agent and lied about it.

Most recently, Enis faced charges of a sexual assault alleged to have occurred on May 29 in Irving, Texas, but the charges have been dropped. But Jamerson says Enis is holding steady. "He's doing great," Jamerson says. "It's unfortunate that in the midst of all the positive things God is doing, that's being overshadowed by these allegations." On Independence Day, Enis married his girlfriend, who was then three months pregnant with his child.

Darrell Green says, "There's a tremendous need for groups like Champions, because sometimes athletes think more of themselves than they ought to."

As for Feste, he freely acknowledges his 1989 suicide attempt, a Chapter 7 bankruptcy, and a one-day suspension in 1992 by the National Association of Security Dealers. But all of that happened, he says, before he became a Christian, the result of being evangelized by CFC's Ball.

EVANGELISTIC ZEAL: CFC's involvement with members of the Jacksonville Jaguars has attracted scrutiny, too, but more for evangelistic zeal.

Jamerson says Jaguars quarterback Mark Brunell, a CFC member, attended a couples' Bible study in Jacksonville in

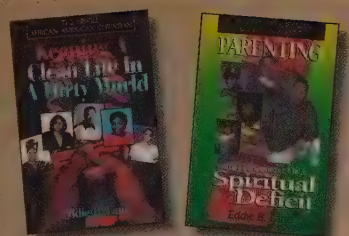
1996, which led to eight team members converting to Christianity and being baptized. At the time, Ball disciplined Brunell and often spoke to the group of new Christian gridiron converts, which had originated from a small group started by the Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

That year, Jamerson says, 11 Jaguars came to CFC's annual conference for professional athletes (this year's conference attracted 60 pros from various teams and their wives). Ball eventually began leading weekly meetings in Jacksonville.

"Last fall, there were 60-some people coming to the meetings, and literally a church was being planted there," Jamerson says of the meetings being held at the Jacksonville Marriott. "It's still growing now."

Don Walker, Jaguars team chaplain and a member of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, says he sees no problem with CFC. "The product of the Champions ministry is that a lot of guys have come to Christ, [but] some are walking and some aren't," Walker says. "Most people are rather offended that the media have even brought it up. They feel it's really none of their business if these guys want to be good, clean guys."

By Carolyn McCulley.



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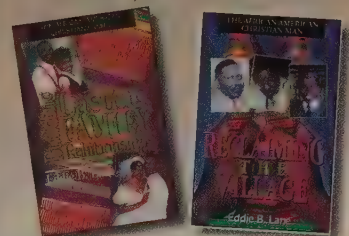
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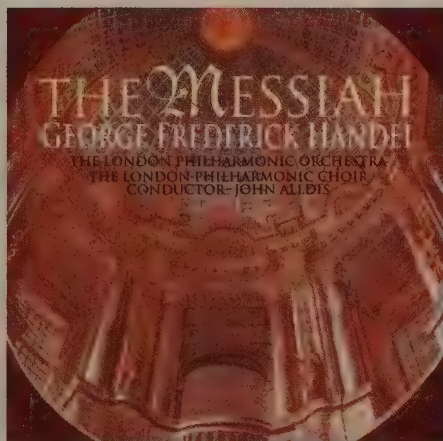
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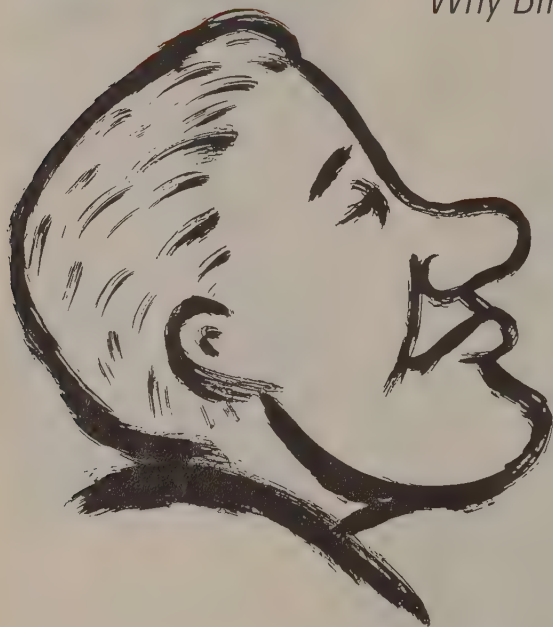
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The Prodigal President

Why Bill Clinton's "apology" misfired.



In February 1994, CT's Philip Yancey and David Neff joined President Bill Clinton and a host of dignitaries in listening to a bracing moral lecture from the late Mother Teresa. Her passion for truth trumped any concern she might have had for the feelings of the powerful gathered in the Washington Hilton ballroom. Later that same day, Neff and Yancey interviewed the President in the Oval Office and the presidential limousine. In writing up that interview (CT, Apr. 25, 1994, p. 24), Yancey contrasted Mother Teresa's bold loyalty to truth with the President's perennial penchant for taking his cues from the crowd.

That interview in the limo was a metaphorical moment: as Neff and Yancey questioned him about his views on abortion, a distracted President scanned the sidewalks, waving to people. He seemed to need constant affirmation, and the likelihood was low that he would deal with Mother Teresa's bracing slap with the hand of righteousness.

In 1994 we saw a politician eager to give the people what they want. On August 17 of this year we saw the same thing: the President's polls showed that the people would forgive him for having sex with an intern, but that they favored impeachment for perjury. So the President gave the people what he thought they wanted—so he could get what he wanted. In a televised nonapology, the President owned up to the “inappropriate relationship” with Monica Lewinsky,

but hid behind weasel words on the issue of perjury.

When the President offered the nation his grudging statement of regret and then proceeded to blame others for his troubles, he shed his last shred of moral authority. That moral authority had been based in part on his famous compassion. But that Clintonian compassion was hollow: having led his friends, staff, and family into lying for him, it was clear he had no feelings for anyone but Bill. It became clear he'd been operating several commandments shy of a decalogue.

Lost and found out

The week the President “apologized” was also the week our editorial staff was putting the final touches on a series of essays on the parable of the Prodigal Son, which will appear in our next issue. It was profoundly disturbing to meditate on that wonderful parable of radical grace while hearing the President's attempt to excuse his stonewalling and his misleading of his wife, daughter, friends, and nation.

The President was no prodigal, limping home, hoping for some minimal acceptance as a servant. He was still in the far country, hoping somehow to make it on his own.

The parable of the Prodigal Son, like the parables of the lost sheep and the lost coin also found in Luke 15, is about Jesus' joy in searching out sinners. The shepherd finds the lost sheep, the housewife finds the lost coin, the Father declares his son once lost but now found. But there is a huge difference between being found and being cornered. That difference, though, is in large part what the lost will make of their being discovered. Will they, as Kenneth Bailey writes in our next issue, “accept to be found”? Or will they find in their moment of discovery that they are cornered?

On August 17, Bill Clinton acted like he was cornered. There was no *mea culpa* in his *mea culpa*. He no sooner acknowledged an “inappropriate” sexual relationship with a female intern less than half his age, than he started blaming those who were doing their duty in pursuing the truth and upholding the law. Even his subsequent attempts at apology—to his cabinet, to party loyalists, to Democratic members of Congress—looked more like sandbagging operations to shore up crumbling support than like the fruit of personal reflection. Not until his September 11 address to the White House Prayer Breakfast did the prodigal President appear to turn toward home and at least get

the language of repentance right. Only God knows whether this truly signaled a major turning point in Clinton's spiritual life. We pray that it does.

The American people are not like the elder brother, refusing to forgive or to celebrate. Indeed, we are often eager to forgive. One of the fundamental religious narratives of Western civilization is repentance and restoration. This storyline undergirded the willingness of Jimmy Swaggart's followers to accept his weeping confession and restore him to their affections. Swaggart's sin, said Garry Wills in his book *Under God*, did not disillusion his followers but confirmed their belief that all are sinners, and his confession was the necessary next act in the drama of restoration. What amazes us is that though Clinton comes from a conservative Christian background, it took him so long to articulate the fundamentals of remorse and repentance required to restore relations.

If, as some have suggested, Clinton's life bears the marks of addiction, his reluctance to repent is understandable, since addictive personalities are skilled at denial and often refuse to acknowledge their problem even when cornered and confronted.

Trust busters

The President's failure to tell the truth—even when cornered—rips at the fabric of the nation. This is not a private affair. For above all, social intercourse is built on a presumption of trust: trust that the milk your grocer sells you is wholesome and pure; trust that the money you put in your bank can be taken out of the bank; trust that your babysitter, firefighters, clergy, and ambulance drivers will all do their best. And while politicians are notorious for breaking campaign promises, while in office they have a fundamental obligation to uphold our trust in them and to live by the law.

It is legitimate to debate whether Paula Jones's sexual harassment suit should have been allowed to go forward against a sitting President; it is reasonable to discuss whether Ken Starr's Whitewater inquiry should have been delayed and whether all the avenues he pursued were part of his mandate. But whether or not the President's legal problems should have been put on hold, unsavory dealings and immoral acts by the President and those close to him have rendered this administration morally unable to lead. Surely those close to him, who believed his denials and risked their own credibility for him, will have to work hard to trust him again. The rest of us may have lost less individually, but the public perception that the Establishment cannot be trusted, increasing ever since Watergate, has been solidly reinforced.

Bill Clinton missed a truly historic moment. August 17 could have been a great opportunity for national healing. A straightforward admission, with evident contrition, would have brought openness and resolution. But while he had the nation's attention, he let his anger at Ken Starr get in the way, and he fumbled. The President was no Prodigal Son, limping home toward reconciliation. But he is limping, and he will have serious difficulty commanding the respect and attention of the American people.

No doubt Bill Clinton has counted on something

other than apologies to carry him through the next two years. A booming economy has long propped up his popularity, and we are sure he did not foresee the precipitous stock market "correction" of late August. A big-stick foreign policy has also been a classic ploy to boost presidential ratings. But his attack on reputed terrorist sites in Sudan and Afghanistan left many with questions about timing and appropriateness. Did he minimize the extent of his apology in the knowledge that in a few days he would be diverting attention to Osama bin Laden?

Conservatives who have been combating religious persecution abroad were particularly vexed by the attack on a Sudanese pharmaceutical factory. For several years, the administration has minimized the abundant evidence of officially encouraged enslavement and crucifixion of Christians in that country's southern region. Fearing the disruption of trade relations, the administration had been unwilling to make the Sudan into the international pariah it should be. But now, on the slimmest hint that precursors of chemical weapons were being produced there, they fired missiles that turned the Sudan into a martyr.

Can we put it behind us?

Amidst widespread dissatisfaction with the President's August 17 speech and the calls for his resignation, some of the nation's most prominent religious leaders issued a pastoral letter entitled "An Appeal for Healing." Signed by the National Council of Churches' Joan Brown Campbell and others, the August 27 document pointed to our common sinfulness and the President's cursory "It was wrong" statement, and called us back to the business of government. "It is time once again to be led by our President. We need our country back," it said. While the need for national healing cannot be gainsaid, this document tried to rush a necessarily slow process. Just as no one recovers from a divorce or a death in the family in six months, so no country bounces back from presidential betrayal in ten days.

How much wiser was the *Christian Century's* Jim Wall, who spotted unfinished business. The simple "It was wrong" was not enough for Wall, who wrote that "a confession does not argue; it admits wrongdoing in a spirit of honest contrition." Wall also displayed a pastoral concern for Monica Lewinsky and her family, to whom, he said "the president owes . . . a public apology and request for forgiveness."

Just before this issue went to press, the President gave a carefully calibrated but emotionally affecting speech to a group of clergy. He spoke of not having been sufficiently contrite. He talked of a broken spirit, genuine repentance, and determination to change. He said that he sinned. But he also promised a vigorous legal defense; we have no doubt he will deliver on that promise. He missed several opportunities to stop the sandbagging and start afresh. Now, it seems, we're in for a long, hot winter. **CT**

**Unsavory
dealings and
immoral
acts by the
President and
those close
to him have
rendered this
administration
morally unable
to lead.**



TIMOTHY P. WEBER

How Evangelicals Became Israel's Best Friend

In its fiftieth anniversary year, the State of Israel has no better friends than American evangelicals. So it seemed to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu when he addressed the Voices United for Israel Conference in Washington, D.C., in April 1998. Most of the 3,000 in attendance were evangelicals, including Ralph Reed of the Christian Coalition, Kay Arthur of Precept Ministries, Jane Hanson of Women's Aglow, and Brandt Gustavson of the National Religious Broadcasters. (Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson supported the conference but did not attend.)

On the day before he met with President Bill Clinton, who urged him to trade West Bank land for peace with the Palestinians, Netanyahu told the conference: "We have no greater friends and allies than the people sitting in this room."

To many observers, the close relationship between Israel and many American evangelicals seems baffling. Many American evangelicals pledge their love for the State of Israel, support its claims against those of the Palestinians, and resist anything that might undercut Israel's security. But they also target Jews for evangelism and sometimes blame them for the mess the world is in. Israel eagerly accepts evangelicalism's public support and aggressively courts its leaders. But many Jews bitterly condemn Christian proselytism and do what they can to restrict the activities of missionaries in Israel. Nevertheless, both sides seem to be getting more than enough out of their relationship.

The close tie between evangelicals and Israel is important: It has shaped popular opinion in America and, to some extent, U.S. foreign policy. To understand how it developed, one must know something about how many evangelicals interpret Bible prophecy and what difference their beliefs have made in the world of politics.

Why do evangelicals care so much about Israel? How did this special relationship develop? What has it produced? On the most basic level, evangelicals love Israel because of the Bible. Many evangelicals have vivid memories of sitting in Sunday school rooms, staring at maps of Bible Lands and listening to Bible stories week after week. Through such experiences, evangelicals came to view the Bible's story as their own and the land of the Bible as a kind of home away from home. Israel is where the Lord

Jesus was born, ministered, was crucified, and rose again. Every year thousands of evangelicals take what amounts to a religious pilgrimage to Israel to "walk where Jesus walked" and see for themselves places they have read about their whole lives.

Evangelicals' view of the Bible gives them a proprietary interest in Israel. It is the Holy Land, the site of God's mighty deeds. In a way, they think the Promised Land belongs to them as much as it does to Israelis.

Writing the end-times script

But there is much more to the evangelical-Israel connection: Most of those who gathered in Washington to show their support for Israel believe that the Holy Land will be ground zero for events surrounding the second coming of Jesus Christ. Such evangelicals read the Bible as though it were a huge jigsaw puzzle of prophecies, with Israel in the center. They believe that human history is following a predetermined divine script, and they and Israel are simply playing their assigned roles.

These beliefs come out of a complex system of biblical interpretation known as dispensationalism, which is a version of premillennialism (the belief that Christ will return *before* setting up his millennial kingdom). As the name implies, dispensationalism divides up the Bible and human history into various eras or dispensations, based on how God deals with humanity. Basic to the system was the way it detected two distinct divine plans, one for an "earthly" people (Israel) and the other for a "heavenly" people (the church). According to John Nelson Darby, the Englishman who shaped dispensationalism in the mid-1800s, biblical prophecies for one group do not apply to the other, and God deals with only one group at a time. Thus "rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15) means keeping the two peoples and programs completely separate.

God's dealings with Israel are the key to the dispensational



State support: During a 1996 rally where 600 people converged to support Jewish settlers living in Hebron, a Christian pilgrim acts the part of King David.

system. Through a series of covenants with Abraham, Moses, and David, God made Israel his chosen people and promised to establish Messiah on David's throne forever. In Daniel 7-9, nineteenth-century dispensationalists believed, God spelled out the divine plan: because of its sin, Israel will be subjugated by four successive Gentile powers until, finally, the "times of the Gentiles" are complete. On divine cue, one of the Gentile rulers will issue a decree to rebuild Jerusalem's fallen walls. Sixty-nine weeks later, Messiah will come to the Holy City but be rejected ("cut off") by his own people. During the Seventieth Week, an evil ruler will try to destroy the Jews, but at week's end Messiah will return to defeat him and re-establish David's throne.

These dispensationalists believed that much of Daniel's prophecy of the Seventy Weeks was literally fulfilled in the history of Israel and the first coming of Jesus Christ. But there was a major problem: why did Messiah not return to finish his work at the end of the Seventieth Week as predicted? To answer this question, those dispensationalists developed a "postponement theory." When Jews rejected Jesus, as the prophecy said they would, God unexpectedly postponed Jesus' return, started putting together a new people, the church, and unplugged the prophetic clock. Thus, for its entire history, the church has existed in a prophetic time warp, what dispensationalists call the "great parenthesis."

A second question then needed answering: When and how will God resume the prophetic countdown? Dispensationalists answer, "At the pretribulation rapture of the church." Since God had decided to work with only one group at a time, God must remove the church from the earth before focusing attention again on the Jews. After Jesus comes *for* his saints in the "Rapture" (1 Thess. 4:13-17), the prophetic clock starts ticking again. Once the church is gone, Daniel's Seventieth Week (the "great tribulation" of Matt. 24, 2 Thess. 2, and Rev.) can begin, after which Jesus will return *with* his already raptured saints to defeat Antichrist, the great persecutor, and establish his millennial reign.

During the 1870s, Darby made a number of trips to the United States, where his dispensationalism got mixed reviews. Most evangelicals at the time were either postmillennialists (Christ will return *after* the world is Christianized) or amillennialists (the millennium should be taken figuratively). In an age of optimism, dispensationalism seemed too pessimistic for most evangelicals, some of whom labeled it a "heresy."

Despite its minority status among evangelicals initially, dispensationalism gained a respectable following through prophetic conferences, Bible institutes, a plethora of magazines and popular books, and a committed clientele for whom it was the key to unlock biblical truth. Every major American revivalist since D. L. Moody has been a premillennialist of some kind; and Pentecostalism has more or less followed the dispensationalist line since its inception in the early twentieth century. The Scofield Reference Bible, whose notes explained biblical texts from a dispensational perspective, was published in 1909 and became an authoritative and effective recruiter for the movement.

By the twenties, many fundamentalists considered dispensationalism a nonnegotiable part of Christian orthodoxy. Since then, the system has been nurtured through an elaborate network of schools, publishing houses, mission agencies, radio and television programming, and the like. Channel surfers on cable TV know that dispensationalists are master communicators.

Dispensationalism's sensational influence

Clearly, one does not have to be a dispensationalist to be influenced by one. In his recent study of prophecy belief in modern

American culture, historian Paul Boyer found that in addition to the relatively small number of committed "experts" who study Bible prophecy and seem to have everything figured out, there are millions of others who are not so well informed but still believe the Bible contains valuable clues about the future. Such people are susceptible to popularizers who "confidently weave Bible passages into highly imaginative end-time scenarios, or who promulgate particular schemes of prophetic interpretation."

Even secular people who normally ignore the Bible may, during times of crisis, pay attention to someone who uses the Bible to explain what is going on when the world seems to be falling apart. Boyer concludes that dispensational views about Israel and the course of history have influenced popular opinion far beyond the boundaries of the dispensational movement.

What dispensational beliefs have influenced a significant number of evangelicals and the broader American culture? For a hundred and fifty years, dispensationalists have been predicting something like the following:

- After the "times of the Gentiles" are finished and the Jews are regathered in the Holy Land, human civilization will begin to unravel. Morals will decline, families will break apart, crime and anarchy will increase. Wars, political and economic unrest, natural disasters, unstoppable epidemics, shifts in weather patterns, and other calamities will increase suffering and despair. Organized Christianity will experience apostasy; religious leaders will abandon historic beliefs and behavioral standards and openly embrace heresy and immorality. Despite massive efforts to stop civilization's demise, nothing can stop its downward slide.

- After the rapture of the church, a charismatic leader will gain a following by promising peace and security. This Antichrist heads up a ten-nation confederacy in western Europe. Unaware of Antichrist's true identity, Israel will sign a treaty with him to guarantee its security, then rebuild its temple in Jerusalem. After three and a half years, Antichrist will break the treaty, declare himself to be God, and persecute all who refuse to worship him and receive his mark on their foreheads. Antichrist will be helped by a False Prophet, a seductive religious leader, who will use miraculous powers and repressive measures to force compliance. For three and a half years, a remnant of God's people who were converted after the Rapture (Rev. 7:4) will suffer horrible persecution in the Great Tribulation.

- Despite Antichrist's power, other nations will rise in opposition. Some time after Antichrist betrays Israel, a northern confederation of nations under Russian control will join with a southern confederacy to launch a devastating double attack against Israel. This move will prompt the intervention of Antichrist's armies from the west and a 200-million-man army

In the last 50 years, Israel has needed all the friends it can get and evangelicals have been loyal and productive supporters.



under the "kings of the east." As armies from east and west converge on Israel, the Russian confederates will try to destroy Israel; but God will intervene to destroy them. With the northern confederacy annihilated, the forces of Antichrist and the "kings of the east" will do battle at Armageddon, a valley northwest of Jerusalem. While the battle rages, Jesus will return, wipe out the surviving armies, subdue Antichrist, and set up his millennial kingdom. Finally, the surviving Jews will accept Jesus as their Messiah. For a thousand years, King Jesus will rule the world from Jerusalem, while Jewish priests perform sacrifices in the restored temple. In the end, God will fulfill all the promises to Israel. The redemptive plan will be complete.

Obviously, the key to this entire prophetic plan is the re-founding of Israel as a nation state in Palestine. Without Israel, the whole plan falls apart.

Reading the signs of the times

In the nineteenth century, most British and American evangelicals did not believe in the restoration of the Jews. They believed that God is essentially finished with the Jews as a people. According to this "replacement theology," because Jews had rejected Jesus, God had rejected them and had transferred divine favor to the church. The church has become the New Israel and has received all the Old Israel's promises and prophecies.

Dispensationalists (and a few nondispensationalists besides) insisted that God is not yet finished with the Jews, and while there was little movement in that direction, they looked for evidence that Jews were heading back to Palestine. A few Jewish agricultural colonies were established in Palestine in the 1880s and '90s, but the number of colonists was small. The Zionist movement was organized in the 1890s, yet at first few Jews paid it much mind. Dispensationalists at that time seemed more eager for Jews to move back to Palestine than did Jews themselves.

Most dispensationalists were content to let God handle the details. It was their job to teach the truth and monitor the signs of the times. But not all dispensationalists were bystanders. A

small minority wanted to help move things along.

No American dispensationalist beat the drum for a Jewish state more than William E. Blackstone (1841-1935). Born in New York and reared in an evangelical Methodist home, after the Civil War Blackstone settled in Oak Park, Illinois, and established himself as a successful businessman and lay evangelist to the Chicago business community. He became a dispensationalist and a close friend of D. L. Moody. In 1878 he published *Jesus Is Coming*, which went through three editions, was translated into 42 languages, and was dispensationalism's first bestseller in America.

In the late 1880s, Blackstone visited new Jewish settlements in the Holy Land and returned to Chicago committed to helping the restoration of the Jews. In 1890 he organized the first conference of Christians and Jews in Chicago and used the occasion to push for a new Jewish state. Most participants, including the Jews, were not interested.

Undeterred, in 1891 Blackstone drew up a petition (or "memorial") advocating the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine. In short order, he collected 413 signatures from leading Americans, including the chief justice of the Supreme Court, the speaker of the House, the mayors of Chicago, New York, and Boston, and business leaders such as Cyrus McCormick, John D. Rockefeller, and J. Pierpont Morgan. Blackstone forwarded the memorial to President Benjamin Harrison, who ignored it, and later he sent others to Teddy Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson.

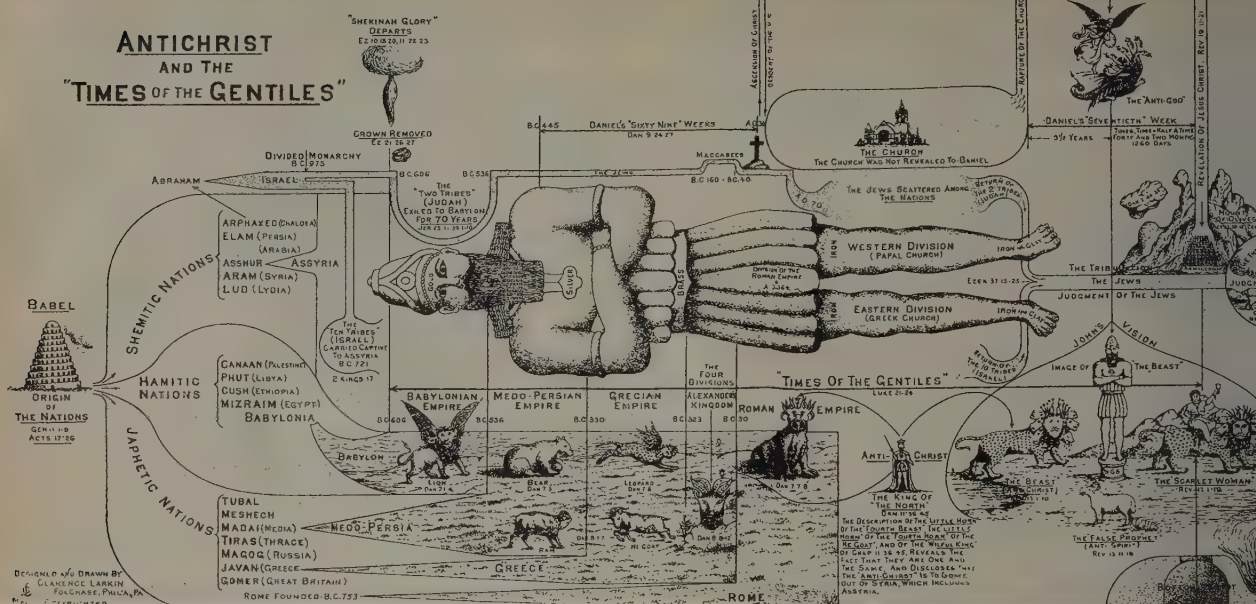
In spite of his ongoing efforts to convert Jews to Christ, he became good friends with Zionist leaders and regularly sent them the results of his prophetic study. In 1918, at a Zionist conference in Philadelphia, organizers hailed Blackstone as a "Father of Zionism"; and in 1956, on the seventy-fifth anniversary of his memorial to President Harrison, the citizens of Israel dedicated a forest in his honor.

A few of Blackstone's Chicago friends took another approach. In 1881, Horatio and Anna Spafford and 16 others established the American Colony in the Muslim quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem to watch at close hand the restoration of the Jews and

ANTICHRIST

AND THE

"TIMES OF THE GENTILES"



the second coming of Jesus. The Spaffordites held all property in common and, at least for a while, made celibacy the house rule.

The Spaffordites went there primarily for prophetic reasons. As one settler put it, "We wanted to see the prophecies fulfilled." One of the children of the community recounted years later how for a while the group "went every day to the Mount of Olives with tea and cakes, hoping to be the first to offer the Messiah refreshment." When hundreds of penniless Jews from Yemen arrived in Jerusalem in 1882, the colony considered them part of the Ten Lost Tribes and a clear sign of prophetic fulfillment, so they provided them with food, shelter, and other support. The colony became a popular stopover for visitors to the Holy Land. Blackstone came; so did Moody. The colony prospered economically when over 100 Swedes from Chicago and the old country joined up in 1896.

For over 50 years the colony survived as a religious community, but subsequent generations lost their prophetic zeal and turned the colony into a business concern. By the 1930s, their perspective on life in Palestine had changed. The colony identified more with the needs of the indigenous Arabs and considered Zionism a threat to their legitimate rights.

Blackstone and the American Colony in Jerusalem were exceptions, not the rule. Most dispensationalists were content to study the Bible and scan the horizon for prophetic fulfillments. During the twentieth century, signs of the times multiplied. World War I gave a major boost to their hopes for the future. Dispensationalists used their Bibles to predict with uncanny accuracy the results of the war, including the redrawing of the map of Europe, which was necessary to get ready for their end-times scenario. But nothing brought them more pleasure than the disposition of Palestine.

When World War I broke out in 1914, Palestine was firmly in the grasp of the Ottoman Empire. By 1916, there was widespread speculation, even in the secular press, about the restoration of a Jewish homeland if the Turks could be vanquished. By late 1917, events were rapidly moving along those lines. As British forces fought their way into Palestine from the south, Lord Arthur Balfour, the British foreign secretary, wrote to Lord James Rothschild, a leader in international Zionism: "His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in

Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best efforts to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country."

Five weeks after the Balfour Declaration, the Turks surrendered Jerusalem to British forces, virtually without a fight. This sent shock waves through dispensationalist ranks. Here was the most concrete proof ever that the "times of the Gentiles" were coming to an end. It made little difference to dispensationalists that Jerusalem had passed from one Gentile power to another. The important thing was that the British had declared their intention to establish a Jewish state. If the "times of the Gentiles" were coming to an end, could the restoration of Israel be far behind?

Dispensationalists could barely contain themselves. Arno C. Gaebelein, editor of *Our Hope*, called the coming restoration of Israel "the sign of all signs." In 1918, dispensationalists organized two well-attended prophetic conferences in New York and Philadelphia, where the real possibility of establishing a Jewish state got much attention.

The Protocols conspiracy

Despite such rising expectations, it would take 30 more years and another world war to establish a Jewish state. But the events of 1917-18 gave dispensationalists ample assurance that they were reading the Bible correctly; and further evidence was pouring in: Ecclesiastical wars between fundamentalists and modernists confirmed the rise of religious apostasy. The public schools were overrun by evolutionists and secularists. Personal and public morals took a nosedive, with increasing divorce rates, the obscenities of the "new woman," and the open flouting of Prohibition laws. Dispensationalists watched the rise of fascism in Europe, the spread of communism, and growing anti-Semitism. Civilization was obviously spinning out of control, and for the prophecy pundits, everything fit and was right on schedule.

During the twenties and thirties, a number of leading dispensational teachers promoted right-wing conspiracy theories and



even fell prey to Nazi propaganda. Shortly after World War I, *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* started making the rounds in Europe and America, purporting to be the secret minutes of a group of Jewish conspirators plotting to take over the world by destroying Christian civilization. When Henry Ford serialized them in his newspaper, the *Dearborn Independent*, in the early 1920s, many people believed what they read. From then on, American anti-Semites made *The Protocols* "exhibit A" in their propaganda campaign.

Not all dispensationalists were fooled by *The Protocols*, but a number of leading Bible teachers were. In 1921, James M. Gray, president of Moody Bible Institute, called *The Protocols* "a clinching argument for premillennialism and another sign of the possible nearness of the end of the

age." Arno Gaebelein also believed that the plan outlined in *The Protocols* was consistent with Bible prophecy. Well known as an evangelist to Jews, Gaebelein obviously loved some Jews more than others.

He liked Orthodox Jews because they still expected the coming of Messiah, read Bible prophecies with expectancy, and honored their traditions. But he had no use for Reform or secular Jews, whom he considered apostates capable of anything. Though he could not be sure, Gaebelein thought that *The Protocols* were "from the pen of apostate Jews" who were responsible for Russian Bolshevism, the illegal liquor traffic in the U.S., and the general decline in morals. "There is nothing so vile on earth as an apostate Jew who denies God and His Word."

Most dispensationalists paid little attention to *The Protocols* until Gerald Winrod gave them a new lease on life. In 1933, Winrod, founder of the Defenders of the Christian Faith in Wichita, Kansas, published an elaborate exposé to show that Jews were in charge of the world's banking system and responsible for World War I, the Great Depression, President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal, and just about everything else.

In 1934, William Bell Riley, who presided over a fundamentalist empire in the upper Midwest, published *The Protocols and Communism* to show that the same conspiracy that turned Russia communist was at work in Roosevelt's New Deal. "Today in our land many of the biggest trusts, banks, and manufacturing interests are controlled by Jews. . . . Most of our department stores they own. . . . The motion pictures, the most vicious of all immoral, educational and communistic influences, is their creation." Riley preached such views regularly from his pulpit at the First Baptist Church of Minneapolis, which some Jewish leaders considered a major center of anti-Semitism.

Gray, Winrod, Gaebelein, and Riley strenuously denied that they were anti-Semites. They were simply explaining events in light of biblical prophecy. But most dispensationalists quickly figured out that using such arguments put them in very bad company. By the thirties, *The Protocols* were identified with the peddlers of virulent anti-Semitism, which dispensationalists said was a horrible sin against God.

Eventually *The Protocols* split the dispensational movement. Jewish-Christian believers objected to their use, arguing that it was not enough to distinguish between good Jews and bad: when people believed conspiracy theories, all Jews suffered, even Christian ones. Others concluded that some of their colleagues had been duped by Nazi propaganda. Harry Ironside, pastor of Moody Church in Chicago, was grieved "to find that the *Protocols* are being used not only by godless Gentiles, but even by some fundamentalist Christians to stir up suspicion and hatred against the Jewish people as a whole."

In 1938, Keith Brooks, a former Winrod associate, founded the American Prophetic League in California to put as much distance as possible between dispensationalism and Nazi anti-Semitism. The next year Brooks published a "Manifesto to the Jews," signed by 60 leading dispensationalists, which condemned the spread of pro-Nazi propaganda under the guise of biblical prophecy and disavowed further use of *The Protocols*. Three years later, Brooks was still trying to get fellow prophecy teachers to "clear the church at large from the charge laid against it by unbelievers, that it had been a tool of Hitler and the Jew-baiters." Before his death in 1935, Gray swore off ever using *The Protocols* again; but Winrod and Riley never backed down. Some time after the "Manifesto" appeared, Gaebelein tried to get his name added to the list of signers. The fact that he never told his own constituency and continued to sell *Conflict of the Ages* until he died in 1945 made the gesture disingenuous.

Suffering with a purpose

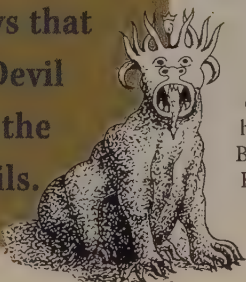
Dispensationalism had a dark side that grew out of its beliefs about the Jews' complex role in prophecy. Jews are God's chosen people and heirs to all the prophetic promises; but present Jews are under the power of Satan and contributing to the decline of the present age. The glory of Israel is future.

It is no surprise that dispensationalists received news of the Holocaust with a combination of horror, resignation, and hope. They were among the first to warn the world of the coming catastrophe. In 1930, Gaebelein told his readers about Hitler and what might happen to Jews if he ever got control of Germany; and by the late thirties, premillennialist leaders had figured out what was going on in places like Buchenwald long before most people realized what the Nazis were capable of.

While dispensationalists condemned persecution of the Jews, they believed such things were inevitable and were happening for a reason. Just like Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians centuries before, Hitler and the Nazis were God's instruments of judgment. God was using them to increase the Jews' desire for a homeland of their own in Palestine. As Harry Rimmer observed, "By driving the preserved people back into the preserved land, Hitler, who does not believe the Bible . . . is helping to fulfill its most outstanding prophecy." Needless to say, once their awful work was done, God would judge the Nazis just as he judged the Babylonians.

Sometimes dispensationalists took comfort in their belief that persecution made Jews more susceptible to the gospel. Moody Bible Institute president Will Houghton claimed that Jewish youth

**The history
of prophetic
interpretation
shows that
the Devil
is in the
details.**



Jerusalem as Jesus Views It

Across the field from our residence in Jerusalem is Har Homa (Jabal Abu Ghneim in Arabic), the mountain that has caused so much conflict over the status of Jerusalem. On Easter morning 1997 we stood on the roof of our residence for a sunrise service. As the sun rose over the mountain, we celebrated the Resurrection with Scripture, song, and prayer.

Several days later we watched with pain as bulldozers cut a swath around the mountain, preparing the way for housing construction. Israelis insist this area is part of southeastern Jerusalem and that they have a right to expand there. Palestinians from the adjacent Christian towns of Bethlehem and Beit Sahour see this unilateral act as infringement on their right to expand their cities.

Jerusalem, the "City of Peace," is a source of conflict and disharmony. Israelis insist that Jerusalem should remain the unified and eternal capital of Israel under the absolute sovereignty of Israel. Palestinians, native to East Jerusalem, are critical of the Israeli claim to sovereignty; they want East Jerusalem to be the capital of a Palestinian state.

Jerusalem elicits the best and the worst in people, and it is being marred by those who claim to love her.

Just as Jerusalem incites the passions of three great religions—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—it also inspires pilgrims. As we approach the year 2000, there is a lot of euphoria concerning Jerusalem. Some Christians are enamored with Jerusalem because they anticipate the restoration of Jerusalem when the time of the Gentiles is fulfilled. Hence, they uncritically defend Jewish control of Jerusalem because it fits their end-times theories. Christian pilgrims are flocking to see the sites where they anticipate these end-times events will happen. Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert recently has even suggested setting up tent camps to accommodate the many Christian pilgrims.

I've been asked what I know about the Mount of Olives beginning to split (Zech. 14:4). Frankly, I've seen no evidence of that, nor is it my consuming passion. Some seem more interested in whether the mountain is beginning to divide than in the division of people living within the shadow

of that mountain. Others seem more fascinated with the reconstruction of a third temple than with Jesus as temple or the believing community as temple. Groups of Christians have even contributed money for the rebuilding of the temple.

Several years ago in the Old City of Jerusalem I visited a Jewish group that is preparing for the eventual rebuilding of the temple. The man I interviewed was armed. The group was very guarded—literally and figuratively! This group does not indicate when or how the temple will be rebuilt, an assertion much too volatile. But they insist it is their task to prepare the ceremonial garments and utensils for that certain future event. Are groups like these the Christians' allies in Jerusalem?

Jesus reinterprets Jerusalem

Many Christians seem to have an Old Testament view of land, Jerusalem, and the temple rather than a New Testament view. The New Testament is positive toward Jerusalem and the temple: Jerusalem is a "holy city" (Matt. 4:5; 27:53), the "city of the great King" (Matt. 5:35), and the temple is a "holy place" (Matt.

HOW EVANGELICALS BECAME ISRAEL'S BEST FRIEND

in Warsaw turned to Christ *en masse* in the summer of 1939, immediately before the Nazi invasion. "Perhaps that is the reason the Devil saw to it that Warsaw was wrecked and the Jews scattered."

Later the same year dispensational leaders called for an international day of prayer for the Jews. Interestingly, the organizers did not advise people to pray for the persecutions to stop, only that Jews might turn to Christ in their despair. The best thing people could do for Jews under the circumstances was send them more New Testaments and missionaries.

The State of Israel

As bad as things got, dispensationalists knew that the Nazis would never annihilate the Jewish people. After all, God's entire prophetic plan hinges on getting a Jewish remnant back to Palestine to establish their own state in preparation for Armageddon and the Second Coming. Prophetically speaking, the most crucial point was not that millions were dying, but that some would survive.

In the thirties and forties, dispensationalists thought that the formation of a Jewish state was imminent. But the British were not so sure. For obvious reasons, the Palestinians, who greatly outnumbered Jews in the Holy Land, disliked the Balfour Declaration and mounted a massive resistance campaign. They

went on strike, rioted, and occasionally committed acts of terrorism against the British and the Jewish population. The British did what they could to stop the protests, including restricting Jewish immigration and suggesting in the spirit of compromise that the Holy Land be partitioned into both Arab and Jewish states. But nothing worked. In 1939 the British issued a white paper that essentially abandoned the Balfour Declaration.

By the end of the war, not much had changed, except the Jews were now well armed and ready to force the issue of statehood, sometimes through their own brand of terrorism. Looking desperately for a way out, the British appealed to the newly organized United Nations. In August 1947, the UN Special Committee on Palestine also recommended that the area be partitioned into Arab and Jewish states; but Arabs refused to relinquish their land, so the UN abandoned the idea. By the spring of 1948 it was obvious to everybody that a political solution was not possible.

The British finally announced plans to withdraw their forces from the region on May 14, 1948. On that day the Jewish National Council declared statehood; and Arab armies invaded. Almost immediately, the U.S. recognized the new state. The fighting was fierce. By November the better-trained Israeli

24:15). Yet Jesus and the New Testament have a radically new perspective on Jerusalem and the temple. As the temple needed to be seen in the light of Jesus (John 2), so did Jerusalem (John 4). And Jesus predicted the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple because of the religious and moral failure of the people (Luke 19:41-44; 21:20-24). He called Jerusalem to repentance. A center of unbelief, Jerusalem killed its religious leaders (Matt. 23:29-24:2) and acted against the purposes of God (Luke 13:34). Because Jerusalem was using God for its own aggrandizement, it could no longer claim holiness.

When Jesus was asked, "Will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6, RSV), he replied: "It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority" (1:7). Rather, they are to witness to Jesus in Jerusalem—and throughout the whole world. Christians must focus more on Jesus than on Jerusalem the Holy City.

More important than the place of Jerusalem is the person of Jesus. Jerusalem is not the center for Christians; Jesus is. Jesus is also greater than the temple (Matt. 12:6) because Jesus took its place (John 2:21). Jesus' own sacrificial death ended the need for the sacrifices of the temple (Heb. 9:11-10:18). He is the divine presence symbolized by the temple. Believers in Jesus and the believing community are also the temple (1 Cor. 3:17;

6:19; 2 Cor. 6:16). If Jesus and the church represent the temple, is the reconstruction of a third temple—a Jewish edifice—essential to Christian faith?

Jesus' agenda for Jerusalem

Still, we may have an affection for the Holy City, but love for it does not mean that we conform to Jerusalem's agenda. Rather, we accept Jesus' agenda for Jerusalem. Looking at Jerusalem through the eyes of Jesus must include Jesuslike involvement in the following ways:

Weeping. Jesus lamented that Jerusalem killed prophets and stoned messengers, refusing to be gathered together as a hen gathers her chicks (Luke 13:34-35). Because Jerusalem did not recognize the things that make for peace or the time of God's visitation, it would therefore

be destroyed (Luke 19:41-44). Jesus' tears expressed regret, compassion, and his reluctance to give up on Jerusalem.

Christians must feel the same anguish for Jerusalem. Sometimes the pain of Jerusalem is too deep for words. One can only weep. Weeping is the precondition for compassion, understanding, prayer. As Jesus prayed for Jerusalem, we are invited to pray for Jerusalem and the church in Jerusalem.

Prophetic critique. Jesus by prophetic word and action called Jerusalem to repentance. He did not criticize from a distance, but entered into Jerusalem's daily life. Jesus rebuked Jerusalem because the Holy City had become unholy. Critique must be laced with mercy and compassion.

Christians are often reluctant to critique wrongs or injustice because they are



troops had prevailed, and a cease-fire was called. In May 1949 Israel was admitted to the UN.

Dispensationalists were ecstatic. This was the "sign of all signs." Louis Talbot of the Bible Institute of Los Angeles declared, "I consider it the greatest event, from a prophetic standpoint, that has taken place within the last one hundred years, perhaps even since 70 A.D. [sic], when Jerusalem was destroyed."

In the flush of prophetic fulfillment, most evangelicals showed little or no concern for Palestinian rights—which was ironic since there have always been more Arab Christians in the Middle East than Jewish ones. During the thirties and forties, a few evangelicals raised questions of justice, self-determination, and fair play for Arabs. After all, Palestinians had been there for centuries, much longer than the United States had been a nation. But most evangelicals believed that God's prophetic purposes were more important than such local concerns. Their attitude seemed to be, "This is the fulfillment of prophecy; the Palestinians will just have to get used to it."

Many evangelicals saw the establishment of an Israeli state as the beginning of the end. But there were unresolved problems: The new Israel occupied only a fraction of the land it held in Bible times. Therefore, dispensationalists were eager to see Israel expand

its territory. In 1956, with French and English support, Israel attacked Egypt: the Israelis wanted the Sinai; their European allies wanted the Suez Canal. The U.S. government opposed the action. Most dispensationalists objected to the U.S. position because they considered it anti-Israel. For dispensationalists, not to support Israel was to align oneself *against* the purposes of God.

Evangelicals who thought this way were elated by the Six-Day War of June 1967. Fearing an imminent attack from Soviet-supplied Egyptian and Syrian forces, Israel struck first. In less than a week, the Israelis defeated the Arab coalition and occupied the Sinai peninsula, territory west of the Jordan River, the Gaza Strip, and the Golan Heights. Now the modern State of Israel looked more like the "Bible Lands" maps on the walls of Sunday school rooms. The most important result of the Six-Day War was that Israel controlled all of Jerusalem. Nelson Bell wrote in CHRISTIANITY TODAY, "That for the first time in more than 2,000 years Jerusalem is now completely in the hands of the Jews gives a student of the Bible a thrill and a renewed faith in the accuracy and validity of the Bible" (CT, July 21, 1967, p. 28). Here was an obvious fulfillment of Luke 21:24: "Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled" (NRSV).

For most evangelicals, the war for Jewish statehood and the

seen as "signs of the times." Yet Christians address issues of famine, social disruption, and apostasy, which are also "signs of the times." Some Christians, instead of calling Jerusalem to repentance, only bless Jerusalem and emphasize God's promises, ignoring the conditional nature of God's promises. Jerusalem is not exempt from God's will revealed in Jesus. Justice for all parties is more important than absolute sovereignty over Jerusalem.

Ethical discernment. The "sacredness" or "specialness" of Jerusalem blinds many Christians to ethical discernment. But devotion to Jerusalem without righteousness leads to unholy nationalism. Religious claims to the holiness of Jerusalem often lead to dispute and war rather than to ethical behavior. Holiness of space must not usurp the place of ethics. Holy behavior is more important than holy places. Where justice is lacking there is no holiness. Devotion to Jerusalem can become an idol. Instead of pointing toward God, it points away from God. Jerusalem must not take the place of God or be revered at the expense of the values expressed by Jesus.

Reconciliation and peace. Jesus wept because Jerusalem did not understand the things that make for peace (Luke 19:42). Can the "City of Peace" discover today the things that make for peace? Can Jerusalem be a place of blessing instead of a place of division? First-century Jerusalem

was destroyed because it did not know what made for peace. Will Christian faith foster or hamper efforts for justice, peace, and security for all? Christians need to pray (Ps. 122:6), act, and hope for the peace of Jerusalem, a peace built upon the foundation of justice, a peace for all the people of Israel and Palestine.

Jerusalem is one of the few places in the world considered holy to several religions. Jews, Christians, and Muslims all see Jerusalem in a unique way, and often their religious perceptions clash. Justice and human rights call for a shared Jerusalem for Israelis and Palestinians—for Jews, Christians, and Muslims. Jerusalem is not only important for the religion of each, but each of these groups lives in Jerusalem. The claims of local people to Jerusalem should not be minimized. There will be no peace if some groups are excluded.

My joy in celebrating Holy Week events in Jerusalem is marred by the awareness that many Palestinian Christians are forbidden to come to Jerusalem to participate in the Palm Sunday walk or the Maundy Thursday procession from Jerusalem to Gethsemane. A shared Jerusalem insists that it be open for all. No one owns Jerusalem. It is God's Jerusalem.

Unity of Christian presence. In Jerusalem Jesus prayed that believers might be one (John 17:2123). Churches need to transcend their particular histories, re-

nounce prejudice, and work for mutual understanding. As a symbol, the mother church of Jerusalem can help Christians transcend their particular community affiliations. Today there are hopeful signs of increasing unity among Jerusalem churches, both among Palestinian Christians and between Palestinian Christians and Jewish believers in Jesus. Christians from abroad should help to heal division rather than increase fragmentation.

Palestinian Christians are a minority within a minority. The diminishing number of Christians in the region due to emigration is of great concern to the Christian community. Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey, on a visit to Jerusalem in 1992, expressed hope that the diminishing number of Christians would not result in an "empty theme park." How tragic if the church should cease to be meaningfully present in the city where it was born.

How can Christians be an authentic presence in Jerusalem? Surely the living Christian community (the temple of Jesus) is of greater significance than the Temple Mount. Community-centered faith is more important than site-centered faith. 

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Six-Day War were nothing short of miraculous. News reports on the wars of 1948 and 1967 read like excerpts from Exodus and Joshua. How could Bible believers complain or question what was happening? One did not have to be a dispensationalist to see that God was obviously in control and vitally concerned with Israel. After 1967, many people who had not given it much thought before were willing to consider Israel's prophetic significance.

The late great planet Earth

The 1970s brought a major change in the evangelical-Israel relationship. The Israelis began to understand the importance of the American evangelical community. According to Paul Boyer, "As liberal Protestant support eroded, Israel played its fundamentalist card. Privately ridiculing premillennialist readings of prophecy . . . , they recognized an important political bloc and dealt with it accordingly." On the American side, evangelicals realized that they needed to become more hands-on in their support of the Jewish state due to the increasing pressure on Israel to make peace with its neighbors by giving up occupied territory. Often this support turned into strong political advocacy, with right-wing political connections.

An intense courtship began. In 1971 Carl Henry, former edi-

tor of CHRISTIANITY TODAY, announced a prophecy conference in Jerusalem. Fifteen hundred delegates from 32 nations showed up. Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion greeted the delegates, and the Israeli government provided the meeting hall free of charge. That started a flood of favored treatment of American evangelicals from the Israeli government. The airport in Tel Aviv was quickly overrun by evangelical tour groups.

Entourages led by the likes of Jerry Falwell, Oral Roberts, or Hal Lindsey were treated to briefings by Israeli cabinet officers, such as Defense Minister Moshe Arens or Prime Minister Menachem Begin. Every televangelist worth his Nielsen Ratings scheduled his own tour; and the Israeli Ministry of Tourism brought evangelical pastors to Israel at little or no expense so that they could return later with their own tour groups. In January 1998, Israel brought at its own expense a large contingent of American evangelical seminary presidents and deans to the Holy Land.

The more this relationship developed, the more blatantly political evangelical support for Israel became. Hal Lindsey is a perfect case in point. In 1970 he published what became the bestselling book of the decade, *The Late Great Planet Earth*, which introduced dispensationalism to the widest audience ever.

Lindsey jazzed up the standard dispensational scenario by showing its connection to current events. The Antichrist's revived Roman Empire was the European Common Market. The northern confederacy was the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc. The southern confederacy was an Arab-African coalition headed by Egypt. The kings of the east were the Chinese Communists. He translated "fire and brimstone" into nuclear explosions and showed the chaos of the sixties as signs of the times. He predicted that before Antichrist is revealed and end-times events accelerate, the United States will decline into a second-rate power, done in by materialism, immorality, addiction to drugs, and false religion—or possibly destroyed by a surprise nuclear attack.

It was scary stuff, and Lindsey said exactly what he wanted his readers to do about it: accept Jesus as Lord and Savior and escape the wrath to come. For all its prophetic razzle-dazzle, *The Late Great Planet Earth* was essentially an evangelistic exercise.

When Lindsey took another look at world conditions ten years later, his perspective had changed considerably. Though still interested in evangelism, *The 1980s: Countdown to Armageddon* contained a full-blown political agenda. He maintained his prediction that "the U.S. must fade from its place of leadership for the west and its former supreme superpower status," but now he believed that if American Christians acted quickly, it might not happen until *after* the Rapture. His suggestions for slowing America's downward slide sounded like a page from the political Right's playbook. He blamed America's ills on a group of conspirators (the Council on Foreign Relations, the Trilateral Commission, and other political liberals) who had dismantled the military and undercut free enterprise. "... I believe that the Bible supports building a powerful military force. And the Bible is telling the U.S. to become strong again." "We need to clean house in Washington, and elect a Congress and a President who believe in the capitalist system." Only then could America give Israel the help it needed.

The politics of loving Israel

By the time Lindsey wrote *The 1980s*, conservative American evangelicals were finding their political voice. Concerned about what was happening to their country, they formed groups like the Moral Majority and the Religious Roundtable to help elect Ronald Reagan President in 1980. For the first time ever, premillennialists were becoming political insiders, and they liked it. In *The 1980s* Lindsey reported that the success of *The Late Great Planet Earth* had opened many doors for him. He had been invited to speak about Bible prophecy to Jamaican government officials, military planners at the American Air War College and the Pentagon, and to Israeli government officials.

It was becoming obvious to everybody that believing in Bible prophecy could have profound political consequences. Shortly after the Six-Day War, evangelicals organized Christians Concerned for Israel, which later changed its name to the National Christian Leadership Conference for Israel. The NCLC's goal was to "educate the American public, and especially the Christians, in the political and religious significance of the close relationship between the United States and Israel." The NCLC opposed any attempt to internationalize Jerusalem or trade West Bank land for peace. It defended Israel's invasion of Lebanon by putting on a pro-Israel rally at the White House and running a large ad in the *New York Times*.

No Israeli prime minister since Menachem Begin would

think of making a trip to the United States without checking in with leaders of the New Christian Right in both public and private meetings. In April 1998, Benjamin Netanyahu spoke to a National Unity Coalition for Israel gathering, which included Kay Arthur of Precept Ministries, the *700 Club*'s Terry Meeuwsen, Paige Patterson (now president of the Southern Baptist Convention), columnist Cal Thomas, and a host of politicians such as Senators Trent Lott and Sam Brownback and Representatives Dick Armey, Dick Gephardt, and Tom DeLay. Jerry Falwell was there, too, and gave a speech against the internationalization of Jerusalem.

Falwell is a major player in the evangelical-Israel connection. When Netanyahu visited the United States in January 1998, Falwell helped arrange a meeting between the prime minister and a number of other evangelical leaders, including John Hagee and Southern Baptists Morris Chapman and Richard Land. Falwell and the others pledged to mobilize the evangelical community against the Clinton administration's pressure on Israel to give up more land to the Palestinians. "There are about 200,000 evangelical pastors in America, and we're asking them all through e-mail, faxes, letters, telephone, to go into their pulpits and use their influence in support of the state of Israel and the prime minister."

Pat Robertson likewise uses his vast connections and his Christian Broadcasting Network to promote Israel. He regularly features news stories about the Holy Land on his *700 Club* and invites Israeli officials to appear. During a January 1998 interview with Netanyahu, Robertson asked him, "What would you like our audience to do?" He replied, "I think they are already doing it . . . , letters to the editor, communications with representatives . . . to support Israel."

**Bible prophecy
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The pro-Israel network

Examples of this kind of public advocacy by evangelical leaders are endless. But the real story in the last 20 years is the founding of scores of small, grassroots, pro-Israel organizations that rarely get into the headlines. They exist to educate and mobilize their local evangelical community to support Israel in the current crisis.

Some have rather specialized missions. Many help Israel by teaching Christians about the Jewish roots of their own faith. The Restoration Foundation of Atlanta puts on seminars, colloquia, and retreats to promote "the restoration of all believers to their rightful heritage in the Judaism of the first century church" and love for Israel and its people. The Arkansas Institute of Holy Land Studies in Sherwood, Arkansas, advertises itself as a "specialty college" and offers unaccredited bachelor's and master's degrees in "Middle East History."

Some of these groups promote Messianic Judaism as the truest form of Christianity. Hebraic Heritage Ministries of Houston wants Christians to worship on the Sabbath (Sunday worship is a product of paganism) and observe the Jewish festivals. First Fruits of Zion Ministries is based in Jerusalem but tries to get American Christians to live like Jews: to keep kosher, study Hebrew, keep the Sabbath and the festivals, and learn messianic Jewish dances (see CT, Sept. 7, 1998, p. 62).

Some of the pro-Israel evangelical groups are more humanitarian than educational. The Tulsa-based Bridges for Peace is a

charitable organization working in Israel. Its "Operation Ezra" provides food, blankets, kitchen and school supplies, home-repair items, and the like to new immigrants and others in need. It claims its food bank is the only one currently operating in Israel. Its pitch for support says, "Don't just read about prophecy when you can be part of it!"

One of the most innovative humanitarian organizations is Christian Friends for Israeli Communities, which was founded in 1995 by Ted Beckett, a commercial real estate developer from Colorado Springs. He organized the CFIC to provide "solidarity, comfort, and aid" to Jewish settlements in Judea, Samaria, and the regions of Gaza by linking them with evangelical congregations in the United States.

At present 35 congregations are part of the program. Beckett's goal is to provide an evangelical partner for every Jewish settlement that wants one, which he estimates to be 100 to 110 out of 150 settlements. Each congregation is taught how to "link" with its assigned community by identifying pen pals, making e-mail connections, helping with fundraising, sending books or other supplies. Churches are also expected to promote awareness of Israel in their own communities. Beckett knows that his work is also political because, he says, God is sending Jesus back to Israel to set up his kingdom. There is nothing more political than that.

In short, there is an enormous network of pro-Israel and Christian Zionist organizations. Most of them have their own Web pages on the Internet, and they usually have links to one another. Unlike many other evangelical groups, they understand the virtues of cooperation. An umbrella organization that tries to bring them together from time to time is the International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem. Founded in 1980, the embassy, which has no real diplomatic standing, opposes internationalizing Jerusalem and establishing a Palestinian state. It has offices in over 50 countries and does what it can to encourage and facilitate Christian Zionism. Over 1,500 people from 40 countries attended its Third International Christian Zionist Congress in Jerusalem in 1996.

Last things

Israel has needed all the friends it can get, and evangelicals have been loyal, productive supporters. When Israel invaded Lebanon in 1982, no one defended it more strenuously in the U.S. than evangelicals. At one time, Israeli prime ministers could count on the strong support of both the U.S. President and the American Jewish community. But the present prime minister has neither. Netanyahu's relationship with President Clinton is strained, and the Jewish community is deeply divided over some policies of Israel's present government. Netanyahu was correct when he said that American evangelicals are the best friends Israel (i.e., his government) has.

But friendship comes at a cost. Supporting Israel has often meant that evangelicals must not be as evangelistic as they would like to be. Cooperation is difficult when one side is trying to convert the other. This does not mean that evangelicals stop believing that Jews need to be saved, only that evangelism must always be the first priority in their relationship. Evan-

gelicals probably learned how to do this when they re-entered the world of politics in the late seventies. The Moral Majority welcomed Jews, Catholics, Mormons, and anybody else who shared common concerns. Falwell often said that since the organization was political, not religious, everybody could get along. Ted Beckett tells participating churches that people are always free to share their faith if asked, but they are not permitted to engage in any kind of overt proselytism. He says that he will "yank the charter" of any congregation in his project that tries to make a direct religious appeal to Jews in Israel. But old habits die hard.

For their part, Jews must learn to ignore what evangelicals

believe about Bible prophecy and the need for all Jews to come to Jesus. Just as it is difficult for evangelicals to lay evangelism aside, so some Jews find it hard to ignore the motives behind evangelical support.

Rabbi James Rudin, interreligious affairs director of the American Jewish Committee, complains that "some of the very same people who are most supportive of the state of Israel and its security and well-being don't see Judaism as a full and valid religion. It's like 'Israel si, Jews no.' " Rudin is also critical of Jews who turn a deaf ear to such teachings in order to gain more allies for Israel. "Many American Jews will say: 'Any port in a storm. If they support Israel, . . . don't worry too much about the apocalypse.' "

One Jew who prefers not to worry is Esther Levens. In 1990 she and Christian friend Allen Mothersill decided to start a

pro-Israel, interreligious study group after the Bush administration started making loans to Israel contingent on not allowing new Jewish settlements on the West Bank. Levens was surprised to discover the level of support for Israel among evangelicals, so she decided to network as many evangelical and Jewish organizations as she could find. The result was Voices United for Israel, which currently enrolls two hundred organizations, of which two-thirds are evangelical.

In 1998, the Kansas City-based organization sponsored two conferences in Washington, D.C., at which Netanyahu spoke, and the group's "media committee" has consulted with Israeli government officials in the development of new promotional and educational materials for use in American media markets. The organization faxes information about Israel to anyone who is interested and sponsors a speakers' bureau of heavy hitters from think tanks involved in Middle East policy.

Politically, Voices United for Israel is fairly homogeneous, but religiously, it is diverse. While the Christian contingent is almost all evangelical, the Jewish contingent ranges from Orthodox to Reform. What holds everyone together, says Levens, is their support for Israel and its current government and their willingness not to press religious differences. She knows about the prophetic views of the evangelicals in her organization and chooses not to dwell on them. For her, the important thing is that evangelicals love and support Israel. But still, Levens and her Jewish friends can get a bit mystified. A common joke in their circles is, "When the Messiah finally comes, my first question to him will be whether this visit is his first or second."

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Ira Nosenchuk of Brooklyn, who attended the Voices United for Israel Conference in April, summarized the spirit of cooperative compromise well: "When you have people supportive of your beliefs, . . . you have to go with them. . . . Sometimes I feel like there are more supporters for Israel among evangelicals than among Jews." Supporting Israel makes the strangest bedfellows.

The evangelical-Israel relationship also raises important theological issues. Despite the widespread influence of their views, dispensationalists have always made up a minority of the entire evangelical family. But their prophetic beliefs raise important questions that all Christians need to think about seriously.

As Christian history makes clear, in the wrong hands the doctrines of providence, divine sovereignty, and eschatology become fatalism; and fatalism takes the significance out of human action. If the future is fixed, people are merely playing out their assigned roles, with no ability to alter the direction or outcome of the divine drama. If one is privy to the process, one can identify the players, evaluate their performance, and make judgments about them. When one knows how the drama is going to end, there are no surprises. At times, then, dispensationalist prophecy can be quite fatalistic.

Eschatological activism

So why are evangelicals working so hard to keep Israel strong and independent? Why bother when they know how things are going to end up? How do their prophetic views and their political involvement fit together? These are hard questions to answer because evangelical political activists and prophecy teachers rarely if ever reflect on such issues. They do say that Christians must "occupy" until the Lord comes and that supporting Israel is a basic biblical imperative, citing Genesis 12:3 as their proof text: "I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you" (NIV). But neither observation says anything about what constitutes responsible action when historical outcomes are essentially determined.

Obviously, many evangelicals do not want to do anything to put themselves at cross purposes with God over Israel and the end times. The tendency is for many evangelicals to idealize Israel and believe that it can do no wrong. Some evangelicals have demonized the Palestinians: because they are the enemies of the modern State of Israel, they are also the enemies of God and the servants of Satan.

When evangelicals force all the complicated issues in the Middle East through the tight grid of their prophetic views, they can lose the ability to think critically and ethically about what is really going on there. For example, many evangelicals are reluctant even to consider the ethical issues involved in the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land and their 1982 invasion and occupation of southern Lebanon. Many Christians—mainline Protestants, Roman Catholics, and evangelicals among them—believe that Israel has some hard explaining to do.

While Jews have a right to be secure within their own borders, do they have the right to seize other people's land, occupy their territory, ignore their rights of self-determination, and bulldoze or blow up the homes and businesses of Palestinian families? Certainly the relationship between Jews and Palestinians in Israel poses difficult questions, and people of good will may disagree about what is justifiable when survival is at stake. But for prophetic reasons, many evangelicals seem unable to entertain the possibility that Israel may be at fault in some way for the stalemate in the region. Evangelicals need to consider whether believing in Bible prophecy absolves them of grap-

pling with issues of right and wrong. Does having a handle on the prophetic details allow them to turn a blind eye to injustice? Do the ends justify the means, just because the ends have been prophesied? Richard Cizik of the National Association of Evangelicals believes that most evangelicals simply have not thought through the issue of Jewish settlements in Palestinian territories. Maybe it is time they start.

Of course, premillennialists are not the only Christians who struggle with issues of human responsibility and divine providence. These are tough issues and worth thinking through. Answers do not come easily. How do human beings participate with God in unfolding history? Drawing lines on a prophetic chart is easy in comparison to unpacking the complexities of the divine-human relationship within the historical process.

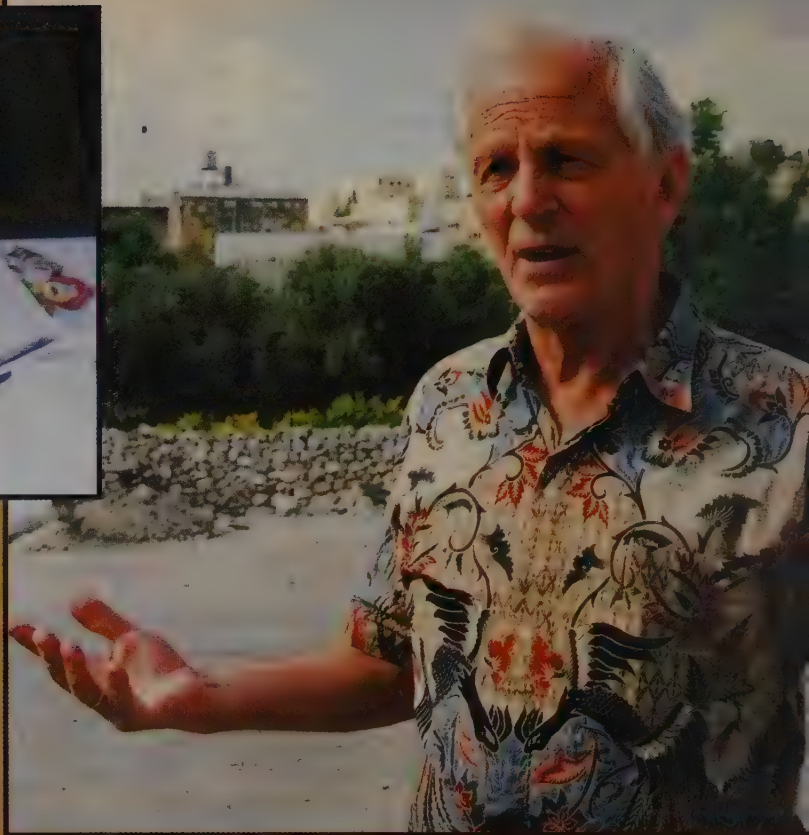
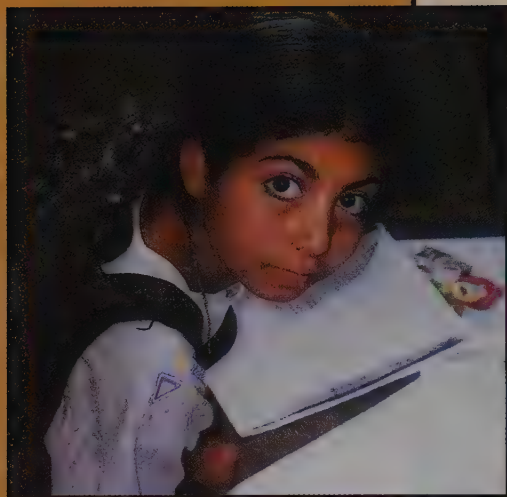
The most serious issue that grows out of the relationship between evangelicals and Israel is whether the connection has helped or hindered the peace process. Because of their prophetic views, evangelicals are often less than optimistic about the prospects for peace. For instance, Jerry Falwell sounded downright scornful of the Camp David peace accords that were brokered by fellow evangelical Jimmy Carter in 1979. "In spite of the rosy and utterly unrealistic expectations by our government, this treaty will not be a lasting treaty. . . . You and I know that there's not going to be any real peace in the Middle East until the Lord Jesus sits down upon the throne of David in Jerusalem."

Falwell and other evangelicals have a right to be skeptical. Agreements have been fragile. But 20 years is not bad for a Middle East peace treaty. Even so, no one really expects any human peace accord to be "lasting." Most are only temporary. But that does not mean that they are worthless. The pessimistic attitude of many other evangelicals toward peace in the Middle East does not give even a temporary peace much of a chance. And it certainly does not honor Jesus' words "Blessed are the peacemakers." No peace is perfect; no peace lasts forever. But how can anyone be sure that we are so close to the end that peacemaking is a waste of time?

Part of the problem is the overconfidence evangelicals have about their prophetic views. Bible teachers are not inerrant; and they have changed their minds often. The history of prophetic interpretation shows that the Devil is in the details. Premillennialist prophecy pundits have been wrong over and over again about identifying Antichrist, setting dates for the Rapture, and a host of other things. Nobody anticipated the demise of the Soviet empire or most aspects of the Gulf War. When history takes unexpected turns, the experts have to make adjustments, redraw their maps, and come out with new editions. History is still full of surprises—so why make categorical statements about what cannot happen between Israel and her neighbors?

A new generation of dispensationalist scholars has toned down the excesses and sensationalism of its predecessors. "Progressive dispensationalists," though seeing a future for national Israel, are less inclined to engage in map drawing and categorical predictions. When one is teaching or writing for a well-defined religious community, speculating about the future is one thing; but when one is engaging in political advocacy with far-reaching consequences, it is another. The future is in God's hands; in the end, Jesus wins. But getting to that point may be more complicated and full of surprises than many people think. It is time for a strategy of humility and hope. **CT**

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Brother

Andrew's

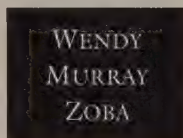
Boldest

Mission Yet:

"Smuggling" Jesus

Brother Andrew said once, "Show me a closed door and I will tell you how you can get in." (He added, "I won't, however, promise you a way to get out.") Erstwhile "God's Smuggler" (and author, with John and Elizabeth Sherrill, of the book by that name), Andrew goes to places most of us avoid to interact with people most of us dismiss in order to aid Christians in circumstances most of us know little or nothing about. He founded the (aptly named) Open Doors ministry to champion the cause of the suffering church around the world and to facilitate his enigmatic ventures of goodwill. Both he and the ministry have come a long way since the 1950s when he started smuggling desperately needed Bibles to Christians behind the Iron Curtain, hiding them in the back seat of his beat-up Volkswagen Beetle.

This year Brother Andrew turned 70, celebrated 40 years of marriage to his wife, Corry, and welcomed their first grandchild. He will tell you, looking back on his life, that his dreams



have come true. Open Doors has made a significant impact and has grown into a force he never imagined: "The curtains have come down in the communist world. That is what I worked for. I am very happy about that."

God's Smuggler introduced his burden for Christians behind the Iron Curtain to fellow believers all over the world, which created a network of support that multiplied the reach of Open Doors. Today the ministry has offices in 20 countries and 200 full-time workers. (Brother Andrew serves as president emeritus.) Through Open Doors, Brother Andrew has brought Bibles and Christian materials to struggling churches in the one-time communist Eastern bloc, to China, Cuba, Vietnam, Africa, and Latin America. They have sponsored "congresses" (like the Love Africa Congress in the 1970s that brought together leaders from all over the continent for prayer and ministry support), prayer campaigns (such as Seven Years of Prayer for the Soviet Union that began in the early 1980s), and "projects" (Project Pearl delivered clandestinely a million Bibles to China in 1981 and Project Crossfire distributed Christian litera-



Brother Andrew's plea: That Palestinian children (left) and Islamic leaders (like Chief Justice of Pakistan Nasim Hasan Shah, above) can answer the question "Who is God?"

nto Muslim Hearts

ture throughout Latin America in 1985).

In this decade, Open Doors has sponsored Project Samuel, which supplied a million schoolchildren in the former Soviet Union with their first Bibles; distributed 20,000 "unofficial" copies of a Chinese Study Bible to church leaders; presented the first complete Albanian Bible to the president there; and initiated Ten Years of Prayer for the Church in the Muslim World.

In 1997 alone, Open Doors distributed 814,041 Bibles; 210,908 New Testaments; 87,606 Gospels; 650,843 "spiritual books"; 387,050 other forms of Christian literature; and trained tens of thousands of pastors and lay leaders in seminars and workshops. (This does not include their visits to imprisoned Christians, emergency help for families of martyrs, church repairs, medical aid, legal support, relocation assistance, vocational training, and just plain *being there*. A church leader in Lebanon recalls the time

when his home was bombed; as he staggered amidst the rubble, he saw Brother Andrew making his way through the wreckage just to be there with him.)

But there is one dream (with two parts) that remains unrealized: The church in the Middle East is dwindling, and the Islamic strongholds are not being penetrated with the gospel. "Communism proclaimed that there is no God, which is stupid and schizophrenic," he says, "because they say there is no God, and then they fight him. The challenge now is not that proclamation; it's the challenge of *Who is God?*"

"Islam confronts us with that question."

Colliding realities

When *God's Smuggler* came out in 1967—powerful as it was in rallying support for the those languishing behind the Iron Curtain (it sold over 10 million copies in 27 languages)—it ended Brother Andrew's access to these countries. "I could not go back there,

and it caused me a lot of heartache to even make the decision [to do] the book."

At that time, he took a trip to the Middle East. He foresaw a power shift taking place that he sensed would pose a critical challenge to the church: He anticipated the disintegration of the communist stronghold; he was witnessing the moral and spiritual collapse of the Western world; and he predicted the ascendance of Islam as both a world power and a religious force.

In 1973, during the energy crisis, the OPEC oil cartel doubled the price of a barrel of oil (from \$2.55 to \$5.09). Western nations gave in to the price hike, which sent the signal to these oil-producing nations that they had power. This, says Brother Andrew, became the defining moment in the realization of his prophetic insights. "Islamic eschatology teaches that in the end time, Islam will conquer and rule the world. In 1973, Islam woke up to the fact that Allah had put oil under their sand for 'such a time as this.'"

Oil, it turns out, is the lifeblood of the West, which has placed these desert kingdoms in a position of near-apocalyptic importance. This has created a complicated network of colliding realities that Western Christians face when it comes to understanding the Middle East. This network consists (in broad

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'Who is God?'

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strokes) of the following aspects:

- *Oil* is in high demand in the West;
- *Demand* has heightened the power and influence of these Islamic nations;
- *Islamic power and influence* have shaped American politics in the region;
- *Politics* is driven by the requirements of a consuming culture ("The moment we discover you can run cars on water," says Brother Andrew, "we'll drop the Saudis.");
- *Consuming culture* has (to a greater or lesser degree) influenced the outlook of the Western church;
- *The Western church* has inadequately understood both the politics of the region and the religious sensibilities of Islam;
- *Islam* is asserting itself (both politically and religiously) and expanding its influence.

Brother Andrew says that Islam threatens the viability of Christianity in this region and internationally, not because these nations have oil (integral though that may be in this picture), but because Islam has forced the question *Who is God?* and Western evangelicals have been unable to answer that question.

He describes a conversation he shared with some leaders in *Hamas* (the fundamentalist Islamic resistance movement in the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem whose aim is to reverse

Israeli occupation and establish an Islamic state in Palestine):

"I challenged the Hamas leadership about the suicide bombers, and they denied that they had suiciders. 'There is no suicide in Islam,' they said.

"Then what about the bombers in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem?"

"One man said with full conviction, 'It is religious.'"

They have an endless supply of "suiciders," Brother Andrew says, because everybody wants to go to heaven. Crying *Allahu Akbar*, they blow themselves up (and those around them) and are ushered straight to heaven proclaiming "God is greater!"

"Greater than whom?" Brother Andrew asks. "Than Jesus, than Jehovah, than the God of the Christians," he says. "One Muslim terrorist, before he got himself killed, made a video recording of himself. He said, 'Our love for death is greater than your love for life.'"

"Unless we come willingly to enter into dialogue—not to win, but to witness to the point of laying down our lives—we won't get anywhere. This is what I saw the Russian and the Chinese Christians do under communism: lay down their lives in the gulag, in the re-education camps, in the labor camps. That's why the church won.

"We've entered a very difficult time of total misunderstanding, miscommunication, misinformation, hostility, and not talking to each other.

"I want to change that," he says.

So his most recent—and perhaps most controversial—ministry focus has shifted to the Middle East where he witnesses boldly about Jesus (by invitation) in the gatherings of Hamas and Hizbollah (the latter—the Party of Allah—is a Lebanese fundamentalist movement within Islam) and extends encouragement and solidarity to the dwindling Christian population in the land where Jesus walked.

Fleet-footed troublemaker

Brother Andrew's propensity to defy the odds has contributed to his being widely misunderstood. The answers to the many questions his activity provokes (What is he doing hobnobbing with terrorists? What about the ethics of smuggling? Why doesn't he use a last name?) are grounded in who Brother Andrew is: he is a no-nonsense doer, with no patience for committees. This can be seen in both his nature and his nurture.

Brother Andrew is, by nature, unfazed by the prospect of dying. When his beloved older brother Bas lay dying of tuberculosis, the young Andrew (age 11) determined that "if Bas was going to die, then I wanted to die too." He threw himself on top of his dying brother and "kissed him again and again on the mouth." (Bas died a few months later while the young Andrew remained "healthy as ever." He felt as if God had "betrayed [him] twice.")

He is, by nature, spirited and adventurous. When the Germans bombed an airstrip four kilometers from his home in Holland on his twelfth birthday (May 1940), he acted out his self-confessed "fantasies of resistance" by sneaking out at night, taking the family's highly treasured sugar ration, and dumping it into the gas tank of the "fat little German lieutenant." "Everyone in the village was amused when the lieutenant's staff car began to give him trouble."

He is, by nature, a risk taker. On another occasion during the

occupation, late at night he tossed a cherry bomb onto the lieutenant's doorstep, purposefully waiting until the village patrol was in sight. ("I thought it would be fun to have these old men in their heavy boots run after me." He was the fastest runner in his hometown.) In his fantasizing, he didn't reckon on guns. When one soldier cocked and aimed his, the young boy tossed the firecracker and bolted. Running in zigzags, darting over bridges, and taking cover in the cabbage patch, he evaded them and was "elated by this success," which inspired him to start brazenly "discharging volleys" in broad daylight.

He is, by nature, stubborn and impulsive. At the age of 17, wanting to be treated like a man, he joined the army and broke his mother's heart. ("She had seen enough of armies," he said.) While in training, an officer asked him, on the spot, if he could drive a Bren carrier (a tank). Not wanting to appear weak and dumb (and feeling sure he could figure it out), he said that he could—failing to mention that he didn't even know how to drive a car.

He was right when he thought he could drive it; he just couldn't figure out how to stop it. The tank quickly picked up speed: "Arms flailing and feet flying, I tried every button and lever I could find. . . . [A]nd with one last surge of power we plowed into the row of Bren carriers parked at the curb. All seven of them bucked forward, each slamming against the other until we came to rest, hissing and smoking."

But other external forces—what I refer to as his "nurture"—have tempered his extremes.

For example, by "nurture," he has reckoned with calamity. The German occupation meant hardship and squalor for Andrew's family: all electricity was reserved for the Germans, so the family's oil lamps were fueled by oil they made from cabbage seeds; the Germans took all the vegetables from their gardens, so they ate tulip bulbs; the military took over Andrew's school building when he was in the sixth grade, so he never completed his education.

By nurture, he has been softened by personal loss. On the day he left home for the army to serve in Indonesia after the war, as he said good-bye to his mother, she pulled her little Bible from her apron. Handing it to him she asked, "Will you read it, Andrew?" (She had taken him to church every Sunday as a boy, but he had always managed to sneak out and enjoy the morning skating the frozen canals or sitting in the fields.)

He put the Bible in his duffle bag "as far down as it could go" and promptly forgot it. That encounter was the last time he saw his mother.

He has, by "nurture," been broken by his own misguided adventures. He found himself in a situa-



tion in the army when he realized that he had been wrong about this "adventure." He and his company had been in combat in Indonesia for weeks when they entered a village that was riddled with land mines. When they stumbled into the mines, fatigued and disoriented, the company "went berserk:" "Without orders, without reasoning . . . we shot everything in sight"—including unarmed civilians.

"I wanted to kill myself after that," he said. And he bought a bright, yellow straw hat that he wore into combat, making himself an easy target for enemy fire. He was eventually shot, but not killed, as he had hoped. The bullet shattered his ankle, making the fleet-footed, dare-devil Dutch boy more or less a cripple.

These external forces eventually broke him and precipitated an inner crisis. Standing at his mother's grave after he returned, he said, "I did read your Bible, Mama. Not at first, but I did read it.

"Mama, what am I going to do now? I feel so useless. And guilty. Answer me, Mama."

No answer came from the grave that day, but his answers did eventually come. At one point, during his weeks in occupational therapy at a nearby veterans' hospital, a young woman invited Andrew to attend a tent revival. Motivated more by the desire to escape the hospital than by spiritual sensitivities, Andrew and a friend attended the meeting. By the time they entered, they were giddy with amusement, having finished off half a bottle of alcohol they had snuck in. They sat in the rear of the tent so they could finish off the rest. They choked back the laughter when a "funny-looking man" took to the podium.

Andrew's hilarity stopped short, however, when the speaker announced from the podium that "there were two people in the congregation who were bound by powers they couldn't control." Later in prayer the speaker prayed for "our brethren over whom foreign spirits have gained influence." He

Occasional breakdowns: Brother Andrew's Volkswagen Beetle was once his sole means of getting Bibles to suffering Christians.

ended the service with the song "Let My People Go."

Andrew did not "go forward" that night. But the song's words—"Let them go; let me go"—haunted him for days, to the extent that he picked up the Bible his mother gave him, which he hadn't looked at in years. "All the passages that had seemed so puzzling when I struggled through them before read now like a fast-paced action yarn."

He spent so much time in his bed reading his Bible that his father and siblings were alarmed. "Papa says it's shell shock," his sister said to him. He started attending church—this time to *learn* something (and not to mock the speaker). But as sincere as his newfound spiritual interest was, he couldn't apprehend the faith in a way that made it seem *real* to him.

Then, during a winter night in 1950 (Andrew was 21) when a storm descended, he seemed to hear in the wind: "Let my people go. . . ." It was as if the wind was telling him what he needed to do. He prayed, "Lord, if you will show me the way, I will follow you." In that moment, he says, "I let go of my ego," and all those no-holds-barred attributes that he possessed "by nature" were under new command. (He opted not to tell his family about his conversion because, he said, "they were worried enough about me already.")

Gospel with a G-O

He spent two years at the Worldwide Evangelization Crusade (WEC) missionary school in Glasgow, Scotland (1953–55), taking Bible classes, systematic theology, homiletics, linguistics, and car mechanics. As "an exercise of faith" the students (in groups of five) were sent out throughout Scotland on a four-week missionary tour with only a one-pound note. They were expected to pay for their transportation, lodging, food, any advertising, and renting of halls (plus refreshments); they were

not allowed to take up offerings or mention monetary needs; and they were expected to remit the one pound upon their return. (Andrew's team came back with enough extra money to send some to WEC missions overseas.)

As he prepared to return to Holland in 1955, after completing his schooling, he stumbled upon a magazine that advertised a youth festival sponsored by the Communist party to be held in Warsaw, Poland, that summer. He wrote and told them he was training to become a Christian missionary and asked if they would allow him to attend the festival to exchange ideas. (They would talk about socialism; he would talk about Jesus.)

"Most certainly," was their reply, and the festival organizers gave him a student discount. This trip was to be the turning point in Andrew's life.

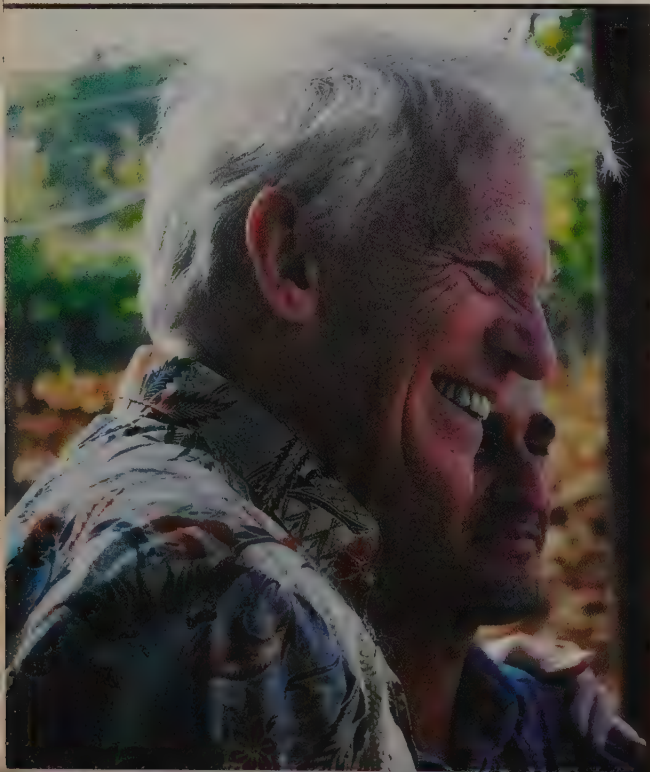
He visited an unregistered (and thus struggling) Baptist church while he was there and was unexpectedly asked to bring a message. Afterward, the pastor said, "Even if you had not said a word, just seeing you would have meant so much. We feel at times as if we are all alone in our struggle."

Andrew pondered the situation of this church, with hardly any young people, comparing it to the other more "successful" "state approved" churches he had visited. He also recalled a student march he had seen with the young, robust, clean-cut socialists marching eight abreast. "They marched singing, and their voices were like shouts."

His heart ached for the Communist youth who had so zealously given themselves to this cause, and he was troubled by the lack of resources and support that the nonstate-approved churches faced, which diminished their numbers and stifled their ability to grow in spiritual maturity. He asked God, "What should I do?" He found his answer in the Book of Revelation. The words jumped out at him: "Awake and strengthen what remains, and is on the point of death" (Rev. 3:2).

From that moment to this, "serving the suffering church worldwide" has defined Brother Andrew's (and later Open Doors') mandate. This meant, he says, "We find out what a church needs, [and] we come back and supply it, whatever they ask." In most cases, during the early years in the Eastern bloc, they desperately needed Bibles. He prayed before each border crossing: "Lord, in my luggage I have Scripture that I want to take to your children across this border. When you were on earth, You made the blind to see. Now, I pray, make the seeing eyes blind." Sometimes he would lay a few Bibles in open view on the back seat of the car and answer honestly when officials asked what they were (to disarm suspicion that there might be more). As far as was possible, he chose to operate within the bounds of the law. When the civil law co-opted God's law, however, he would "obey God rather than man." (In 1981 he orchestrated the secret delivery of one million Bibles to China on a single night. The idea came from the Christians in China, and they told Brother Andrew's team how, when, and where to do it. That was "very illegal," he says.)

His desire to go to the suffering Christians ("you can't spell the *gospel* or even *God* without first spelling *go*") ultimately compelled him to stop using his last name. The more he traveled (and had an impact), the more difficult it was becoming for him to register at hotels and to cross borders. "Anonymity was becoming a problem. If I kept using my real name when I spoke, wouldn't I jeopardize my freedom to come and go across borders?" Last names had "almost ceased to exist among Christians" behind the Iron



Curtain. So for all these reasons, "God's smuggler" decided to drop his last name. Henceforth he has been known only as Brother Andrew.

Where Jesus walked

His mandate to "strengthen what remains and is on the point of death" has led him to prisons, refugee shelters, and house churches in the farthest reaches of the globe. But most recently it has led him to the land of Jesus—specifically, to the churches that are struggling for survival in the West Bank and Gaza.

"I have never seen so much despair that leads to running away, and to violence, and to conversion to Islam," says Brother Andrew of the Christians in Bethlehem. "There is one tiny evangelical church in all of Gaza, and I preach there every year. Every time I'm there the numbers are down. The last time I preached a couple of months ago, there were only 12 Christians."

Fifty years ago the number of Christians living in "the Holy Land" (Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza) hovered around 30 percent, according to Brother Andrew (other sources estimate 10 percent). Today a generous estimate would put the Christian population at 2.3 percent of the 5.7 million Israelis and 2.5 million Palestinians. (Andrew thinks it is more like 1.8 percent.) Some of this is due to the massive influx of Jewish immigration in recent years, but there has also been a significant exodus of Christians, who endure severe hardship if they choose to stay.

"If a bomb goes off or a boy throws a stone, then they close all the schools," he says. "The schools are closed most of the time. The [Bethlehem] Bible College was closed." And even when they are open, very often students and staff cannot get to schools if they are coming from outside the area. So the cumulative loss of days adds up. The high unemployment rate in Gaza and the West Bank makes finding jobs very difficult. So, on one level, diplomas, when they are earned, "are worthless"—not academically so much as in the sense that many graduates feel, What is the use of having a diploma if I cannot get out of my 'prison'?

"There is no electricity for long periods of time because they cut it off," says Andrew. "They shut off the water, so they take their laundry to another village. They can't travel—a farmer cannot go to his field because in between is a piece of Israel that he cannot cross."

Unemployment in Bethlehem hovers around 50 percent, according to Jane Handal (quoted in the Religious News Service [RNS]), an architect and Catholic Christian who lives in Bethlehem. "All the younger generation want to leave. All who study abroad stay where they are and try to find work. Opportunities are rare here." Many Christian families who have lived there for centuries (some since Pentecost) have decided to leave, "besieged by wars, unemployment, and the unstable peace between Arabs and Jews," writes Steve Chambers (for RNS).

Heaped upon the church's struggle for survival is

the insult of Christian tourists and pilgrims "walking where Jesus walked" while sidestepping their hurting brothers and sisters in the West Bank and Gaza. "Pilgrims come and go. They visit churches, visit the stones, but not the living church," says Claudette Habesch, who serves as secretary general of the Caritas Jerusalem charities office (quoted by Chambers). "Many pilgrims come and go without ever realizing there are Christians living in the Holy Land."

But Brother Andrew's concern for the dwindling Christian presence in the West Bank and Gaza encompasses only one aspect of his larger concern about the exponential and unchallenged rise of Islam in the Middle East. Muslims' "influence is growing while [Christians] are declining in influence," he says. "Christians are losing ground in the Muslim world."

The rise of Islam has remained largely unchecked

I tell them, 'You don't have to
blow yourself to pieces.

There's another way.

because of negligible Christian activity in this region. ("There is one missionary to every 250,000 Muslims," says Brother Andrew.) Both of these phenomena (the rise of Islam and the marginal Christian response) can be understood in terms of a modification of the "network of colliding realities" mentioned earlier:

- *Islam is asserting itself* because of increased prosperity from oil and meager Christian activity by the Western church;
- *The negligible Christian activity* is due, in part, to the outlook aroused by the politics of the region and a general lack of understanding;
- *The politics* of the region exists to secure access to oil in order to accommodate Western lifestyle demands;
- *Western lifestyle demands* have distorted both the Western view (including the Western church's view) of the Middle East and the Middle Eastern understanding of the West (including Western Christianity).

This is what Brother Andrew means when he says that Christians in the West and Muslims in the Middle East have "entered a very difficult time of total misunderstanding, miscommunication, misinformation, and hostility."

As he has come into relationship with many Muslims, including leaders of Hamas and Hizbollah, he has found that they are surprisingly open to Christianity—that is, once they understand what it is real-

There is another way: By loving Muslims, he shows them they don't have to die in jihad to see God.

ly all about. He has been invited to speak at gatherings of both groups, and in one instance, drew a crowd of 400.

"You see," he says, "every Muslim is afraid of the judgment day because, in their concept of good deeds and bad deeds, the bad angel is gloating: 'Your bad deeds are a lot greater than your good deeds.' Every Muslim lives under that condemnation and there is only one way out—and every Muslim knows it: to die in *jihad*."

"We must confront them with a greater determination," he says. Like the time he told some leaders in Hizbollah that he wanted to exchange his life for a hostage they were holding. Brother Andrew said, "Chain me to the radiator in the dark basement and let him go. He has suffered enough. Let him go back to his wife and children."

The Hizbollah leader's "eyes almost popped."

"I don't know how you can say that," he said.

"That's the spirit of Jesus," Andrew said. "He gave his life to let me go. Now I come to give my life so he can go." ("He did not follow my advice, but we became friends.")

This same leader came back to Andrew later and said, "Andrew, you Christians have a problem."

"What is it?"

"You Christians are not following the life of Jesus anymore."

"What do you think is the solution?"

"You must go back to the book, the New Testament."

"I figured if we Christians could go back to our book, we would obey the scriptural injunction: *love your enemy*. The moment I love my enemy," he says, "I have no enemy."

"I have lectured officially at the Hamas University on the subject 'What is real Christianity?' Every time I mentioned the prophet Muhammad the front row of Hamas leaders would whisper, 'Peace be upon him.'"

"*You can have that, I thought. But I am proclaiming Christ, and peace comes through him.*"

"I stand there and I open the New Testament and I read about the cross, about forgiveness, and this concept of God's love. Forgiveness is unknown. Allah forgives or he does not forgive, according to his will. They know nothing about the assurance of salvation. They're such uncertain people. Why are we not crying out with compassion and pity on a billion people like that? We're not dealing with structures. They are human people that have the same fear and pain and anxiety and love that I have."

"According to 1 Peter 3:15, we're supposed to 'give an account of the things that you hope and believe.' As we are transparent, and not political, they will accept you as their brother or sister, and together you can study the Scriptures and find out who God is."

"I tell them, 'You don't have to blow yourself to pieces. There's another way.'"

A plea to the church

Brother Andrew cites the last verse in Hebrews 11 to articulate his appeal to the Western church: "They [the suffering church] will not be perfect without us." But he puts on an addendum: "Nor will *we* be able to survive in the so-called free world without them." Why? Because the plight of our struggling brothers and sisters in conjunction with the rise of Islam is forcing the

Western church to answer the question, *Who is God?*

Islam rises in strength and numbers and the Christian presence dwindles, either because of outright persecution and discrimination or lack of governmental support. And there is little or no advocacy asserted by Western Christians for their struggling fellow believers. So Islam proclaims the victory of Allah over the God of the Christians, whose people are weak and whose churches are dying.

Brother Andrew extends a two-sided plea to American Christians. First, he asks that we actively advocate on behalf of Christians in the Middle East and offer financial support to the floundering Christian institutions there. That means, for example, when Christians visit Israel, they should seek out and encourage struggling brothers and sisters, even if that means going off the standard tourist trail.

"Christian evangelicals could make a point of insisting at the tourist office that they go to places like the Bethlehem Bible College," he says.

"I took a group to the Palestinian hospital on top of the Mount of Olives. The Muslim director was very helpful. We met a number of born-again Christian nurses in the hospital. It was the highlight of the whole trip."

Christians will be flocking to the Holy Land, especially as the new millennium approaches, many enamored with end-times prophecies. But, Andrew says, "The end-times prophecies can never be fulfilled if there is no church in the Middle East. There is no 'holy city,' only 'holy people.' There is a living church, and so there is a responsibility."

"We have a surplus of liberty, of knowledge, of goods, of resources that fit exactly their need," he says. "If we do not reach out to them, we are not fulfilling our God-given purposes for life. God gave us this for them. But keeping it, we commit spiritual suicide. I spoke at a prayer conference some years ago and said, 'Stop praying for revival [in America]' because God will not create a monster of the body of Christ by letting half of it grow huge beyond proportion and the other half shrivel into oblivion."

Brother Andrew's other plea involves becoming more aware of and concerned for Muslims. "Nothing will change until we begin to spell *Islam* 'I Sincerely Love All Muslims.' We Christians are not praying for Muslims. One [Christian] brother in prison told me that he was praying for his torturers. We are not even praying for our IRS men or gang members. It's one reason why America is in a mess—we're not praying for those who are 'enemies' of our society. We have to learn that lesson from the suffering church."

"Get prayer letters, read books about persecution—make them bestsellers!—and begin to pray. Very soon God will say, 'Why don't you answer your own prayer?'"

Not going to places that are more easily avoided, not interacting with people who are more comfortably dismissed, and not advocating for believers who struggle in situations we know little or nothing about will leave unanswered the question that Islam poses to the West. And going, interacting, and advocating can be, as Brother Andrew puts it, "a dangerous business."

"But the doors are not closed," he says. "Only when you are there can God tell you what you should do. Jesus said in Acts 1:8 to go. He didn't say 'Go, if the doors are open'; or 'Go, if you have an invitation or a red carpet treatment.'"

"He said, 'Go,' because people need his Word."

CT

The Muslim Challenge

One of the earliest prayers in the Bible is Abraham's prayer for his other son: "If only Ishmael might live under your blessing!" (Gen. 17:18). I believe that if more Christians will pray this prayer today, we will begin to have an impact for Jesus upon the world of Islam.

Today many of us have created an enemy image of the Muslims. They are all terrorists who hijack our planes, blow up our embassies, and take innocent people hostage. Not only is this untrue, but the very minute we view them this way we make it impossible to reach them with the gospel. God cannot use us.

Every trip I've made to the Middle East, beginning with my earliest visits to Israel and Jordan in the mid-1960s, has been an education. More often than not it has been a reeducation, because I've had to unlearn so many of the things I've been taught by

Western church leaders. By being there, seeing the situation for myself, and talking with many people face to face, I've gained an entirely new perspective on this part of the world and its various peoples. Let me give a few examples.

- *I learned that there are many Christians among the Palestinians.* When I took time to speak with these fellow believers, they poured out their pain to me—specifically the pain of not being recognized by the Western church as part of the body of Christ.

- *I learned that the percentage of Christians in the Middle East is shrinking at an alarming rate.* For a variety of reasons,

large numbers of them have emigrated during this century, and the trend continues.

- *I learned that just as Christians come in many varieties, so do Muslims.* There are many Muslim groups and sects, and they disagree and fight with one another in much the same way Catholics and Protestants have fought over the centuries. Some interpret the Muslim teaching of *jihad*, or holy war, to mean literal war and even terrorism, while others believe it simply means they should strive to obey Qur'anic teachings.

- *I learned that the church in the Middle East has not figured out how to handle Muslim converts.* The problem is that in many Muslim countries, conversion to Christianity is illegal. Muslims who accept Christ can be dismissed from their families, can have their wives and children taken from them, can be sent to jail or to their death. As more and more Christian missions begin to reach out to the Muslim world, this matter of "convert care" will become a key issue.

- *I have seen that there is a genuine openness to Jesus*

among some Muslim groups. The Qur'an considers Abraham, his sons, Moses, David, Solomon, and Jesus to be prophets, and it recognizes the Torah, the Psalms, and the Gospels as holy Scriptures—though the Qur'an is considered to be the last revelation.

We've seen that there is a startling openness to the gospel among some of these people. But unless we go to them now in love and influence them in a Christian direction, the ongoing cycle of violence and revenge will force them to take hard-line, extremist positions. They will come to us—the "Christian" West—in judgment.

Though most of my recent travel has been in the Middle East, I have also visited other Muslim countries. Usually the body of believers I found was small and badly in need of encouragement, but very much alive.

The situation in Iran remains very tense, for example, because of the rise of Muslim fundamentalism and radicalism and polarization. And the church is learning how to resist fear and grow in boldness and confidence. Maybe because of all the suffering the country has endured, Iran will be one of the first countries to reap the benefit of the gospel.

A recent experience I had at the Israeli airport in Tel Aviv symbolized both the problem in the world today and the solution that can be found only in Christ.

"So where have you been?" the uniformed [inspector] said sternly.

"I have been to Bethlehem," I said, knowing she wouldn't be happy about it. (Bethlehem is in the West Bank, Palestinian territory occupied by Israel.)

"Where else?"

"Kiryat Arba."

Her eyes flashed in disbelief. (Kiryat Arba is a very rightist Jewish settlement.) "What were you doing there?"

"The son of a Dutch friend of mine lives there, and he was recently shot by a Palestinian terrorist. I wanted to console the family."

"Bethlehem one day and Kiryat Arba the next—that is quite a change in location, Sir."

"Yes," I said, "but they are both about people who suffer."

Muslims are not a vast, faceless ethnic group to project our hatred upon, not a new enemy to replace the Communists, but children of Abraham, people created in the image of God, people in need of a Savior whose name is Jesus. 

Excerpted from The Calling, by Brother Andrew with Verne Becker, published by Moorings, © 1996. Used with permission from Open Doors International, P.O. Box 27001, Santa Ana, CA 92799.

The Unforgettable Story of a Man
Who Discovered the Adventure of

THE CALLING

BROTHER
ANDREW

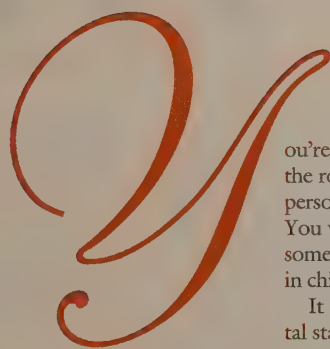
Author of THE CALLING
A Personal and Spiritual Journey

with Verne Becker



Satan with a Stethoscope

Novels you don't want to read before surgery.



ou're in the hospital. Your spouse has gone home to take care of the kids; the room is dark; you're disoriented and doped with painkillers. Medical personnel have been doing strange and inexplicable things to you all day. You wake up at 2 A.M. and find an unfamiliar white-clad figure injecting something into your IV line. Do you (a) close your eyes and drift back off in childlike trust, or (b) sit up and bellow, "Stop! Stop!?"

It depends on what you've been reading. If you are planning a hospital stay anytime soon, don't put a medical thriller in your overnight bag.

The doctor as compassionate healer, worthy of unquestioning trust, has been taking a beating ever since Robin Cook's *Coma* hit the shelves in 1977, and the trend shows no sign of stopping.

"When a doctor does go wrong," Sherlock Holmes once remarked to Watson, "he is the first of criminals. He has nerve and he has knowledge." This view of the doctor as occupying a plane above common humanity (Holmes's opponent in "The Speckled Band," Dr. Grimesby Roylott, can bend a poker double with his bare hands) persists.

But it is not the nerve or the poker-bending muscle that intimidates us layfolk; it's the knowledge. Only doctors know all the secrets of the body, including the ones they aren't telling us. We can only hope they put this knowledge to work for us instead of for themselves.

Greed: the great corrupter of the profession. Mainstream medical thrillers—those you are likely to find in what the book trade refers to as the "ABA market" (American Booksellers Association), in contrast to the "CBA market" (Christian Booksellers Association)—are almost entirely centered on doctors who use their knowledge for gain. Cook, a physician who has been on leave from the Massachusetts Eye and Ear

S U S A N W I S E B A U E R

Infirmity since he hit the bestseller list, pops out a thriller every year or so, and his string of novels provides a useful sort of index to the depredations of greed.

In 1987's *Outbreak*, hemorrhagic fever appears in three separate chains of hospitals that provide an innovative service: managed care. Widespread panic and a sudden drop-off in business follow. Eventually, we discover that a right-wing group of private practitioners is to blame; they have conspired to spread disease in HMOs in an attempt to protect their own patient base. Marissa, *Outbreak's* perky CDC investigator, looks at the head bad guy and sees his "expensive silk shirt, the heavy gold cuff links, the tasseled Gucci loafers. . . . It all represented the conspicuous consumption of a wealthy doctor, now fearful of the new medical competition, of changing times, of medicine no longer being a seller's market."

Greed is also central to 1995's *Contagion*, which is practically the same novel in reverse. This time the good guys are the private doctors who've been driven out of business by the managed-care giants: specifically, one Jack Stapleton, who lost his ophthalmology practice to the huge for-profit chain AmeriCare. AmeriCare sweeps through Middle America, "gobbling up practices and hospitals with bewildering speed" and destroying the quality of patient care. When odd epidemics start appearing in AmeriCare facilities, Stapleton hunts down the villain: another managed-care chain, spreading germs to put the competitor out of business.

Medical thrillers go through fashions—fetal-tissue research, euthanasia, Ebola, genetic tinkering, managed care—and the current fashion appears to be illegal transplant organs. Take, for example, the most recent novels of doctors-turned-writers Tess Gerritsen and Leonard Goldberg. In Gerritsen's *Life Support*, doctors grow genetically altered embryos in the wombs of hired prostitutes. The embryos turn into blobs of tissue studded with dozens of pituitary glands; the doctors abort the pregnancies and then transplant these glands (for a substantial fee) into rich elderly patients who want their youth back. This would work fine, except that Gerritsen's greedy doctors eventually step over the line by killing a couple of adults, which leads to their detection by a perky

female doctor named Toby. And in Goldberg's *Deadly Harvest*, a perky female doctor named Joanna goes searching for a liver for her critically ill sister. Instead, she discovers an organization that grows babies for organ donation. "Oh, my God!" screams Joanna. "The children . . . are being kept like animals, to be sacrificed when needed?" The villain, a greedy doc-



tor, shrugs: "It's a moneymaker." Fashions come and go; greed always remains.

Medical thrillers have only recently appeared in the CBA market, and the greater number are written by nondoctors. Alton Gansky's *By My Hands* and *Marked for Mercy* (1996 and 1998 respectively) are billed as medical suspense. *By My Hands* revolves around the hunt for a mysterious Healer who performs several cures at a local hospital and then disappears; *Marked for Mercy* deals with physician-assisted suicide. Gansky himself is a pastor, not a doctor, and it shows. In *By My Hands*, the putative central character is Dr. Rachel Tremaine, a woman surgeon who finds nurses a "chronic annoyance" and treats her patients with "impatience and disdain." One of those patients turns out to be pastor Adam Bridger. Despite his emergency appendectomy, Bridger visits parishioners in the hospital, convinces a Jehovah's Witness to accept a blood transfusion, outargues atheists and New Age philosophers, and even convinces the antagonistic Rachel that a minister's training is just as rigorous as a doctor's. ("A theological

education is not a cakewalk. . . . Most ministers with doctorates have a working knowledge of Hebrew . . . Koine Greek . . . and at least one modern language." "What's your point?" Rachel inquires.)

Gansky's point is clear by the end of the book, when the villain is unmasked: he's the manager of a traveling word-of-faith evangelist, determined to find the mysterious Healer and make a mint by organizing gigantic healing services. He is, in fact, the ecclesiastical equivalent of an ABA thriller-villain: a man who uses his calling for personal gain. But the novel is church-centered, not doctor-centered. Gansky's *Marked for Mercy* makes several good and sometimes unexpected points about physician-assisted suicide, but it's not a true medical thriller either (even though the central character is a perky female doctor with fawn hair and blue eyes). Rather, it's a mystery that happens to involve doctors.

Sigmund Brouwer's *Double Helix* (1995), on the other hand, features many of the markers of an ABA thriller—an evil doctor who grows

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babies in surrogate wombs, a maverick independent hero (Slater Ellis), and a perky female investigator named Paige (she isn't a doctor, but she has spectacular red hair, and legs that go "to her shoulders"). But while the ABA bad guys want money, Van Klees is trying to create a superrace. As he explains to hero Slater Ellis:

"Any genetic change you make in an embryo will be passed on to the next generation. I was laying the groundwork for future scientists to evolve us into superhumans. . . . In the long run, we can mold the human species to our own vision."

Van Klees is a more chilling villain than his mainstream counterparts; he's an actual zealot, driven by something other than gain. But Brouwer is a writer, not a doctor, and *Double Helix* has more adventure than medicine in it.

Harry Lee Kraus, Jr., a general surgeon who practices in Virginia, wrote the first

CBA medical thriller, the unfortunately titled *Stainless Steel Hearts* (1994). The title is supposed to serve as a pun; the villain of the story, cardiothoracic surgeon Michael Simons, is literally "stealing" the hearts of aborted fetuses for his research. The fact that this pun made it into the title of the book points up a difficulty with all of Kraus's books: He needs a strong editorial hand. His medical scenes are vivid, and he plots well, but his point of view swings wildly back and forth, he inserts large chunks of backstory in the middle of his action, he steps out of his characters to editorialize, and when his bad guys swear, they emit annoying strings of %\$#*&.

But Kraus's medicine (and his capacity for creative paranoia) rivals that of his ABA colleagues. In *Stainless Steel Hearts*, evil doctor Simons theorizes that hearts from late second-trimester abortions could be transplanted into infants born with congenital defects. To test this procedure, he teams up with a local abortionist to obtain fetal hearts. Together, the two of them encourage women to wait as late as possible before aborting; Simons then experiments on the still-living fetuses.

ers show little awareness l dimension of greed; Christian thrillers ension all too visible.

What's behind the evil? Like Brouwer's Van Klees, Simons isn't driven by greed alone. In fact, he's developed an interest in New Age writings.

At first he began with some meditation techniques that he learned at a local university seminar. Occasionally during a time of meditation, or when he was envisioning himself in a position of great influence, he would gain the impression of an idea or thought that seemed to originate outside his body. Later he began having a strong sense of guidance in some of his research.

Money considerations aren't completely absent from Kraus's thrillers. In *Fated Genes*, pediatric surgeon Weber Tyson rations care for retarded infants, justifying himself with the explanation that "debilitated infants won't have to live on as needless burdens on an already overtaxed society." But it turns out that Tyson is being manipulated by Lenore Kingsley, president of

United Biotechnical Industries. Lenore is also a Satanist who worships with a local coven, even bearing several children for sacrifice in Satanic rituals, and Tyson is simply an instrument for a demonic plan.

In *Lethal Mercy*, the spiritual evil gets even more obvious. As Simons (making a repeat appearance) operates on the son of his enemy, a demonic creature clings to his back and whispers in his ear; overhead, an angelic warrior stands ready to protect the child. And in *The Stain*, Kraus's latest book, a rich philanthropist hires doctors to create clones. But the intent behind this high-dollar project is purely spiritual: to clone DNA found on the shroud of Turin, to prove that Jesus was simply human, nothing more.

Like all too many CBA novelists, both Gansky and Kraus tend to insert "anchor" characters, ideal Christians who don't doubt, and who serve as a "normative" voice. Belle, the praying grandmother in *Fated Genes*, Kerri, the trauma nurse in *The Stain*, pastor Paul Carpenter in *Marked for Mercy*—they are capable of explaining God's will, too virtuous to be real ("With Kerri Barber, prayer was like

breathing. . . . She enjoyed an ongoing spontaneous consciousness of God's presence in her life that many believers yearn for"), and far too ready to supply mini-Bible studies on demand ("Find Philipians chapter one," Paul Carpenter tells a character, in the time-honored tradition of Christian fiction. "Do you want to read it out loud, or shall I?").

But these books are, after all, thrillers. The characters are no more exaggerated than Cook's wicked managed-care providers, happily spreading 1918 flu virus acquired from a frozen Eskimo corpse; or Goldberg's spectacularly brilliant, beautiful, and courageous medical examiner, Joanna Blalock. The true distinctive between mainstream and Christian medical thrillers seems to lie in the deepest motivations of the evil doctors. In the ABA, the dollar is the ultimate villain. In the CBA, Satan always lurks beyond the dollar.

This is perfectly good theology. After

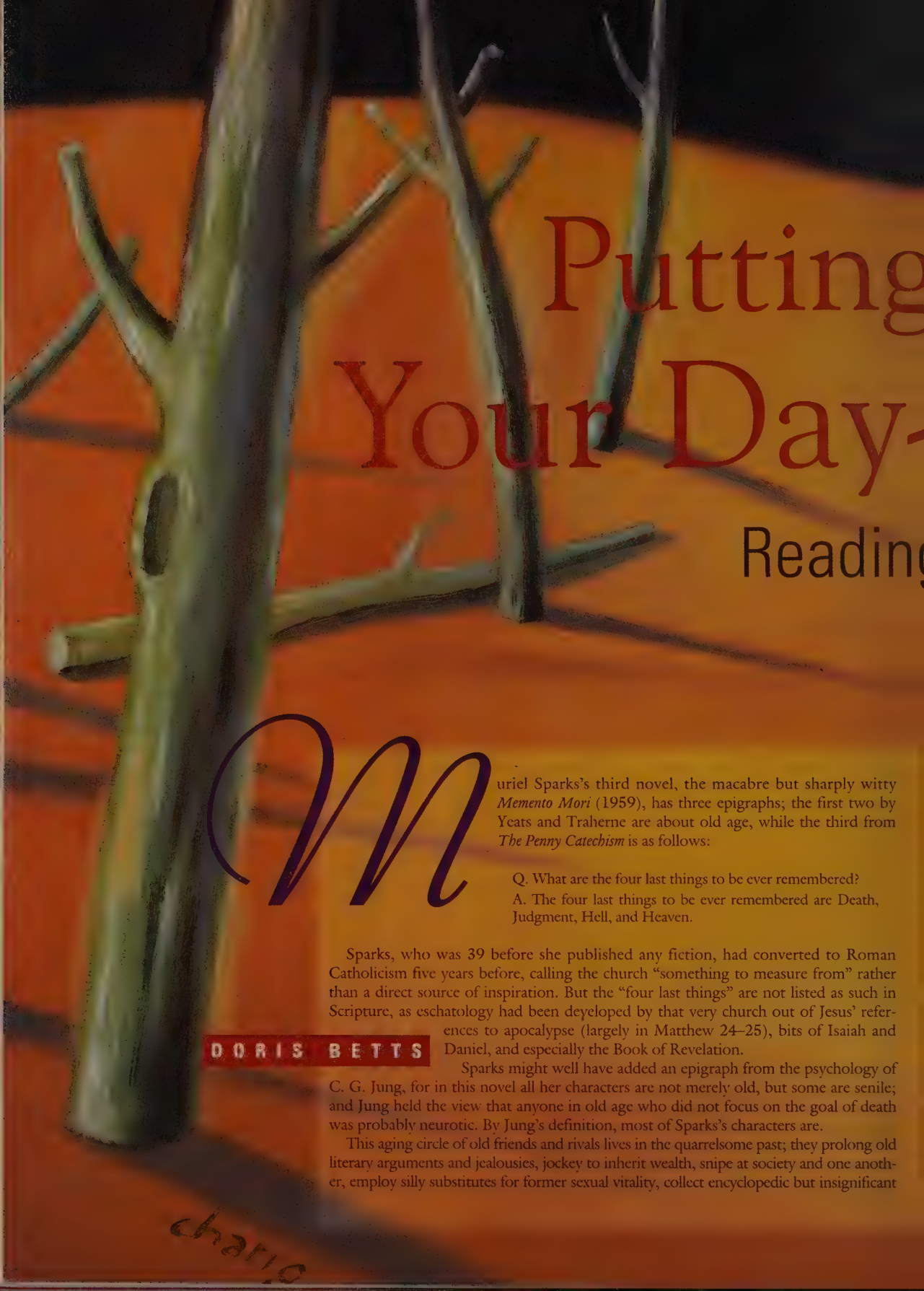
all, in the medical-thriller villain, we see the reflection of the serpent's face. "Know enough," he whispered to Eve, "and you too will have the powers of a god. Know enough, and you can satisfy your own desires." The self-serving doctor, using knowledge to acquire instead of to heal, responds to this same temptation. The greedy physician—like the greedy lawyer, ad executive, or church administrator—is, ultimately, the servant of the Destroyer.

But how is this theme best worked out in fiction? Mainstream thrillers show little awareness of the spiritual dimension of greed; Christian thrillers make the spiritual dimension all too visible. The battle with greed is a spiritual battle, yes, but the battlefield is not the coven down the road. The fiercest skirmishes are not fought between angels and demons, hovering in the air above the operating table. The battlefield is the human heart; the war is fought out with human hands; and any novelist ignores the human face of evil at his own peril.

Consider Kraus's *The Stain*, which begins (like Cook's *Contagion*) with a managed-care giant taking over a private practice. Dr. Seth Berringer lands himself in a mess, trying to protect himself in the face of managed care's unreasonable demands. Is this a spiritual battle? Of course it is. But Kraus subordinates it to the novel's central plot, the demonic attempt to clone Jesus and destroy Christianity. As a matter of fact, when Berringer becomes a Christian, his managed-care problems seem to dissolve. He has been worried about finding work outside the Coast Care system; after his conversion, he says confidently, "I'll be returning to work soon. This town hasn't completely abandoned me. You'll see. Besides, God is in control now."

But surely a Christian medical thriller should deal, at least in passing, with the hard question: How does a Christian physician operate day-to-day in a system that defines itself by profit? Such a medical system may not have Satanists lighting candles in the corridors, but the serpent is certainly slithering through its halls. The recognition that greed, whatever form it takes, is itself a demonic force—this, in the end, is what will separate the Christian medical thriller from its mainstream equivalent. 

Susan Wise Bauer's second novel, Though the Darkness Hide Thee, was recently published by Multnomah. She teaches literature at the College of William and Mary.



Putting Your Day- Reading

M

uriel Sparks's third novel, the macabre but sharply witty *Memento Mori* (1959), has three epigraphs; the first two by Years and Traherne are about old age, while the third from *The Penny Catechism* is as follows:

Q. What are the four last things to be ever remembered?

A. The four last things to be ever remembered are Death, Judgment, Hell, and Heaven.

Sparks, who was 39 before she published any fiction, had converted to Roman Catholicism five years before, calling the church "something to measure from" rather than a direct source of inspiration. But the "four last things" are not listed as such in Scripture, as eschatology had been developed by that very church out of Jesus' references to apocalypse (largely in Matthew 24–25), bits of Isaiah and Daniel, and especially the Book of Revelation.

DORIS BETTS

Sparks might well have added an epigraph from the psychology of C. G. Jung, for in this novel all her characters are not merely old, but some are senile; and Jung held the view that anyone in old age who did not focus on the goal of death was probably neurotic. By Jung's definition, most of Sparks's characters are.

This aging circle of old friends and rivals lives in the quarrelsome past; they prolong old literary arguments and jealousies, jockey to inherit wealth, snipe at society and one another, employ silly substitutes for former sexual vitality, collect encyclopedic but insignificant

chario

Death in Timer

as memento mori.



research on the process of aging, and when blackmailed, either keep or reveal secrets the reader judges to be trivial. In short, these elders meditate on everything except their own imminent deaths.

Besides this cluster of superficial friends and kin in the 75 to 85 age bracket, 12 old ladies (called by nurses "the Gran-nies") survive but wet their beds in the government-subsidized Maud Long Medical Ward. The dozen includes Miss Jean Taylor, formerly a maid-companion and acquaintance of that larger senior group still able to live independently outside old-age institutions. Both Taylor and retired Chief Inspector Henry Mortimer receive the whispered fears of the rest as, one by one, they begin receiving phone messages from an anonymous caller who says only, "Remember you must die!" and then hangs up. To every person, the caller reveals a different tone, accent, apparent age, or class.

After Dame Lettie Colson is bludgeoned to death during a random robbery, police try to link these spreading telephone calls to some actual stalker preying on the elderly, but wiretaps and detective work fail. Both Mortimer and Taylor decide the strange caller must be Death himself, or else a personification rising from the subconscious of each victim on whom death is persistently laying claim, despite their denials of mortality.

During his own conscientious investigation, policeman Mortimer remarks that if he had his life to live over, he would "compose himself every night by practicing the remembrance of death," because that practice intensifies life. "Without it," he adds, "you might as well live on the whites of eggs."

And when one visitor to the old ladies' home, who is also plagued by the unknown caller, suggests that Jean Taylor's quick mind with its history of sophistication must hate to be remanded by arthritis to this collection of drooling, incoherent wards of the state, she calls those other 11 grannies her own "memento mori"—like your phone calls."

Supernatural into natural

However gloomy this plot summary may sound, *Memento Mori* is an amusing novel in Evelyn Waugh style, affirming life by showing this last stage either deepened or wasted, produced by a writer who has always been preoccupied with metaphysical questions of good and evil.

Sparks often introduces the supernatural into everyday settings, as if (since the

two planes coexist side by side) sometimes the membrane between them would be bound to break—a premise applied by Flannery O'Connor in her own fiction. Sparks, for example, brings Satanism into the suburbs in *The Ballad of Peckham Rye*. In one of her stories, as cynics are conducting a tawdry Nativity play, a real and irritating angel bursts in.

This intrusion of supernatural into natural seems, once permitted at all, to become recurrent with writers, and not simply in Frank Peretti's sagas of demonic warfare. In my novel *Souls Raised from the Dead*, once I had written one scene in which a possible "ghost" (the dead Miss Lila Torrido) appears while Mary Grace Thompson is dying, it became inevitable that the restless spirit of Tamsen Donner should haunt many pages of the next novel, *The Sharp Teeth of Love*, as it is inevitable that death and love are every serious writer's primary subjects. Ghosts themselves are contagious scene stealers, appearing, for example, in the novels of Reynolds Price, entire story collections by Alison Lurie and Edith Wharton, in Voltaire's *Semiramus*, Henry James's *Turn of the Screw*, and the work of Toni Morrison, Randall Kenan, and many other African-American writers, even as a sense of the revitalized presence of the late Joy Davidman in C. S. Lewis's *A Grief Observed*.

Whether readers decide such ghosts are actual spirits or only psychological projections matters less than the intended light the real as well as fictional death casts back onto life itself. Though one of La Rochefoucauld's maxims warns that "Death and the sun are not to be looked at steadily," Socrates did not flee Athens despite Crito's advice, and Jesus moved straight ahead to Jerusalem and Gethsemane. Jung's opinion about confronting one's own impending death is shared by Kierkegaard, who—finding an advantage in our normal death-fearing despair with all its risk of meaninglessness—suggests that from that precipice man might "leap" and "fall into the open arms of God."

Two local deaths

On one Sunday in the spring of 1993, I was driving home from church down the narrow rutted road in Chatham County, North Carolina, that we shared with neighbors, when I was stopped by my husband's waving arms. "Frank died," he said tersely. "Can you sit with Lib till the undertaker comes?"

This couple had been our good neighbors ever since we had bought land here a

decade before, land that had once been part of a larger tract owned by Lib's father. When we moved into an existing small house on those acres of pasture and forest, we must have seemed helpless city folks; but their natural kindness embraced us nonetheless, advised us on well pumps and feed dealers, sent our loose dogs home, shared garden produce.

Lib and Frank, then in their seventies, had lived through a long marriage with its good and hard times. During these later, harder days, his emphysema some-

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on the cross.

times frustrated a once-active Frank; nursing him while coping with her own ailments had also made Lib weary. When his condition worsened, I served as witness on the day he signed his living will to reject extreme resuscitation measures. On that day he seemed irascible, mistrustful, as if the paper gave permission for spouse and hospice to rush him to the grave.

Now he had died at home as he preferred. I went indoors to where Lib sat like a guard by the hospital bed, watching the sheet-covered features of her husband. Although as a child I had said farewell to grandparents who then died overnight, had hugged my recuperating father only to learn by phone that he did not survive to the next dawn, I had by now reached the age at which burgeoning cancers and waning hearts were killing my own former schoolmates; this was my first experience of sitting with the widow and the newly dead—a vigil that for a generation earlier had been commonplace.

For an hour or so we talked about Frank, who had "died so easily," just between spoonfuls of Jell-O being slipped into his mouth. There were memories of early marriage, golf games, other houses

and jobs in other cities, baseball, their inability to have children, special vacations, his love of chocolate, and his fatal love of unfiltered cigarettes.

Gone from this history was any recollection of how illness had lately made him cross. If the dying are said in the end to review their own lives, so survivors also sort through the years, and favorably, as if the corpse might overhear. Selectively, the slate is wiped clean, the sum of good increased. At one point, Lib suddenly leaned forward, pulled down the sheet, and kissed Frank's cooling forehead.

Then she said softly, "I have always

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ating on the
draw
remember
lf was no stoic

loved
you," and
covered his
face again.

Afterward, in a buzz of crowded activity, the undertakers came to wheel out the body, hospice workers to flush prescription pills down the commode into the septic tank, men to roll away the rented bed and oxygen equipment, until the room was suddenly empty of the whole experience. Frank would be cremated, his ashes retained until the urn eventually could be propped between Lib's embalmed hands—I do not know if this was done when she died 18 months later.

Neither had a dramatic death; neither took a stirring nor quotable departure toward Rabelais's "great perhaps," but they had left for me a local parallel to Goethe's *Baucis and Philemon*, and a reminder of his words in *Elective Affinities*, "The sum which two married people owe to one another defies calculation. It is an infinite

debt, which can only be charged through all eternity."

How to die now

Montaigne once wanted to produce a book of real and literary deaths that "in teaching men to die should after teach them to live."

In 1980, Norman and Betty Donaldson compiled 300 real deaths in *How Did They Die?*—an alphabetical chronology stretching from Socrates to Elvis Presley. Their pages primarily make readers contemplate the contrast between pre-antibiotic deathbeds at home versus today's choices of high-tech hospitals (where 50 percent of Americans died in 1949 and 80 percent do now) or Dr. Kevorkian's oxygen-stealing machine; choices among extreme unction, Elizabeth Kubler-Ross's five stages, or Raymond Moody's near-death experiences (famously known now as NDEs); between the mossy country churchyard and today's perpetual-care parks where flat headstones make grass cutting easy for power mowers; between those who have died accepting God's mystery and those others accepting some other metaphysic—reincarnation, New Age karma, whatever.

During the nineteenth century, physicians encouraged to prescribe narcotics for the dying were said to engage in "obstetrics for the soul"; today lawyers and doctors more typically argue over how much more humanely we euthanize dogs and cats.

Death and church

Let it be said straightaway that we children who grew up among Associate Reformed Presbyterians had memento mori impressed on us officially every seventh day and subliminally during nightly prayer: "if I should die before I wake." We were admonished young to work, for the night is coming, to remember our Creator in the days of our youth, and so on. Although in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus had not one word to say about death, and although our radio heroes regularly escaped death to fight crime again in next week's sequel, Sunday school made vivid to us how Stephen went down under stones, made clear to us also that the head of John the Baptist could not be reattached.

My lifelong "remembering" since then has run the gamut. I tried the American Society for Psychical Research, but lost patience with Ian Stevenson and those reincarnated (previously wealthy) children in India. Bridey Murphy and the Fox sisters proved fake. Every photo of ectoplasm always looked like damaged film. Even now, when insomniac, I listen to Art Bell's wee-hours broadcasts from Nevada, on which he frequently interviews time travelers, witches, UFO witnesses, Big Foot survivors, and alien abductees; but I do not phone in for details. Neither Houdini nor those whom I loved, once deceased, have ever come back bearing news. Of course, kin and old friends appear in my dreams, where they always seem healed, whole, and happy while they walk along tropical beaches—but so what?

No, after transmigration and Freud's Thanatos; after the crystal balls, Ouija boards, hellfire preachers, eternal recurrence, Buddhist reabsorption, automatic writing, magnetic leeches, druid monoliths, table tipping; after Hades, Sheol, and Gehenna; beyond J. B. Rhine, Colin Wilson, Edgar Casey, Hal Lindsey, and Shirley MacLaine; after Camus's weary Sisyphus gives up; after Marcus Aurelius plus the stoicism of Ecclesiastes wears thin (these being the most appealing alternatives), there is no place for this aging Death-Rememberer to go but home to the New Testament.

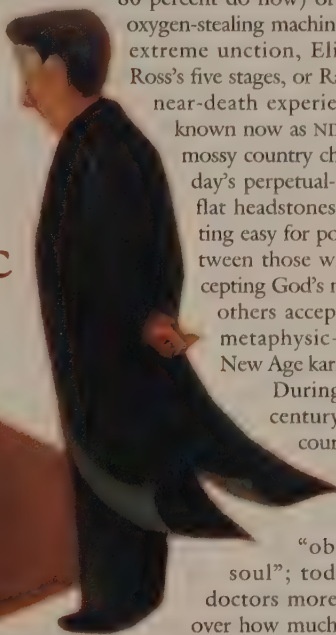
Koheleth or Christ?

Ernest Becker, in his Pulitzer Prize-winning book, *The Denial of Death*, concludes, "I think it is very hard for secular men to die." He did die, of cancer, shortly after the book was published.

So did Dostoevsky die three months after finishing *The Brothers Karamazov*, which opens with a New Testament epigraph and closes with an affirmation of hope for eternal life.

Ars moriendi—the art of dying—and its parallel, the art of mourning the dead, still seem in the end to rely on secular stoicism or religious faith. For example, Sherwin B. Nuland's 1994 bestseller *How We Die* is careful, scientific, even ethical; but it is not religious. And when in 1997 professional poet and also professional undertaker Thomas Lynch published his essay collection about life, death, and faith, the book was criticized in the *New York Times Book Review* from the viewpoint of a secular humanist who preferred Jessica Mitford's version.

But we Christians still meditating on



the last things draw comfort when we remember that Jesus himself was no stoic on the cross. He felt despair and dread before and during the crucifixion; he cried out his challenging question to God as have King David, Job, Ivan Ilych, and millions upon millions. Stoicism is not required of believers, but hope is offered. Jane Kenyon, dead before fifty, ends one poem thus: "and God, as promised, proves / to be mercy clothed in light."

If I cannot refute the stoics, nor shrug off cosmic indifference, if I cannot cheer up Beckett's lonely characters waiting onstage, not concur with Freud about the infantilism of religion, discard it, and then advance bravely into "hostile life," neither can these refute my sometimes wavering hope. And my emphasis is on hope, hope in God's mercy rather than fear of eternal punishment, which worried even ancient Egyptian kings and made Virgil separate the good from the justly punished dead. It is our sadism, not evangelical Christianity, that relishes medieval and hellish visions of torment, and it is our hubris that in imagination tests and tunes the personal harp and mentally tries on well-suited wings. Only if ends justify means can we (on the far side of the veil) take pleasure in separating sheep from goats forever, after we have finished (on the near side of that veil) making war on infidels and burning heretics at the stake.

Spiritual journeys into the beyond were nearly as frequent in the Middle Ages as those taken now during flat EKG moments before a defibrillator blasts the heart into rhythm again. In their context, medieval soul travelers often saw on their journeys ample fire and brimstone; in ours, the dying patient typically rushes through some final birth/death canal toward light. Doubters, of course, dismiss testimony about NDE as a subjective response to oxygen deprivation. To them, such anecdotal evidence is as unpersuasive here as in second-hand, multiple translations of Saint Paul. Even Hans Küng, in *Eternal Life*, distinguishes death as the final destination from the process leading to it, dying cell by cell, and believes most of Moody's NDE samples have experienced the first stage of that process but not the last condition.

Remember you must live

Memento mori, then, commands me not so much to dwell on heaven, hell, or the millennium, nor to contemplate the whole world's eventual death in apocalypse, but to value today's immediate gift of life against the backdrop of tran-

sience and God's eternity. Though Jesus acknowledged an end time, his emphasis was on daily forgiveness and hourly love.

The earliest Gospel, Mark, takes only 11 verses to summarize all postresurrection events—in the long version of the ending—and it ends with the apostles at work in this world. The earliest New Testament Easter story (1 Corinthians 15) says little about the mechanics of how Christ died and then came back, but concentrates more on what his overcoming of death should mean in human lives. And that elaborator Luke, who will double everybody else's angels at every opportunity, relocates Jesus' ascension to Bethany but closes by emphasizing the praise and worship of the 11 left behind. (Naturally, he cannot resist adding more angels plus a spread of clouds in Acts 1:10, but the heavenly message puts a quick end to sky gazing; clearly the coming Pentecost is more important.) And gospel writer John shows no interest at all in postresurrection space travel. Jesus at the end of the Fourth Gospel is far too busy to take airy flight because, by patient repetition, he keeps trying to make one thing clear to Peter: "Do you love me? Feed my lambs."

Memento which dying, then?

For me, as for some characters in my fiction, memento mori is an order to take life as seriously as its Creator did, to apply urgency, to view each day in an eternal context, to live right now the abundant and loving life Christ commanded—and to fail at all these but still to trust in mercy.

Except for this heightened commitment and purpose provided by our sure mortality, I believe that in ways beyond my understanding God has in Christ defeated the former annihilating power of death.

Oh, that's easy to say. Too easy. Vague. Facile.

Such trust comes harder when tested against real dying. When Bob, my Early American Literature colleague in the University of North Carolina's English Department—a friend of 30 years—progressed downward by slow medical degrees from finding a lump in the groin to lymphoma, then up by way of successful chemotherapies and optimistic MRI reports, he experienced all that intensity of life measured against the risk of death. He was free to retire, to write more essays on the books he loved, to travel to Spain.

But before too long, in disguise and by sabotage, the cells in his lungs went malignant. When no more cure was available, he received at home old friends and

kin and former students. There was time to laugh and talk, to share many good memories, to omit any pretense that he would long survive.

Those good times ran out. When last I came, he had turned into a skeleton thinly wrapped in yellowing pastry, eyes already closed, the breath whapping in and out with a great suck and labored release. Having been told that hearing is the last sense to shut down, I sat by his shell through which air slammed in and out, and reminded his ear of affections and blessings. It was like trying to talk to a bellows.

The next day he was gone, having told us no more about death than all the 300 recorded in the pages of *How Did They Die?* And at the memorial service in a bland campus auditorium, I swallowed hard and read aloud as he had wished Emily Dickinson's "Because I could not stop for Death." Cole Porter recordings were played, the Lord's Prayer murmured. By the podium, Bob's color photo—pink and precancer, young and already long ago—was displayed.

Not a churchgoer, Bob was perhaps not technically a Christian except in his behavior, but I have continued to remember his particular death (and the bravery by which an excellent teacher continued to teach us who would outlive him) in the context of Goethe's *Faust*. The play opens with a God-Mephistopheles wager much like the opening of Job, and it ends with Faust, who richly deserves all punishment, being granted mercy instead. When Goethe was 82, he emphasized that this salvation came not because it was earned but "by the divine grace vouchsafed to us."

"Say to the moment, 'Stay!' Thou art so fair!" Goethe's line captures the intensity with which we transient mortals who know we are transient must surely seize the day. And "He who strives mightily we are allowed to save," speaks to that final and mysterious grace that runs to meet all of us prodigal sons and daughters.

Say to the moment, Stay! Strive mightily. Memento mori.

CT

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The Lord Puts Strange Hooks in the Mouths of Men

A story.

B

elle Metcalfe stood on the steps of her cabin at Rocky Look Bible Camp and looked toward the dropped-down sun. A blue pickup shimmied along the valley road far below, fishtailing here and there on the loose gravel. Though she couldn't see the truck, Belle heard it coming. She knew that her niece Jeanette was finally home from an all-day trip with Drew Parks, and she knew, too, that they'd been up to no good. About the only thing she didn't know was that a hitchhiker sat in the back seat of their

pickup, wondering what kind of weird fate had brought him here. The mountains to the east had turned dark purple. You could still smell dinner, though dinner was all done and the dining hall staff had finished washing up.

"What do you think about Jeanette and her boyfriend?" Belle asked her husband, Dean, who sat beside her on the steps having his after-dinner pipe before vespers. Belle was grey-headed, but Dean and his brother, Gratian, both had shiny curls of hair, black as you please. It grew down the sides of their faces like tree bark, and Fansher, the camp cook, liked to tell them they had African blood.

"There's a Afro-American in your woodpile," she'd say.

BETTY S. CARTER

Could be true or could be not true. Most people said that Gratian looked like Abraham Lincoln, but poor Dean was too fat for that.

"I think it's about time little Jeanette found herself a husband," Dean said calmly. "She don't seem to have nobody else interested in her."

"That's because she's already dated every other man who set foot here! She's run through most of the counselors, none's good enough."

"I can understand that," said Dean. "The counselors are a little young for Jeanette, ain't they? She's past college age, she don't want a younger man."

"She's not past 30," said Belle. "She's only 26, and that Drew Parks is younger than she is."

"Oh, what you so worried about, Mother?"

"I'm worried about the way they act together."

"How do they act together?"

Belle whispered something to her husband, something that had the words "tight clothes" and "temptation" and "desperate" in it. He looked around warily, then knocked the ashes out of his pipe and stuck it in a clean brass spittoon beside the door.

"Well," he said, "she's not the beauty in the family; you can't blame her for trying to reel one in while her sister Delphi's off to college. This is a Christian boy we're talking about, isn't it?"

"Dean, do you hear what I'm saying? I'm trying to keep Jeanette out of trouble. She's so crazy for the boys. She reminds me of her mother."

"Oh, don't let's get started on to that."

"Get started on to what? Tell me your brother doesn't need help raising two girls alone. I think you should say something to him about this."

"I'm going down to the chapel. I'll see you at vespers."

"I wonder why God brings all these rascals our way," she mumbled. "Can't he bring just one decent fellow?" She watched her husband—so innocent, so trusting, too godly for his own good—pick his way down the hill toward the campground. When he was well out of sight she hurried jauntily after him. She slung past the pretty log cabin that belonged to his brother, Gratian—the cabin where little Jeanette and Delphi had been raised without a woman's guiding hand (other than her own) since their mother ran off so long ago.

She took a trail that did not lead to the chapel. This trail cut off through the woods toward the playing fields. It was ferny and damp, strewn with boulders and pine straw. Down near the softball field lay Jeanette's cabin, beside a row of pecan trees and a small parking lot with a sign thrusting up from the middle of it that said

ROCKY LOOK BIBLE CAMP
THREE FORKS, TENNESSEE
EST. 1955 FOR THE GLORY
OF GOD AND THE SALVATION
OF YOUNG AMERICANS

There sat the blue truck, empty, in front of Jeanette's cabin. The hood made a clacking noise as it tried to cool. The air smelled like burning oil. Belle looked this way and that to make sure her husband didn't come out of the trees and catch her snooping. Then she waved at some girls

pitching a ball a hundred feet away and darted past the empty truck to the cabin.

She pulled slightly at the screen door, trying to be quiet, but it had swollen tight shut in the heat. She clenched her teeth and yanked the door open with a loud screech. "Jeanette girl, you home?"

"Huh?" A bare-chested boy jumped about a foot from a folding chair behind the door.

"Excuse me, ma'am!" He stood up, covering his white stomach with his elbows.

Belle's mouth dropped open. "Son, what you doing in Miss Jeanette's cabin? Don't you know the rules? No male campers in the girls' cabins."

"Well, ma'am, I'm not exactly a camper."

"No excuses. Come on out right now. And get you a shirt!"

The boy came outside as quickly as he could, smiling in what she thought was a stupid way. His jaw stuck out from his head; his face was red either with sunburn or shame.

"What is your name?" Belle asked, putting her head back through the door, "and who is your counselor?"

"My name's Cecil Howard. I'm not a camper, ma'am. I got a ride out here from Georgia, see. These folks picked me up back on the road and I don't mean to stop long, neither. I'm on my way to New Mexico."

She had her mind on other things. "Do you happen to know exactly where my niece went?"

"Jeanette? I think she went thataway." Cecil pointed to a path that led into the woods beyond the pecan trees.

Belle straightened up. "Was she with him? Drew Parks?"

"Yes, she sure was."

She narrowed her eyes. "Well go on to vespers, son. Don't be hanging around Miss Jeanette's cabin any more."

"No, ma'am, I won't. Have no intention of it."

"Good." Belle hurried over to the path.

Cecil took a breath as he watched the trees close around her. She might have been a rabbit, the way she bent forward, her round tail sticking up. He looked back at the truck, figured there was no chance of getting any farther on

the road tonight, and sat down on Jeanette's porch to think about his plans.

In his back pocket was a letter from the girl he intended to reach before the end of the week:

Dear Cecil,

I am not very happy in this place, but when I think about you and how you are so kind, it is enough to make me cry with happiness. It is very hot and



dry here. Even if I could have a garden I couldn't bend over far enough to plant things but they don't let us garden since there is not enough water and we already have to take three minute showers.

I'm getting out on June 1 if everything comes out all right (ha ha) and the address of the new place is Sunshine House, 145 Eureka Trail, Albuquerque. So come as soon as you can and I will be waiting for you, sans baby, since it will be in foster care. I

promise I will not sign anything final until you get here.

All my love,
Maria

Cecil had never laid eyes on Maria, only written to her c/o the Branton, Georgia, Public Library Pen Pal Program, but he pictured her as a beautiful person about his age sitting beside a cactus in a

as he sat on Jeanette's porch, "I really am coming, but this was the only ride I could get and now I'm stuck here for tonight."

A bell began to ring. "Vespers!" shouted the softball players across the field, and they crowded together and began walking in the same direction. Cecil watched them go, then stood up and started after them.

He brushed against a shaggy apple tree, its leaves a mix of deep green and pale yellow, no fruit on its branches.

Must not be any other apple trees about. Straight in front of him, right beneath a big hill shooting up from the ground like a man's head, sat a little chapel.

"Hey you! Where's your shirt?" asked a young man standing by the chapel bell. He wore a whistle around his neck. "You can't go in to vespers like that."

"I reckon I got it too dirty to wear."

"Then go on get another shirt, boy. Don't be coming down here half naked. Which cabin you in?"

"I—" Cecil gestured back toward the hill.

"Oh, up there in Enoch. Where's your sense? Go in my cabin—it's the one behind the latrine. Borrow a shirt from my dresser. *Not* my Vols shirt. And give me the shirt right back after vespers!"

Cecil moved through the crowd to the cabin. It sat in long shadows, under oaks and more pecans. He opened the screen door and slipped in quickly.

The bunks were simple mattresses on metal frames. Each one had a sleeping bag rolled up at the foot. Each one had a striped grey and white pillow. On a trunk at the far left end of the cabin sat a transistor radio playing something religious, and next to the radio lay a pile of T-shirts, size X-tra large, three pairs of rolled-up socks, and

a pair of black sports sandals.

There were some pictures, too. One was of a girl. Cecil couldn't see her well in the shadows. He hesitated for a second, then picked it up and walked back into the light. The girl was pretty. She had long blond hair and heavy bangs. Her eyes were sort of turned up, her teeth white. Could Maria look like this? On the back was written, "To Franklin, Love Delphi." Cecil smiled at the girl and hated to set her back down alone in the

dark on that guy's trunk in this place. He put the picture in his pocket next to the letter from Albuquerque and went on to vespers wearing a plain white T-shirt he'd found at the bottom of the pile.

The chapel was a huge, dark, wood-paneled room with big screens for windows and a stone fireplace at the front. He sat down on a wooden folding chair near the back, next to a blond boy with a red face and cracked lips. You could see that he'd recently grown about a foot. The skin on his knees was pink and smooth. His hands looked too large for him.

"You like this camp?" the boy asked.

"Guess so. Never been to another."

"This is the best I been to so far. What cabin you in?"

"Well, Jonah, I guess. I just got here."

"I'm in Ezekiel." The boy cracked his knuckles. "I'm glad I'm not in Jonah, ain't y'all's counselor that Franklin over there with the big stupid whistle? I heard y'all take those 4:30 A.M. hikes most every day."

"Sounds nasty," said Cecil.

"I'm in the Scouts. You in the Scouts?"

"Used to be," said Cecil. "I hate the Scouts."

"Sorry to hear that."

The boy sighed, then looked around and started a similar conversation with the girl on his other side. While they waited, it turned dark outside. No light remained but the big hanging light inside the chapel, shaped like a globe.

"All right, young people," said a pudgy black-headed man standing up to the polished wooden pulpit. "Brother Gratian's going to deliver the Word of the Lord tonight. I'm just going to open with prayer. I want each and every one of you to pray that the Lord will speak something to your heart tonight, something that will change you forever. Pray with me now."

A quiet fell across the room, a quiet like first sleep. The man prayed. Cecil didn't really listen, except when the man said, "Lord, forgive our wandering hearts. Draw us to you, O Lord."

"I ought to get on my way," thought Cecil. "I ought to be getting on my way out West." Outside, the frogs sang loudly.

The prayer stopped and the man raised his head and sat down. Then, from the back of the room came another man, just as black-headed but much taller, with broad, thin shoulders and a long neck and low-hanging belly.

"Thank you, Dean," he said when he

hot desert garden, one soft hand across her swollen stomach. Now he was on his way to rescue her and her child. That was his plan, at least, though he'd already come out of his way just by accepting a ride to Tennessee. What would their meeting be like? He saw himself stepping in between Maria and the sun and saying, "I'm here. I'm going to take care of you and that baby of yours, and you won't have to worry about a darn thing."

"I really am coming, Maria," he thought



got up to the pulpit. "You know, it's a little funny sometimes to hear Dean call me 'brother' and reflect on the fact that he is indeed my brother, my earthly brother, and yet that you *all* are my brothers and sisters. Am I right? Yes, I am right. Folks, young people, am I a good man?"

There was a nervous pause. "Yes, Brother Gratian," said a girl in the front with braces on her teeth. "You are."

"What's your name, sweetheart?"

"Kenna Drender."

"Kenna, why do you think I'm a good man?"

She said something in such a low voice that Cecil couldn't hear.

"Well!" Brother Gratian practically shouted the word. "That's nice of you to say so, Kenna, but what if I was to tell you I'm a murderer? I killed a man. You still think I'm nice? No, I reckon you don't. In fact, you want to run out that door, don't you, so you can call your mama and tell her to climb in her automobile and come after you? Don't want to be friends with me *no more*. Because I am a *dangerous* man. Am I right, y'all?"

Some of the boys laughed, but Brother Gratian paid no attention. "It happened quite a few years ago, you see. I killed a good man, tortured him and watched the breath and blood slowly ebb, ebb, ebb, ebb from his pain-racked body. I looked on without mercy, I turned away from him without regret. I thought I was innocent, but his blood is on my hands."

Everyone in the room hushed. "I killed a man," said Brother Gratian. His hands shook as he lifted them. "But so did all of you kill him. Kenna Drender and"—he pointed to a boy in the front—"that young man there, I don't know your name yet, son, but I'll learn it, and John Evan over there, and even my own two sweet baby girls, Jeanette and Delphi. We all killed him, every one of us. Drove spikes through his hands and feet. And the blood ran down his cheeks from the thorns of his mock crown."

"You say, 'How, Brother Gratian? I was not there the day that Christ Jesus died.' But I say to you, young people, we were all there. With our sin we nailed him to a cross. And with his death he paid out our debt to God for all that filthy, disgusting, murderous sin."

"You say, 'How, Brother Gratian? I haven't sinned that much.' But listen, young people, you got to look in your heart. What's there? What's behind the face you show to the world? Is there rage? Is there jealousy? Is there lust? Is there a

desire to be your own savior, to do works of righteousness in order to save yourself or your sister or your brother—when really we're all doomed to perish without Jesus there to snatch us from the Devil's jaws?"

"Yes, there is, because we all have sin in our hearts. And when Jesus filled his burning lungs to gasp, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do,' who do you think he was talking about?"

He looked around, raised his eyebrows for a second, and sighed. "And all you in this room. We all killed him. He forgave all of us."

There was a sharp smell in the chapel, pine wood and young sweat. Cecil felt a pain at the back of his neck, as though someone had yanked him up like a cat. He stared at the preacher's lips, which kept opening and closing, and for another moment all he could hear in the room was the slow whine of a girl beginning to cry.

Outside, an owl hooted. At the back of the chapel a door opened and Brother Gratian stopped in the middle of his sentence and took a deep breath. All the young heads in the room, those baby faces on grown bodies, turned to look. Belle came in, her short grey hair sticking up and her mouth set straight. Behind her walked Jeanette, staring at the floor. Where was Drew?

"Have a seat, honeybun," said Brother Gratian. "Glad you finally decided to join us." Jeanette nodded at her father and slipped onto a back row across from Cecil. She didn't look at him, but he knew something was wrong. Her long hair was kinky and wet. She had grass on the backs of her bare calves and heels. She stared straight down, her mouth as tight as a seam in her white face. Cecil watched her until the sermon was over and the singing started. "This World Is Not My Home," "Jesus, Name Above All Names," "Beautiful Savior," "We Are One in the Spirit."

Jeanette didn't sing. She sat as still as the dirt dug from a grave. Then suddenly she got up and walked to the front alone. She walked right to the pulpit all by herself and stood before her own father.

He pulled a piece of grass out of her hair and said something to her in a gentle voice.

Cecil felt a terrible, terrible need. He hardly knew Jeanette, he'd only met her that afternoon, and yet he couldn't bear to see her alone up there kneeling. It was the loneliest sight he'd ever seen, her with her shoulders shaking and her daddy leaning over her. "Come!" something said. He stood up and jumped forward as if someone had pinched him. He practically

pushed Jeanette sideways to kneel beside her. She smelled like wet grass and crushed mint leaves. Their bare arms touched.

"Son," said Brother Gratian hastily, looking down at him with lifted eyebrows while Jeanette began to sob and moan—"It's all my fault! I drove my precious Drew away."

"Son," said Brother Gratian, beginning again, "do you come today to repent of your sins and accept the Lord Jesus?"

Cecil stammered. "Mostly, uh, yes sir, I believe I do."

"Then pray this prayer with me." Two heavy weights fell upon Cecil then, one pair of hands on his shoulders and another on his head. He closed his eyes and repeated Jeanette's father's words, and then he heard feet shuffling up behind him. Others had come to be saved.

After a few seconds the burden of hands lifted from his head and shoulders and he opened his eyes again. But Jeanette was no longer beside him. He twisted around and saw that the back door of the chapel stood open. She had slipped away, but he was trapped by the small crowd and couldn't escape to reach her.

Even when the singing and praying had finished and he could go out in the dark to search for her—well, then he couldn't get to her! He found her cabin windows lit, but the shutters were drawn and others were already inside talking. He heard snatches of their conversation: "By their fruits ye shall know them," Jeanette's aunt said, and Brother Gratian said, "It's a good thing we found out about that Drew before it was too late, before he got our little girl in real trouble." Below their voices he heard Jeanette's soft crying.

Cecil figured he'd find a place to sleep, not far away, and help Jeanette in the morning. So he settled down on the ground again, next to a creek that cut its way down the hill above her cabin. All night he slept soundly, no longer thinking about Maria, not wondering when he'd reach Albuquerque, not remembering the photograph in his pocket nor even considering that he might now be bound for heaven. Yet Brother Gratian had said that he was—right after that brief prayer in the chapel: "Son, you have been redeemed and justified, signed, sealed and bound up for glory. Amen." CT

Betty S. Carter is the author of two novels, I Read It in the Wordless Book (Baker) and The Tower, the Mask, and the Grave (Harold Shaw), and has just completed a third, from which this story is taken.

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FINISHING

After achieving success, early retirees are finding significance in second-career mission assignments.

CHRISTINE J. GARDNER

Nelson Malwitz was having a midlife crisis. At 50, he was at the top of his game. As corporate director of chemical research for Sealed Air Corporation in Danbury, Connecticut, the company that invented Bubble Wrap, Malwitz achieved seven patents for plastic foam technology. He served as an adult Sunday-school teacher at Walnut Hill Community Church, a congregation he helped found. He had a wife, Marge, and two teenage sons, Jonathan and David, who loved him. But something was missing. Then he remembered Urbana.

The year was 1967. Raised in the Christian and Missionary Alliance denomination, Malwitz was

mortgage payments soon got in the way.

Now with a view from middle age, Malwitz decided to revisit his dream and pursue a second career in missions. But he quickly found missions agencies were unprepared for a skilled professional in his fifties. "It was so difficult to get in, and I had no idea where the point of entry was," Malwitz says.

Gene Shackelford, a friend from church, had a similar experience. At 59, he retired as a vice president of Union Carbide. He and his wife were active in Bible Study Fellowship and participated on his congregation's missions committee, but it took them three years to find a position in missions. "I thought, *That's way too long*," Malwitz says. "The task is way too difficult for people to get a significant second career if the missions infrastructure is not ready to take people." So Malwitz decided his contribution to missions would be to encourage others from his generation to consider second careers in missions and to help them through what he calls "the missions minefield."

Malwitz founded Finishers Project in 1996 (finishers@compuserve.com). "As you hit 50, you no longer count your years from the time you were born, but you count the amount of time you have left," he says. "The big idea has to do with finishing well." The concept has captured the attention of more than 30 missions agencies, which are joining with Finishers Project to host an "Urbana-like" conference in Chicago October 1-3. Finishers Forum is addressing financial, health, and family concerns, and connecting an anti-

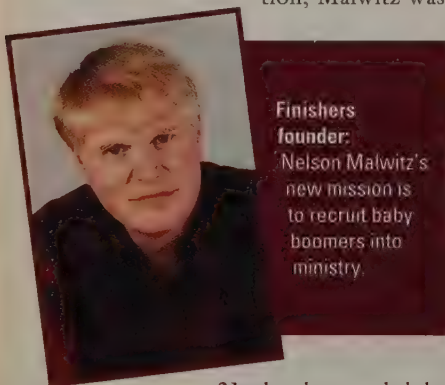
pated 600 boomer participants with 150 missions agency representatives.

Like Malwitz, who calls himself "the generic evangelical baby boomer sitting in the pew," millions of boomers, identified as those born between 1946 and 1965, are approaching retirement with their nests empty and their 401(k)s full. In 2001, the leading edge of the 82 million-strong group turns 55, for an estimated total of 21 million boomers 50 years or older. Malwitz has determined that 4.6 million of them are evangelicals. If 1 percent is interested in missions, 46,000 individuals could be available for ministry.

They are the healthiest, wealthiest, and best-educated retirees ever. These evangelical boomer "finishers" (or "second-halvers") may want to return to their Urbana roots and start second careers in missions. They have already achieved success in their careers; now they want to achieve significance. Their idealism—as well as their skills and money—could help revive flagging North American missions.

SEARCH FOR SIGNIFICANCE: Michael Darby, a senior vice president at Shearson Lehman, had been a stockbroker for 30 years, and his wife, Elizabeth, had owned a retail store for 13 years when they started feeling burned out. "We didn't have the joy of going to work like we used to," Michael says.

A teaching cassette by television preacher Charles Stanley about discovering God's will and a job offer from a friend at Focus on the Family prompted the Darbys to consider career opportunities in ministry. A visit with friend Bruce



Finishers founder: Nelson Malwitz's new mission is to recruit baby boomers into ministry.

21 when he attended the InterVarsity student missions conference in Urbana, Illinois. Reflecting the idealism of the time, Malwitz wanted to change the world, so he committed his life to missions. But family, career, and

WELL

**On a mission:
Ken and Pat
Kingston pack for
Africa.**



Wilkinson at Walk Thru the Bible confirmed their call to missions.

But panic quickly set in. They had a business to liquidate, a house to sell, and a career to conclude—but at least their children were grown and they had no financial debt. The Darbys decided to let God take care of the details. “If it’s his calling, we’re not supposed to worry about those things,” Michael says. “We’re just supposed to obey.”

In 1991, Michael retired early at 54 and Elizabeth, then 49, sold her store so they could work with CoMission, a cooperative effort by 80 organizations to teach Christian values in Russian public schools. After short trips to the country, the Darbys joined a team from Navigators to live in

Rostov, Russia, for a year to disciple new believers. The Darbys exchanged a home on the Florida coast for university housing with no hot water, infrequent heat and electricity, and a view of a garbage dump; but they considered themselves blessed to have rediscovered God’s purpose. Now living in Georgia, the Darbys are working with Navigators on a new program to help other finishers determine their giftedness.

Ken and Pat Kingston assumed they would retire one day and move to Florida or Arizona. But retirement came sooner than they expected when Ken, a middle-school teacher in Crystal Lake, Illinois, for 29 years, had an early retirement option at age 59. In 1991, they seized the opportunity to pursue a lifelong dream of

becoming missionaries with Wycliffe Bible Translators.

The Kingstons believe God orchestrated the timing. Pat’s mother, who had been living with the Kingstons, had died a month earlier. Their youngest son married the previous summer.

But credit card debt concerned them, along with leaving their four grandchildren, all of whom lived within two blocks of their home. Ken’s pension helped, but the Kingstons still had to raise support.

The Kingstons “adopted” many new grandchildren in Lima, Peru, where Ken used his experience as an educator to start a school for missionary children while Pat served in the Wycliffe office. After six years, the Kingstons returned home for a

year, but they now are packing for a three-year assignment in Kenya. "[Retired] people are traipsing around the country in RVs," laughs Pat. "I think that would be the most boring life I could ever imagine."

Both the Darbys and Kingstons achieved success in their careers, but they wanted something more. Bob Buford would say they sought significance. Buford, whose book *Halftime* (Zondervan, 1994) is the unofficial guidebook for finishers, says that for retirees who choose service over leisure, "the payoff is blessedness."

A recent survey of 600 evangelical boomers, sponsored by Finishers Project, indicates 61 percent would like to retire early and pursue a second career. Fifty-four percent say they would consider a second career in missions. Eighty-one percent want to be able to serve with their spouse. "They want to leave a legacy," says Rod Beidler, director of international recruitment for Navigators.

MISSIONS DILEMMA: As early retirees search for significance in the second half of their lives, some missions leaders are wondering whether self-absorbed boomers are willing to make the costly sacrifices necessary to serve in overseas ministry. But with the leveling off of church commitment to foreign missions, agency leaders may have few alternatives to draw in a significant number of fresh missions candidates.

The *Mission Handbook* (MARC, 1997) indicates that by 2000, more than 1 billion people still will not have heard the gospel message. Yet as the world's population increases, North American mission efforts have not.

"Basically, we've plateaued," says Jim Reapsome, founder of *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*, commenting on the current numbers of full-time North American missionaries. By contrast, the number of short-term missionaries—on assignments as short as two weeks—continues to rise.

There are more available missions positions than qualified candidates to fill them. TEAM is recruiting for 700 positions. Wycliffe has 1,500 openings. Servant Opportunity Network, a computer matching service for retirees, lists more than 6,000 available jobs with more than 200 missions agencies.

Ralph Winter, general director of Frontier Mission Fellowship, estimates non-Western missionaries will outnumber Western missionaries in the next few years. Missions experts point to the new ranks of cross-cultural missionaries from developing-world congregations as the

result of centuries of missionary commitment from the Western church.

But in North America, the church's financial support of missions is steadily declining. According to *Money Matters: Personal Giving in American Churches* (Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 10–15 percent of Protestant church budgets goes to foreign missions, roughly half the amount of what it was in the 1950s. *The State of Church Giving Through 1992* (empty tomb, inc., 1994) estimates that Protestant church members each gave only \$20 to foreign missions in 1991, compared to \$164 spent on soft drinks and \$103 for sporting goods.

"[The church] is losing its zeal," says Larry Walker, southwest regional director for ACOM, which assists its 1,000 member churches with their mis-

sions programs.

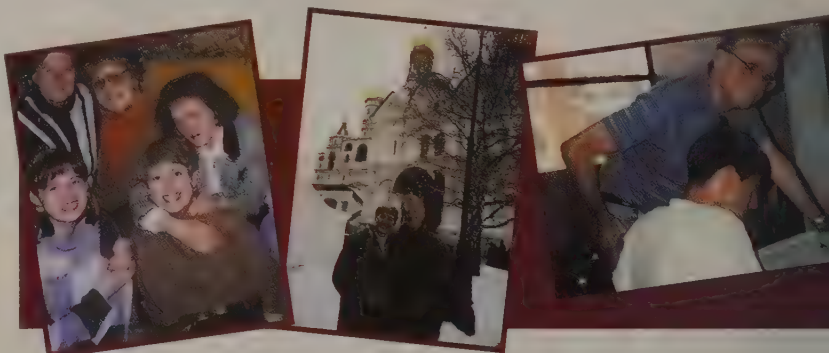
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"[The church] is losing its zeal," says Larry Walker, southwest regional director for ACOM, which assists its 1,000 member churches with their mis-

ance and financial planning. Navigators' Rod Beidler says that when he started receiving calls from finishers looking for second careers, "we didn't know what to do with them. We were caught very much by surprise."

Ed Lewis, a recruiter with International Teams, says finishers know the primary need to spread the gospel worldwide. "They are up to the challenge and want to get involved," he says. "We don't want to put unnecessary obstacles in their path. And I think maybe, right now, we're doing that."

Mike and Linda Green, of Jupiter, Florida, shared a desire to use their skills in communications technology to further world evangelism. In 1994, Mike retired early at 58 from a 30-year career as a nuclear engineer and started his own busi-



ness as a software consultant. Linda, then 49, worked as an editor of an online financial publication. Their passion for missions had been fueled by Urbana, which Mike first attended in 1957 and they both attended in 1996. But the missions agencies they approached would not accept them because they both had earlier been divorced—twice for Linda and once for Mike, while he was a Christian.

Mike and Linda applied at six agencies, all of which turned them down. Most agencies terminated their applications early in the process. "Some just come right out and say, 'Sorry, we can't have divorced people as part of our organization,'" says Mike. One agency said they "had to limit their damages, so to speak," he says. The Greens' worst experience involved a missions agency that accepted them after numerous interviews, but later retracted their offer after a staff member threatened to leave if the organization hired a divorced couple. "It was painful at times," Mike says.

OVERCOMING OBSTACLES: Missions agency leaders agree that they need to update their processes to accommodate boomers. Malwitz, as a test to see how agencies would respond to a finisher, forwarded the name of Indiana financial consultant David Ober to two dozen missions agencies. Sixteen of the agencies made no effort to contact Ober. Eight sent standard information packets—data geared to recent college graduates, not older professionals with concerns about health insur-

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that make them so appealing—spiritual and emotional maturity, professional skills, and financial security—may also create problems that could hinder missions objectives.

The largest cross-cultural adjustment a boomer may have to make is between the corporate and nonprofit worlds, especially if the boomer has left a leadership position. "If a finisher is a high-powered, CEO-type, he's not going to be prepared to sweep the halls," says Winter.

Some finishers may expect a leadership position in missions, Lewis says, but it will take time for them to gain credibility with career missionaries who may feel threatened by finishers who seem to use missions as a hobby. He believes more finishers such as Michael Darby—who had no qualms about leaving a man-

leaving to plant a church with a Mennonite missions team in Albania, have raised their full support. Mike and Linda Green sold their house in August in anticipation of their move to Colorado. "We're back at square one in many ways," says Mike.

Another potential area of frustration is recruitment and training. Finishers say the hiring process is too slow, taking several months to several years before a candidate is accepted, trained, and has raised support.

In most cases, finishers are mature in their faith but have not had the formal Bible training required by most agencies. TEAM, for example, requires 30 semester hours of Bible classes for its full-time missionaries. Finishers Project is looking to develop a "Bible SAT" to accommodate those who are biblically literate but may not have the college transcripts to prove it.

The lack of a foreign language could also hinder a finisher's effectiveness in missions by limiting options to support roles in the United States or reliance on an interpreter.

But altering the training requirements to meet the needs of boomers is an area of serious concern for Winter, who sees a growing "amateurization" in missions. "I don't care if you have a Ph.D. in marketing, [a finisher] still needs to know what missions is," he says. Otherwise, they will just be "sand in the machinery."

DRIVE-BY MISSIONS? Despite the eagerness of missions agencies to retool their processes to attract finishers, some missions experts are skeptical. They fear finishers could change the focus of missions by demanding short-term options, disregarding indigenous leadership, and posing a threat to career missionaries.

Winter believes finishers will not want to spend their last years of life overseas, instead choosing "drive-by missions projects."

"For the most part, short-termers have given up trying to make a contribution to missions," Winter says. "It's kind of an expensive education, and almost a futile way of conducting missions."

But short-term missions opportunities could help finishers verify their commitment to longer-term assignments, says Paul McKaughan, president of the Evangelical Foreign Missions Association.

Missions experts herald the growth of indigenous leadership in missions and express concern over whether a new corps of Western finishers may be counterproductive to internationalization. "The role

we played in the past is not the role we will play in the future," says McKaughan. "We will not be calling the shots from the West."

Ruth Tucker, visiting professor of mission at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, says, "Our fix-it-upper mentality—that we can do it—it's passé." Finishers Project is "wrong-headed," she says, if nationals are not consulted first.

Bill O'Brien, director of the Global Center at Samford University, says finishers need to know the church in the Two-Thirds World is prospering, with an estimated 1,000 sending agencies and more than 40,000 missionaries. North American Christians still have a pivotal role to play in missions—especially in the training of national leaders—but O'Brien says finishers need to understand they are the students in this process.

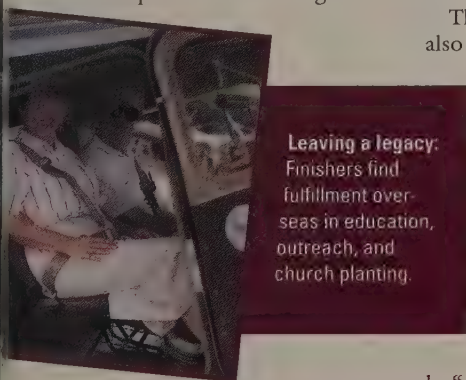
The agencies' eagerness to court finishers could be perceived as a slap in the face to career missionaries who bypassed opportunities for profitable careers. "Often-times, missionaries are a little bit offended by the fact that these people come in and 'haven't paid their dues,'" acknowledges Malwitz. "However, they're just going to have to get over it."

HISTORIC OPPORTUNITY: Despite the concerns, Finishers Project is taking advantage of a historic opportunity. Plans are under way for an adult educational video, a toll-free number with information on job availabilities, and a finishers magazine. The idea is spreading around the globe: Malwitz has received calls from boomers in Canada, Germany, Ireland, New Zealand, South Africa, and Taiwan who want to start their own Finishers Project.

Thousands of boomers are approaching retirement and want a second chance to make a difference in their world; but a problem could arise if significance, not service, becomes their goal.

O'Brien warns that boomers' desire to become finishers should have more to do with meeting missions goals than their personal goals. Missions is "not just a flash-in-the-pan that gave me a warm, bubbly feeling because I felt significant for a minute," he says.

North American missions needs the energy that comes from a new corps of impassioned missionaries. Finishers need to find significance in their retirement years. But finishers must move from the pursuit of personal fulfillment to fulfillment of the Great Commission—sharing the gospel with a world desperate to hear—if they want to use their life skills to nurture a young, but growing, church. **CI**



Leaving a legacy: Finishers find fulfillment overseas in education, outreach, and church planting.

agement position in finance to work as part of a discipleship team in Russia—are looking for a respite from the responsibilities of leadership.

Others, such as the Kingstons and the Greens, may want to use their professional skills in missions, but it may mean they will have to serve in a support role. If they are not wealthy enough to support themselves on retirement income alone, they may have a difficult time raising support. "We view missionaries as people going into hardship posts, maybe wrestling with cockroaches," says Art McCleary, a finisher who left a career in human resources to work for Senior Ambassadors for Christ. "But when they are in an office setting in the West, it is difficult to see them as missionaries."

Mike and Linda Green finally found computer positions with the Caleb Project in Littleton, Colorado, but they recently had to withdraw their acceptance because they could not raise enough support. After 15 months of raising funds, the Greens had only 15 percent of their \$70,000 combined first-year support. By contrast, Mike's oldest daughter and her husband, who are

The Unmoral Prophets

Evolutionary psychologists are society's new prophets, says

CHRISTIANITY TODAY's editor at large, Philip Yancey, in the following article condensed from BOOKS & CULTURE, a sister publication of CT. While their message would reduce us to mere survival machines, Yancey points out, their logic contains fatal flaws. Yancey's most recent books are *Church: Why Bother?* and *What's So Amazing About Grace?* (Zondervan).



PHILIP
YANCEY

The new science of evolutionary psychology attempts to explain all human thought and behavior as the unguided result of natural selection. As products of blind evolution, say these thinkers, we deceive ourselves by searching for any teleology other than that scripted in our DNA. We must look down, not up: to nature, not its Creator.

The hubris of this new science is breathtaking. Predicts Robert Trivers of Harvard, "Sooner or later, political science, law, economics, psychology, psychiatry and anthropology will all be branches of sociobiology." He might have added ethics to the list.

Writers on evolutionary psychology are talented and entertaining, and they fill their works with vivid descriptions of birds, bees, and chimpanzees. They explain courtship displays, infidelity, maternal instincts, gossip, and social organization in arresting ways. Newsmagazines like *Time* hire these writers to interpret gang behavior in the inner cities or sexual indiscretions in the capital city, and the results are so winsome that evolutionary psychologists have become the new cosmologists, helping us make sense of ourselves and our role in the universe.

Philosophers are just now beginning to scrutinize the assumptions of evolutionary psychology, and I suspect they will have a field day with its epistemology. I am more concerned with its implications for what I have called "the crisis of unmorality." As if in direct fulfillment of the apostle Paul's predictions in Romans 1, scientists have relocated our primary source for morality and meaning in the beasts.

1. Evolutionary psychology relies on one principle—that of the selfish gene—to decipher behavior. I do what I do, always, to advance the likelihood of my genetic material perpetuating itself. Even if an individual act does not benefit me person-

PETER SAMUELS/TONY STONE IMAGES

ally, it does benefit the "gene pool" I am contributing to. Evolutionary theorists herald it as the most important single advance in their theory since Darwin.

By their own admission, the new scientists propose a wholly deterministic understanding of the human species. As Richard Dawkins puts it, "We are survival machines—robot vehicles blindly programmed to preserve the selfish molecules known as genes. This is a truth which still fills me with astonishment. Though I have known it for years, I never seem to get fully used to it."

Critics propose many anecdotal exceptions to the



human behavior, evolutionary psychology has both the virtue and the defect of simplicity. When Robertson McQuilkin, who left a college presidency to stay by his Alzheimer's-afflicted wife (CT, Feb. 5, 1995, p. 32), contends that he stands by his wife out of his love for her and because of his commitment to biblical standards of fidelity—why, of course he would argue that. He makes his living as a Christian writer and speaker, does he not? He is finding a way to propagate the ideas that have served him so well.

Robert Wright, one of the best expositors of evolutionary psychology to the general public, articulates the tautology: "We believe the things—about morality, personal worth, even objective truth—that lead to behaviors that get our genes into the next generation. . . . What is in our genes' interests is what seems 'right'—morally right, objectively right, whatever sort of rightness is in order."

Carry the logic far enough, and any notion of good and evil disappears. In

Morality must, of course, serve the monistic selfish-gene principle: "Human behavior—like the deepest capacities for emotional response which drive and guide it—is the circuitous technique by which human genetic material has been and will be kept intact. Morality has no other demonstrable ultimate function."

This, of course, raises important questions about human freedom and moral responsibility. Western jurisprudence assumes the right to judge a person guilty of criminal behavior if he or she (1) can discern the difference between good and evil and (2) was mentally competent to make a free decision when committing the crime. Sirhan Sirhan was sent to prison and John Hinckley to a mental institution over just this legal distinction. Evolutionary psychology appears to call both principles into question by claiming that none of our actions are free, and that the difference between good and evil is a social construct.

Robert Wright points to lust as a clear example of the selfish-gene principle at work. Lust developed as nature's way of "getting us to act as if we wanted lots of offspring and knew how to get them, whether or not we actually do." Following this line of reasoning leads Wright tentatively to endorse polygamy. After all, the practice addresses the basic sexual imbalance between what men and women want. If a man grows restless after a woman gives him a few children, why shouldn't he "fall in love" and begin another family line without divorcing his first wife?

Lyall Watson takes on the case of Susan Smith, who rolled a Mazda containing her two infant sons, nicknamed "Precious" and "Sugarfoot," into a lake. Infanticide is nothing new, says Watson, citing the statistic that in the U.S. alone, 1,300 children are killed each year by parents or close relatives. In a statement that could stand as a parody of the morally neutral stance of evolutionary psychology, Watson observes: "We have to be careful not to confuse the interests of parents and offspring, which often conflict where optimal fitness is concerned. Children nearly always want more than their parents can provide, and nice judgment is required to reconcile such disparity. In many situations, unconscious calculations are clearly being made, with

As if explaining algebra to a child, the evolutionary psychologists take up thorny problems one by one and explicate them in terms of the selfish gene.

selfish-gene theory. What about gay people, or childless couples, who do not plan to perpetuate their genes—how to explain their behavior? Or consider Mother Teresa, who early in her life committed to a vow of chastity. On what basis can we account for such altruistic behavior? As if explaining algebra to a child, the evolutionary psychologists take up such thorny problems one by one and explicate them in terms of the selfish gene.

Like all monistic explanations of

essence, the evolutionary psychologists have devised a unified theory of human depravity that would make John Calvin blush. Hard-wired for selfishness, we have no potential for anything else.

2. Morality springs entirely from our genes. Most evolutionary psychologists take their turn at accounting for the origin of morality. The sociobiologist Edward O. Wilson proposes that, over the course of thousands of generations, natural selection wired in certain tendencies that are "largely unconscious and irrational," on the level of "gut feelings."

every evidence of an evolutionary perspective coming into play."

Trapped in philosophical naturalism, evolutionary biologists cannot embrace any external code, such as the Tao described by C. S. Lewis in *The Abolition of Man*. The Tao represents objective truth, the first principle beyond which we cannot argue; it allows us to make judgments; we cannot judge it. Without such a standard, modern science must constantly teeter on the edge of self-contradiction. Why choose one set of values over another, especially when you do not believe in free choice?

Some evolutionary biologists cheerfully acknowledge the problem. Concludes Robert Wright: "Thus the difficult question of whether the human animal can be a moral animal—the question that modern cynicism tends to greet with despair—may seem increasingly quaint. The question may be whether, after the new Darwinism takes root, the word *moral* can be anything but a joke."

3. Nature gives mixed messages about morality. After demonstrating that we can look to the primates for early examples of sympathy, empathy, and justice, Frans de Waal writes, "We seem to be reaching a point at which science can wrest morality from the hands of the philosophers." Examples of "ethical" behavior abound in nature: whales and dolphins risking their lives to save injured companions, chimpanzees coming to the aid of the wounded, elephants refusing to abandon slain comrades.

Well, yes, but it all depends on where you point your field binoculars. Where do you learn about proper behavior between the sexes, for example? Nature offers very few examples of monogamy and none of egalitarianism. Should our females, like the praying mantises, devour the males who are mating with them? Should our neighborhoods resolve their disputes as do the bonobo chimpanzees by engaging in a quick orgy in which they all have sex with one another? Should human males mimic the scorpion-fly by lying in wait to take the nearest female by force?

Mark Ridley sees sexual jealousy as a Darwinian adaptation for humans that enabled our ancestors to outbreed their more relaxed contemporaries. But he quickly adds that he can "imagine a soci-

ety in which people are conditioned to enjoy the thought of their spouse's being unfaithful." In his discussion, the morality of sexual fidelity is a value-neutral adaptation to social circumstances.

Or, consider violence. Lyall Watson admits he finds it "disturbing" that hyena cubs seem genetically programmed to attack and kill their siblings on sight almost from birth. Researchers such as Frans de Waal and Jane Goodall likewise react in revulsion and dismay when primates they have grown to love are murdered by others of their species. On what grounds? The animals themselves seem undismayed; they are acting "naturally," in response to genetic mes-

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about the morality of
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but I do worry about
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sages. What gives an evolutionist the right to step outside of nature, endorse a moral concept of nonviolence, then apply it back to nature, of which we are all a part?

The alternative is not just jarring but appalling. Some evolutionary psychologists, showing more consistency, look to nature to explain, and even justify, the most egregious human behavior. Lyall Watson, for example, though mysteriously disturbed by fratricide among hyenas, admits that he could not easily condemn headhunting, because such a practice keeps certain tribes in ecological balance.

In response to their critics, evolutionary psychologists are quick to argue, "Don't go from *is* to *ought*. We examine nature to see what is, to learn why we behave the way we do. It does not necessarily follow that we *ought* to do what other species do." Fair enough; but where do we go to get the *ought*? And another

question: Where did this whole notion of *ought* come from, anyway?

4. A morality based in nature is vulnerable to large-scale abuse. Julian Huxley declared in 1963,

The population explosion is making us ask . . . What are people for? Whatever the answer . . . it is clear that the general quality of the world's population is not very high, is beginning to deteriorate, and should and could be improved. It is deteriorating thanks to genetic defectives who would otherwise have died being kept alive, and thanks to the crop of new mutations due to fallout. In modern man, the direction of genetic evolution has started to change its sign, from positive to negative, from advance to retreat: we must manage to put it back on its age-old course of positive improvement.

The Western intellectual community, in the wake of Hitler, today finds eugenics repulsive and roundly condemns racism based on Social Darwinism. Yet its allegiance to philosophical naturalism leaves it vulnerable to abuse, especially now that advances in gene research allow for genetic "improvement."

Any time a leading thinker uses phrases like "general quality of the world's population" and "genetic defectives," the rest of us should invest in home security systems. An engineered society or engineered individual must conform to some standard of correctness or normalcy, and here is where evolutionary psychology and social engineering break down. Who decides the standard or norm? Julian Huxley or Martin Heidegger? Bill Clinton or Pol Pot? I am still trying to think of a large-scale attempt to improve human society that has not led to catastrophe.

Trust us, say the new behaviorists. We're kinder and gentler. We have your best interests—the best interests of the whole species—at heart. Oh? And what historical examples can you point to in which behavioral conditioning was used for benevolent purposes? Must we repeat history?

From a Christian perspective, the new science of evolutionary psychology founders on its anthropology, its basic understanding of the nature of humanity. The "trouser ape," C. S. Lewis satirically called us in *The Abolition of Man*. Perhaps

that should be updated to "untrousered ape." Scientists are finding it increasingly difficult to claim any distinctiveness about being human. Stephen Jay Gould faults the view that places humanity at the top, as the pinnacle of evolutionary progress. We are instead, he says, "a cosmic accident that would never arise again if the tree of life could be replanted."

Animal-rights activists seize upon the new paradigm as an endorsement of their campaign against "speciesism." Animals, being no different from people, should be treated accordingly. "There really is no rational reason for saying a human being has special rights," says Ingrid Newkirk, cofounder of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals. "A rat is a pig is a dog is a boy."

Evelyn Pluhar takes that logic further down the same road, arguing that in certain cases, an animal's rights should take precedence over a human's. For example, as one reviewer of the book suggested, "Compare a normal chimpanzee to a severely retarded human child unable to take care of itself or to speak or to reason. Given that neither qualifies as a rational moral being, capable of asserting its rights, why do we allow vivisection of the chimp but not of the child? Surely, if moral significance attaches only to full persons, then the child should be granted no more protection than the chimp, or the pig awaiting slaughter."

It takes an honest scientist indeed to acknowledge that all discussion about rights is irrelevant. Rights are, by definition, granted. As zoologist Paul Shepard admits, "'Rights' implies some kind of cosmic rule prior to any contracts among users, legislation for protection, or decisions to liberate. It refers to something intrinsic or given by God or Nature. . . . Wild animals do not have rights; they have a natural history."

At least Shepard is honest about the moral vacuum at the center of evolutionary psychology. Books in this field by evolutionary psychologists tend to contain glaring contradictions. They call on us to respect the rights of animals without giving us a rationale for those rights. They inform us we have no claim to superiority over other species—though so far as I know, only humans will be reading their elegant arguments. After describing nature's examples of gang rape, murder, and cannibalism, they urge us to rise above our genetic scripting. They call us to "higher" values of nonviolence and mutual respect, even though there is no "higher" and

"lower," and apparently we have no freedom to act anyway. They urge us to transcend the destiny of natural selection, to combat the cosmic process. Yet by binding us within that cosmic process, and by insisting that we have no other fate but natural selection, they deny our ability to act on such noble instincts.

I have met a few evolutionary psychologists, and they seem like cultured, well-mannered individuals who do not beat their children or murder their undesirable cousins. Yet the doctrine they promulgate, by undercutting any transcendent basis for morality, destroys our very ability to judge such behavior "bad" or "evil." I do not worry about the morality of individual evolutionists, but I do worry about the morality of those who follow their doctrines to their logical ends. "We make men without chests and expect of them virtue and enterprise," wrote C. S. Lewis.

Meanwhile, the leaders of the movement are cranking out books, writing cover stories for newsmagazines, and being feted

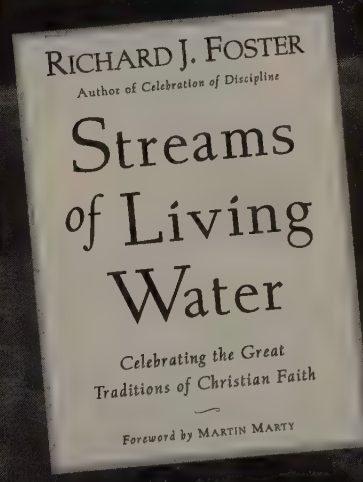
at major universities. For the moment, at least, they hold the spotlight, and it illuminates a benign and knowing smile. At last we understand human behavior. At last we understand ourselves.

More than three centuries ago another scientist, Blaise Pascal, considered a pre-modern version of the loss of faith. This was his conclusion:

Now, what do we gain by hearing it said of a man that he has now thrown off the yoke, that he does not believe there is a God who watches our actions, that he considers himself the sole master of his conduct. . . . Do they profess to have delighted us by telling us that they hold our soul to be only a little wind and smoke, especially by telling us this in a haughty and self-satisfied tone of voice? Is this a thing to say gaily? Is it not, on the contrary, a thing to say sadly, as the saddest thing in the world? **CI**

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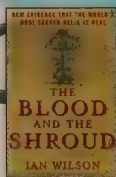
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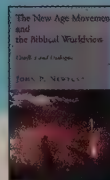
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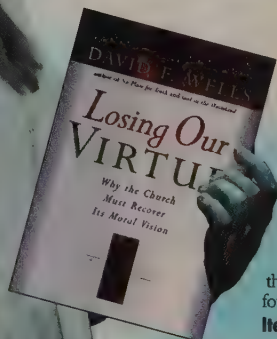
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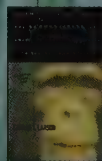
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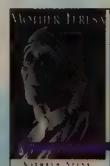
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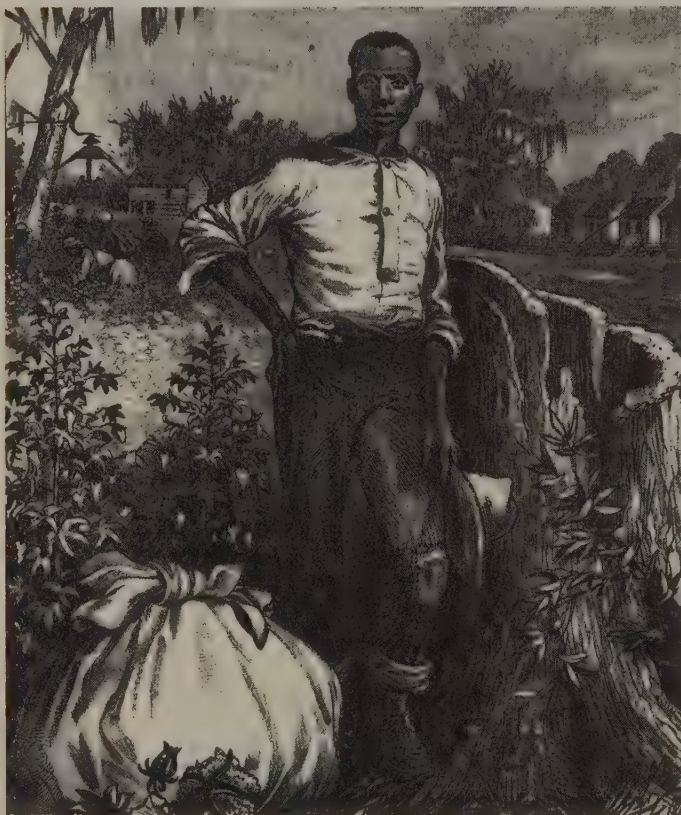
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**Slavery:
White
Americans
must deal
with our
racist past.**

Gestures of collective repentance have become popular in recent years. In 1994, the pope offered an apology for past sins committed against non-Catholics. In the summer of 1995, the Southern Baptists, who number over 15 million, voted to express a resolution of repentance that read in part, "We lament and repudiate historic acts of evil such as slavery from which we continue to reap a bitter harvest." Last year, President Clinton apologized to the African Americans who were the unwitting subjects in the infamous Tuskegee study of syphilis, and he seriously considered the possibility of apologizing for slavery in general.

Reactions to Clinton's proposed mea culpa varied. Ward Connerly, an African-American entrepreneur, regent of the University of California, and

architect of the California antiaffirmative action referendum, Proposition 209, pronounced this verdict on the idea: "Apologizing for slavery is probably one of the dumbest things anyone could do." Conversely, civil-rights leader Julian Bond maintained that an apology for slavery would be a good and important symbolic gesture.

Last summer, in between Little League baseball games in a largely white Minnesota town, I did some informal polling of my own. Though none of the people I talked to took the President's proposed apology to be an urgent matter, about half expressed mild support for the idea. Others scoffed at repenting for what they took to be ancient history. The wife of a professor commented, "Why should I apologize for something done to blacks more than a hundred years ago?" A fair question, which might be restated: "Why should I apologize for a crime that I had nothing to do with?" Or more to the point, "By what authority can I apologize for someone else's actions?" It would, after all, be hubristic for me to think that I could repent for a mugging that I did not participate in.

As a professor of philosophy, I have encountered many white students over the years who accurately or out of paranoia believe that they are constantly being asked to feel guilty and repent for racist institutions and actions in which they themselves had no hand. When it comes to race and repentance, these students are of the Aristotelian opinion that we should only be praised or blamed for our own voluntary actions. Oddly enough, many of them feel no qualms about taking pride in the accomplishments of the various communities with which they identify—their college, church, country, or for that matter, their local major league baseball team.

This minor inconsistency aside, many of those who sneer or snarl at the suggestion of apologizing for deeds from the deep past need to consider the possibility that we may bear a moral connection to actions that we did not ourselves commit. In this regard, it would be useful to distinguish between actions that one neither commits nor profits from and actions not committed but profited from.

Suppose, for example, that unbeknownst to me, a friend of mine robs a bank and makes off with \$7 million. Clearly, I am neither responsible for the robbery nor am I in a position to apologize for it. How-

ever, if after telling me about the theft, my friend offers me a million dollars of the stolen loot, and I accept it, then I am no longer innocent of the robbery, despite the fact that I had nothing at all to do with the heist. It could be argued that white people have profited from our racist past, and thus, relative to slavery, we are more like receivers of stolen goods than innocent bystanders who just happen to bear a physical likeness to slave owners.

Paradoxically enough, Americans do not shy away from admitting that we profit from access to cheap foreign labor, and yet whites find it hard to believe that we have benefited in any way from hundreds of years of free labor. Obviously, this lack of awareness would be exculpatory if, in fact, slavery and discrimination did not serve the interests of whites. However, if ignorance of being privileged is an ignorance we ourselves are responsible for producing, then we become morally reproachable receivers of stolen goods. And to be psychologically realistic, whites have a strong investment in blinking their assessment of the broad effects of racism.

Let's return to my earlier example: assume that when I accepted the gift of a million dollars, I had no reason to think that the money had been stolen. Years later I came to understand that the funds upon which I had built a comfortable and respectable life had been pilfered from the accounts of your great-grandparents. Would the fact that many years had gone by cover the sin to such a degree that I would not bear any responsibility to the descendants of my great-grandparents' victims who, thanks to my ancestors, now led a distinctively unprivileged existence?

Individuals who benefit from a crime are mistaken in thinking that they have nothing to do with the crime. If responsibility does not extend from the robber baron to his children, then the material benefits of his wrongdoing can be passed along with impunity to future generations.

Once again, it is essential to distinguish between cases in which one generation is entirely innocent of a transgression committed by an earlier generation and those in which the sins of the father continue to bear fruits of advantage for his descendants. Although I am not sure that a presidential apology would have the healing effects that some anticipate, I do know that white Americans have profited from slavery and discrimination. In a competitive society, whites have always had a leg

up on African Americans, whether it be in hunting for a job, loan, house, or a position in a corporate firm.

Consider the Texaco scandal in 1996, when unsuspecting white corporate executives were caught on tape espousing racist sentiments. Or consider a story that a friend recently shared with me. My friend, who is about 35, recently returned to his hometown in a Detroit suburb for a class reunion at his richly integrated public high school. After the reunion, four of his old school chums convinced

Apologies are becoming all too easy to make today. But abuse is no argument against use.

him to go out and play a few rounds of golf. All were corporate executives and registered Democrats. And yet, when the issue of race came up, all of them swore they would never "take the risk" of hiring an African American to fill a leadership role in their respective companies. In other words, any white applicants who sought employment in one of their firms would have a decisive advantage over all African American applicants.

I was not involved in the civil-rights struggle of the sixties. While I have huffed and puffed and shaken my head about racial injustice, I have made no significant sacrifices for the cause of racial justice. I have no special authority to preach on the matter, and yet I have lived long enough in this country to recognize by whose sweat and on whose backs this country has been built and why. Because of slavery and discrimination, African Americans have provided an endless supply of cheap labor. They still work the fields, wash white babies and white octogenarians, shake drinks in country clubs, and mop floors in the classrooms in which white folks debate about race. It

was not by chance that a black woman closed my dead father's eyes. It was no accident that a black woman was there when my child first opened his blue eyes.

As a result of institutionalized racism, African Americans have been cornered into doing more than their fair share of protecting, building, and preserving this land. For that reason, I suggest that even white Americans who have cursed racism have unwillingly and perhaps unwittingly benefited from it. Thus, whites are in no position to slough off the call for an apology by insisting that they have no connection to slavery.

The Hebrew scriptures ring with intimations that blessings and blandishments can be passed on from generation to generation. The children of Abraham are blessed because of Abraham's faith. On the other side, there was clearly a time when the Israelites believed that the sins of the fathers would be punishable unto the fourth generation.

The revolutionary prophet Ezekiel inveighs against the notion of cross-generational responsibility. Attempting to focus his people's attention on their individual actions, Ezekiel proclaims that if a man "has a son who sees all the sins that his father has done, considers, and does not do likewise, . . . he shall not die for his father's iniquity" (Ezek. 18:14, 17, NRSV). When we refuse to acknowledge the harm that our community has inflicted upon others, when we the unoppressed refuse to acknowledge that, at least for a time, oppression benefits those who are not forced to walk on the other side of the street, then we fail to turn away from the sin of oppression.

By turning a blind eye, the sins of the father become the sins of the more passive son. By refusing to acknowledge who has been doing what for the last four hundred years, we fail to turn away from the grievous sins of our forefathers.

There is some sense today that apologies are becoming all too easy to make. Perhaps so. But as the philosopher Stephen Toulmin has pointed out, abuse is no argument against use. If Americans ought to feel sorry that people in our community ever permitted slavery, then we ought to be willing to say that we are sorry for slavery. Clearly, it is a sorry character who does not regret our slaveholding past.



Gordon Marino is associate professor of philosophy at Saint Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

Bringing Up Babies

It takes a church to raise the McCaugheys' septuplets.

At a prayer meeting last year at Missionary Baptist Church in Carlisle, Iowa, Kenny McCaughey asked fellow members to petition God on behalf of his wife, Bobbi, that fertility therapy would be effective. Upon learning that the prayers for his wife to conceive had been answered sevenfold, McCaughey turned to pastor Robert J. Brown with questions on how he could handle such a brood. Brown prayed that God would be glorified by whatever happened.

Since that time, life has not been the same for the McCaugheys, Brown, or Missionary Baptist Church.

The birth of the world's first surviving septuplets on November 19, 1997, changed the dynamics of the church immensely. Besides living through

to do anything we can do, no matter how long the haul may be."

Preparation began long before Kenneth, Alexis, Natalie, Kelsey, Brandon, Nathan, and Joel came into the world. Church members began bringing meals three times a week when a doctor ordered bed rest for Bobbi McCaughey in her ninth week of pregnancy—21 weeks before delivery. There have been 70 volunteers from their church to aid in caring for the septuplets—and their two-year-old sister, Mikayla—as well as in cleaning the home and preparing meals. Many on-site helpers take one shift a week, ranging from four hours in the morning to eight hours overnight.

Compassion not coincidental

Such devotion is not a new phenomenon at Missionary Baptist Church. "Their giving attitude did not start with Bobbi's pregnancy," says her father, Robert Hepworth. "It's a natural extension of what had been going on before. They are very giving to anyone who has need." Hepworth and his wife, Peggy, both 53, attend the church, as does Kenny McCaughey's father, Kenneth George, 53, and his stepmother Val, 42.

"It's not unusual for people in this church to help people in need," Val McCaughey says. "Of course, there's never been a need like this before."

Indeed. Bobbi McCaughey prepares 45 bottles of formula herself every day, but the task of

periods of intense media scrutiny, the 100-member congregation has rallied to become a model of what the church is designed to be: a support in time of need, even if the circumstances are overwhelming.

"When Bobbi and Kenny found out they were expecting seven, we said, 'You don't have to do this by yourselves,'" says Brown, 49. "The response from families in the church has been to commit ourselves

feeding, bathing, and changing diapers for seven babies around the clock—while trying to attend to other household chores—is beyond any one person. Although the McCaugheys have many relatives in the area, it has been their extended family—the church—that has seen them through.

Even if the McCaugheys feel a bit awkward relying on the assistance of others to raise their family,



Extended family: Missionary Baptist members, including Brown (back row, third from right) have taken the McCaugheys under their wings. Above, Kenny and Bobbi with Kenneth W. and Natalie.



MICHAEL E. ADAMS

they know it is part of God's plan. "The help has been simply outstanding," Bobbi McCaughey says. "If it was just me, the laundry wouldn't get done and the meals wouldn't be made."

The church in Carlisle, a town of 3,400 people 10 miles southeast of Des Moines, has been at the center of the lives of Kenny and Bobbi McCaughey both before and after the birth of the septuplets. Before the big event, they had been active at Missionary Baptist Church, which is affiliated with the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches, by working in the children's ministry and singing in the choir. Both Kenny, 28, and Bobbi, 30, attended Bible college before he became a billing clerk at the local Chevrolet dealership and she became a seamstress.

The McCaugheys continue to attend Sunday school, morning worship, and Sunday evening services faithfully, with their eight children in tow. Church members are there to help them unload and load the safety seats in the van. Friends often hold the septuplets during services.

The day of delivery, Brown led intercessors in prayer at the hospital. McCaughey chose the church sanctuary as the site of a press conference to announce the births. A prayer chain formed when newborn Joel came perilously close to death and needed a blood transfusion.

At times, Brown has been enamored with the adorable septuplets. "If I had my druthers I'd be at their house almost every day," Brown says. "But that's not my calling. I'm the pastor."

Before the births, a three-woman church committee that includes Brown's wife, Ginny, 47, formed to organize a volunteer schedule to meet the practical day-to-day needs of the McCaugheys. They initially identified three paramount needs: housing, transportation, and income.

But generous American individuals and companies have taken care of many of the needs, including free diapers, clothes, and baby food. A consortium of area businesses is putting the finishing touches on the most amazing gift: a 5,000-square-foot house being constructed with donated labor and materials. The ten-member family has lived in a 770-square-foot house the first year. Chevrolet bestowed on them a 15-passenger van to take care of transportation.

That left basic at-home needs, and two-thirds of the families from the church have helped. A volunteer is at the McCaughey home overnight for an eight-hour shift, seven days a week.

"Pastor Brown and Ginny are the right

people for this," says Val McCaughey. "They are great organizers and they know how to handle the media."

Managing the publicity

Maintaining equilibrium has not been easy. While the birth of the septuplets has provided a marvelous opportunity to demonstrate to the world that God can work miracles through a faithful church, the attention heaped upon the McCaugheys at times has been consuming. "This is a whole new dimension of ministry we've never had before," Brown says.

Brown and his six-member deacon board have been careful to make sure other congregants are not slighted because of the immense attention that has been showered upon the McCaugheys. After much agonizing, Brown and the deacons decided to allow crews from NBC's *Dateline* and ABC's *PrimeTime Live* to film in the church. Concerns about disturbing the holiness of God's house and invading the privacy of members dissipated when the news programs both portrayed church members as loving and devoted.

The births have had a unifying effect on the congregation, according to Ginny Brown. "This has enabled other people to grow," she says. "Other people are being blessed by helping out."

Brown appreciates his faithful flock. "These people are really committed," Brown says. "Many have jobs 40 hours a week. But they see this as ministry."

One such volunteer is Ken Bailey, a 47-year-old commercial artist in West Des Moines. "I like to take care of these babies," Bailey says. "It's neat to see them grow and how their personalities develop."

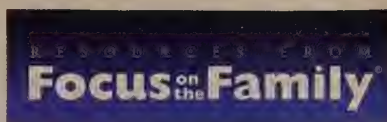
For 40-year-old Craig Milligan, a farmer nine miles south of Carlisle, helping the McCaugheys is a way to thank Bobbi McCaughey, who brought his wife, Joy, meals when she broke her arm while eight months pregnant.

"It's our turn to give back," Milligan says. "God has watched over this family. Every one of these children is so precious."

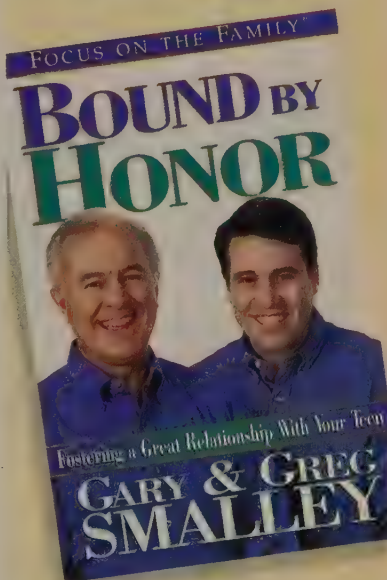
Bobbi McCaughey hopes the volunteer shifts at their home will be phased out by early next year. "We don't anticipate having help forever," she says.

Nevertheless, Brown vows that assistance will continue as long as it is needed. "We're just a local church trying to do what God has told us to do," he says. "Two years ago we never dreamed we would be a part of something like this. It humbles us and causes us to be in awe."

By John W. Kennedy, in Carlisle, Iowa.



Parents and Teens Can Turn Anger to Honor



DURING Greg's teen years, best-selling author Gary Smalley went through a stormy time with his son. But now they've teamed up to share what they learned with others.

A relationship of honor, trust, respect, and love is possible with your teenager. Just like God designed it.

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Resources for Life

Unreached People Group: Classical Musicians



There is a need for the light of the gospel to permeate the arts community, . . . to reverse the tide of a poisonous, self-destructive attitude," says Douglas Yeo, bass trombonist for the Boston Symphony Orchestra. "The problem really is spiritual, an unwillingness to fulfill the role that we have clearly defined for us in the symphony orchestra."

Audiences would be amazed at the attitudes among symphony members, Yeo thinks.

Christian musicians as role models

When one thinks of unreached people groups, classical musicians aren't likely to spring to mind. But hundreds of musicians are aiming to reach the world of classical music with a Christian witness. Yeo openly shares the gospel and his views on the brutal competition in classical music, employing his Web site (yeodoug.com) as a forum.

He believes Christian musicians can be role models, pointing to Paul's description of the body with each member having its part. His part is third trombone, and he is content with it—an attitude apparently rare in the competitive world of classical music.

John Kasica, percussionist with the St. Louis Symphony, says he applies Christ's servant philosophy to his fellow professionals. "If you serve your colleagues and give them the first opportunity to have the best part, and encourage them and help them sound better rather than compete with them—let them be the best—you reap what you sow. God will position you to do the best work. Now that takes a lot of faith

in God—to die to your own talent—but that's what it takes."

"With the arts, you have an opportunity to bring the gospel to people in creative ways. We don't always have to use words," notes Kasica's wife, Paula, a professional flautist.

The desire to communicate God's glory through beautiful music was a motivating force behind the founding of the Christian Performing Artists' Fellowship (CPAF), which got its start in Washington, D.C., by holding professional classical music performances by Christians. Since its inception in 1984 with six founding members, CPAF has grown to about a thousand members, mostly professional musicians and academicians in the performing arts, including music, theater, and dance.

Members of CPAF study the Bible and grapple with everyday applications of biblical teachings to their craft. They also go to great lengths to learn the language of their "people group" extraordinarily well. While excellence in art is an end in itself, they believe their musical credentials must be beyond question in order to gain a hearing for the gospel with their colleagues, as well as witness to paying audiences who expect the best. All this takes hours of daily practice.

Summer camp for musicians

Two years ago, in its quest for virtuosity, CPAF debuted the MasterWorks Festival, a summer camp for promising Christian music students ages 14 to 24. The faculty includes musicians from major orchestras such as the National Symphony (D.C.), the New York Philharmonic, and the Pittsburgh Symphony, and instructors from leading schools of music, including Juilliard and Eastman in New York State.

Held annually at Houghton College in rural western New York, the festival is designed to help young musicians hone their skills to the highest level in preparation for classical music careers, while at the same time providing spiritual instruction to help them avoid compromising their Christian character. One morning, Alan Harrell, cellist with the Cleveland Orchestra, led campers in a clapping exercise to demonstrate how hard it is to go against the beat—as Christians in a worldly environment must do all the time. On another day, Roslyn Langlois, a pianist from Tasmania and resident camp counselor, gently addressed the issue of competition: "If we have a sneaking fear or a worry about someone being better than

us, the Holy Spirit is there to say, 'Love them, bless them, give thanks for their gifting. Don't worry, I'll look after yours.'"

Many seasoned symphony players, including Yeo, come for a day or two to conduct master classes at the four-week festival, providing both musical and spiritual instruction. Other faculty, like the Kasicas, come for one or both two-week sessions, offering private lessons and playing alongside students in the orchestra. Participants give weekly concerts, free to the public, featuring major orchestral works, and almost daily performances and recitals for fellow campers.

"The MasterWorks Festival is a chance for Christians from these various orchestras to get together and encourage and inspire each other with their playing," says John Hodges, a MasterWorks guest conductor from Memphis. Unlike professional symphonies with their sturdy hierarchies of players, seated in order beginning with the most proficient, MasterWorks takes a radically egalitarian approach.

"We make it an educational experience for anyone. We put some good players in the back, and we seat professional musicians right with the kids," says Patrick Kavanaugh, CPAF's executive director and founder. "When Stephen Clapp, the dean of Juilliard, was here, he asked, 'Do you mind if I go to orchestra rehearsal and sit in back with the second violins?' A young

high school kid was sitting in the back of the section by himself. The night before he had prayed for a stand partner—and it turned out to be the dean of Juilliard!" John Kasica notes, "It's exciting for students to be working with so many players of excellence, and they rise to the occasion."

Many of the musicians at MasterWorks admit they feel like fish out of water, performing in secular organizations, and finding the church not terribly encouraging about their calling. "I think [the church] has often misunderstood how it can be effective in the culture, and it's lost its view of itself as the cutting edge of cultural accomplishment," observes Hodges. "Since the Enlightenment, the church has decided that the arts are so un-Christian that it's given them over to the unbelieving world."

Although many Christian musicians long for the church once again to embrace fully their musical genre, CPAF is most concerned about the secular profession of music. Kavanaugh urges musicians of faith to "be right there in the marketplace. The music world will listen to our people who are well-trained musicians more than they're going to listen to preachers and evangelists. We speak their language. I

can go down to the Kennedy Center and talk about Jesus and Beethoven in the same sentence, and they respect that."

Being salt and light

Kavanaugh wants to expand MasterWorks to new locations in the U.S., Europe, and Asia. He also envisions a Christian music conservatory—but wonders whether Christian students might be better salt and light in secular academies.

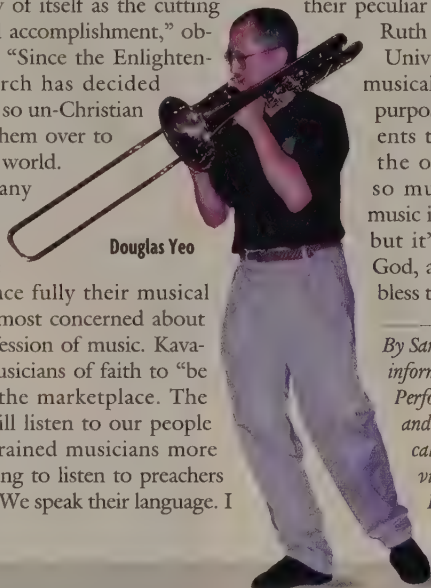
MasterWorks students and CPAF musicians believe the rigors of endless practice and often unaccepted outreach constitute their peculiar calling. Opera student

Ruth Crumley, a Bob Jones University student, says her musical training is for God's purposes: "He's given us talents to use for him. That's the one goal I've learned so much about here. Our music is not just for ourselves, but it's primarily to glorify God, and to uplift others and bless them."

CT

By Sara Pearsaul. For further information on the Christian Performing Artists' Fellowship and the MasterWorks Festival, call 888-836-2723 or visit www.ChristianPerformingArt.com

Douglas Yeo



The White Robed Army of Westminster



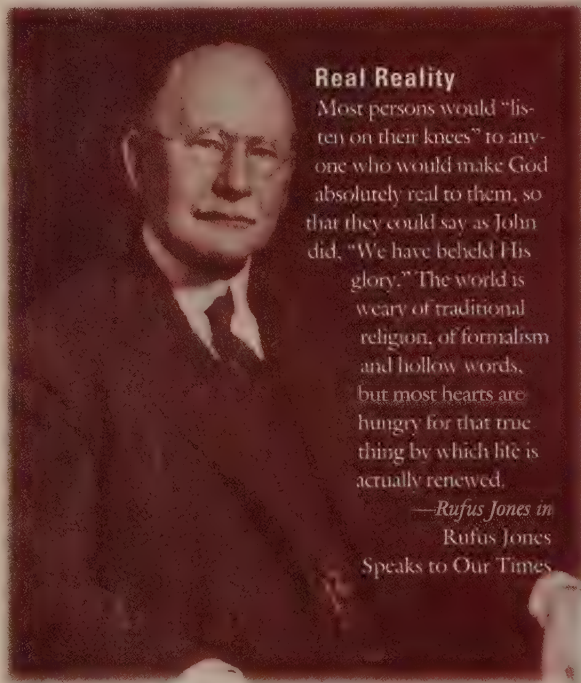
SIMON WALKER/NEWS INTERNATIONAL SYNDICATION. ©TIMES NEWSPAPERS LTD., 1998

Unveiled July 9 at Westminster Abbey, London: Ten modern martyrs are commemorated in niches that have been empty since the façade's construction in the fifteenth century. Some of these martyrs died unheralded at the hands of their own Muslim or animist families or were executed for the sake of political expediency. Some, like Archbishop Oscar Romero, made chillingly prescient statements about their imminent deaths: "You can tell them, if they succeed in killing me, that I pardon and bless those who do it. But I wish they would realize that they

are wasting their time. A bishop may die, but the Church of God, which is the people, will never die." From left: Maximilian Kolbe of Poland (Franciscan), Manche Masemola of South Africa (Anglican), Janani Luwum of Uganda (Anglican), Grand Duchess Elizabeth of Russia (Orthodox), Martin Luther King of the United States (Baptist), Oscar Romero of El Salvador (Roman Catholic), Dietrich Bonhoeffer of Germany (Lutheran), Esther John of India (Presbyterian), Lucien Tapiedi of Papua New Guinea (Anglican), Wang Zhiming of China (evangelical).

CT

Classic and contemporary excerpts



Real Reality

Most persons would "listen on their knees" to anyone who would make God absolutely real to them, so that they could say as John did, "We have beheld His glory." The world is weary of traditional religion, of formalism and hollow words, but most hearts are hungry for that true thing by which life is actually renewed.

—Rufus Jones in
Rufus Jones
Speaks to Our Times

No Melody

One frequently meets passers-by with music emanating from transistor radios on their persons. Lacking music in our hearts, we carry it in our pockets!

—Vance Havner in
The Vance Havner
Quote Book

Be Patient

Jesus went to Jerusalem one Passover holiday and met a man who had waited thirty-eight years at the Bethesda pool for a healing. Tradition had it that every so often an angel of the Lord would stir the waters and whoever stepped in first would be cured. For thirty-eight years, this man had reached out for a healing only to be muscled aside by someone bigger and faster.

Some folks say this man didn't want to be healed, or else he would have pushed

other folks aside and hustled into that pool himself. I say true patience is so scarce, we're apt to confuse it with apathy. There's a load of difference between the two. Apathy curls up into self-pity when times get hard. Patience quietly waits its turn, trusting that God will get around to making things right in his perfect time.

—Philip Gulley in
Home Town Tales

Vain Search

Those who seek happiness too intensely will have little of it.

—Calvin Miller in
The Taste of Joy

The Sin of Self

Christians do not see themselves as wicked; they do not see their righteousness as filthy rags; they do not see themselves as needing to be in a state of ongoing confession

and repentance. The result is that the body of Christ is, in large part, suffering from the power-draining effect of a universally unconfessed sin . . . the vanity of self-righteousness!

—Jim Russell in
Awakening the Giant

It Starts with One

But where was I to start? The world is so vast, I shall start with the country I know best, my own. But my country is so very large. I had better start with my town. But my town, too, is large. I had best start with my street. No: my home. No: my family. Never mind, I shall start with myself.

—Elie Wiesel in
Souls on Fire

Forget the Past

It is a mistake to be always turning back to recover the past. The law for Christian living is not backward, but forward; not for experiences that lie behind, but for doing the will of God, which is always ahead and beckoning us to follow. Leave the things that are behind, and reach forward to those that are before, for on each new height to which we attain, there are the appropriate joys that befit the new experience. Don't fret because

life's joys are fled. There are more in front. Look up, press forward, the best is yet to be!

—F. B. Meyer in
Our Daily Walk

"Junk Food"

Today we often tend to treat the Lord Jesus something like a convenience food—handy to have around in case of unexpected need.

—Margaret Clarkson in
All Nature Sings

Father of Evil

It is so stupid of modern civilization to have given up believing in the devil when he is the only explanation of it.

—Ronald Knox in
Let Dons Delight

Where God Lives

Who has not found
the heaven below
Will fail of it above.
God's residence is next to mine,
His furniture is love.

—Emily Dickinson in Poems

Time's Value

Time is what we want most, but what, alas, we use worst, and for which God will surely most strictly reckon with us when time shall be no more.

—William Penn in
Fruits of Solitude



The Reconciliation Walk

"From the beginning of the Reconciliation Walk, the Holy Spirit has stressed to us that we must walk in the true spirit of the Cross. The Crusaders used the Cross as a banner for battle, but we are called to redeem its meaning among Muslims and Jews. We must do more than carry the message,

WE MUST BE THE MESSAGE."

Lynn Green



The aim of the Reconciliation Walk is to mark the 900th anniversary of the Crusades by conveying a person-to-person message of apology from western Christians to Muslims, Jews and Orthodox Christians.

The Reconciliation Walk is an effective approach for defusing some of the suspicions with which Muslims, Jews and the Orthodox Church view western Christians.

Its effectiveness will be due to the indispensable value of meeting one another face-to-face and to prayer. You now have an unprecedented opportunity to participate and help defuse the bitter legacy of the Crusades.

You can participate for as little as 10 days or for as long as 3

weeks (depending on location); we recommend small teams of between 3-8 people, though you can apply as an individual.

Immediately before you start your reconciliation walk (to Syria or Lebanon), you will need to attend a 2-day orientation on location in Beirut.

All you have to do is contact us at either our US or UK office for application forms. Upon receipt we will then arrange accommodation for your Orientation time and help you with international/internal flights. The location/route you will take and accommodation, after Orientation, along that route will all be

arranged and booked at Orientation. It's as simple as that and you'll soon be on your way.

"This is a wonderful idea, I compliment all of you on your largeness of spirit. This is very much needed, a very important project".

LEBANANESE AMBASSADOR, USA

ORIENTATION DATES ARE AS FOLLOWS:

September 13th-16th	(arrive Beirut 13th and depart for the rest of your trip on September 16th)
October 11th-14th	(arrive Beirut 11th and depart for the rest of your trip on October 14th)
November 22nd-25th	(arrive Beirut on 22nd and depart for the rest of your trip on November 25th)
January 17th-20th	(arrive Beirut on 17th and depart for the rest of your trip on January 20th)
February 21st-24th	(arrive in Beirut on 21st and depart from the rest of your trip on February 24th)
March 21st-24th	(arrive in Beirut on 21st and depart from the rest of your trip on March 24th)

Extra

There is also a tour from October 29th-November 9th – Southern Turkey, Syria and Beirut. Visiting fascinating Crusaders sites, with visiting speakers opening up historical and spiritual insights. There will be opportunities to share the Reconciliation message in three countries, with worship and prayer being offered in the many locations which are of current, strategic importance.

Future

There will also be further opportunities to participate between April and the end of the project in July 1999. **WATCH THIS SPACE!**

FOR MORE INFORMATION/APPLICATION FORMS, PLEASE CONTACT:

The Reconciliation Walk, P.O. Box 38369, Colorado Springs, CO 80937

Tel: 719-540-0914 Fax: 719-527-2680 Email: recwalk@aol.com

OR

The Reconciliation Walk (SL), PO Box 61, HARPENDEN, Hertfordshire, AL5 4JJ

Tel/Fax: 01582 766019 Email: Reconciliation@compuserve.com



The Good HMO

First Resort founder Shari Plunkett wondered how to reach unhappily pregnant women. Answer: Work with HMOs.

What have HMOs to do with reducing the number of abortions in a given community? Plenty, says Shari Plunkett. She has begun a chain of pregnancy-help centers (called First Resort) in the San Francisco Bay area that operate under a special arrangement with one of the largest HMOs in the country: When the health-care providers of this health maintenance organization have patients who are ambivalent or negative about their pregnancies, they refer them to First Resort for counseling. More than 40 percent of First Resort's clients come from those referrals, says Plunkett. "We're a medical and counseling service for women who are at the point of making a decision about carrying to term or having an abortion. About 70 percent of our patients fall into that category, while for most pregnancy care services, it's 20 to 35 percent." Plunkett spoke with CT columnist Frederica Mathewes-Green about this "mainstream medical" approach to abortion intervention—a model Plunkett hopes will be used across the country. (Plunkett may be reached at sp1rst@dnai.com)

How did you arrive at this "mainstream medicine" model?

It grew out of my frustration in trying to reach women contemplating abortion. It's not like they're all listening to the same radio station or reading the same newspaper. Two years ago I worked with an ad agency to put together radio spots targeting this group of women, and I learned two things. First, that we were trying to reach half a percent of the population. Second, that a four-month series of ads would cost almost as much as my whole budget for the year. It didn't make sense.

One of my donors said, "You need to have a big HMO to refer all their patients to you." I realized that that is where pregnant women are congregating, and we needed to reach them there. We began talking to physicians, asking if this was a service they would be interested in. One of the first we talked to, a pro-choice physician, said, "Absolutely, because I see women like that all the time. I can spend 20 minutes with them, but I can do nothing in comparison with what you do."

How did you describe the service you were offering?

We told doctors, "We know that you regularly see women who are pregnant and don't want to be, and who are struggling with what to do. We know that you'd love to educate them on their options and hold their hands as they struggle through all their thoughts and fears and circumstances. We also know you don't have that kind of time—but we do. We'd like you to see us as specialists and refer those patients to us. We will provide them unbiased, compassionate, nonjudgmental pregnancy consulting. As soon as that woman makes her decision, whether to carry to term or to terminate the pregnancy, she's coming back to you."

Shari Plunkett:
"I think every woman's heart is telling her to carry to term, because God has placed truth in her heart."

How does your relationship work with the HMO?

Twenty-four hours after a patient drops off her urine sample, she phones the advice nurse who tells her if the test is posi-



NEIL HANSHAW

tive. Then the nurse asks, "Is that good news or bad news?" If it's good news, the nurse tells her how to establish prenatal care. If she says "bad news" or that she's not sure, the nurse says, "Let me give you the phone number of the agency we use to do our pregnancy consulting." If the woman says, "I'm having an abortion," the nurse tells her that we will provide preabortion counseling for her. All we're doing is spending time with them at the point of their decision, and our hope is that ultimately they will make a decision to carry to term.

How did you get the HMO to agree to this?

This HMO did a study of women having repeat abortions and found that the rate declined if women received counseling. One of our volunteer RNs works at this HMO office, and she knew that there was frustration over women having abortion after abortion. It was wearing the staff down. She told them about our organization, and they invited us to do a presentation. At the end I asked, "If you were to refer patients to us, which would you refer?" I expected they would say the ones that were confused or ambivalent, and that's what one nurse said right away. But as soon as she said that, the chief of obstetrics said, "But what about the ones that are having abortions? Do they really know what they're doing?"

From that point on, we prayed for the whole enchilada. We didn't want just the undecided women, but every single one, including the ones that wanted abortions.

Why do you think they agreed to this? If the woman chooses childbirth, it costs an HMO a lot more than an abortion would.

Absolutely. When they refer out their first-trimester abortions, it's going to cost \$250 or less; for those who carry to term, the HMO has to pay for prenatal care, labor, and delivery, and maybe 18 years of pediatrics. So this is not a decision based on money, and that is what gives me hope. I sensed that these health-care providers really wanted their patients to take more time to think through their decisions. They have a real sense

that abortion is not a good thing, and if women could make other choices, it would be good for them.

Do the doctors accept that your orientation is pro-life?

We've been very honest that our goal is to build the Bay Area into an abortion-free community. One of the first questions people ask us is, "Where do you stand on the issue?" I tell them, "I'm not going to jump into one of the two boxes, because they are political boxes loaded with stereotypes, and I don't know what your stereotypes are." Then I say, "Every day we go to work

"Some women go into an ultrasound talking about abortion and come out saying, 'I'd better start thinking about names.'"

to reduce the desire for abortion in our community." The minute we say that, they know where we stand, but I've been careful to frame it in a way they've never heard before, and that has made all the difference.

They know, too, that we're a Christian organization. I tell physicians that this is a decision of life and death, and that often when women are making such decisions they want to look at it from a spiritual perspective. Because we are a Christian organization we can say, "Let's talk about this based on your faith background." I can show doctors the evaluations that patients have made of our counselors, stating that the counselors were compassionate and non-judgmental. In everything we do we are exhibiting Christian principles.

What would a woman walking into your clinic receive?

Like other crisis-pregnancy staffs, we talk with her about the circumstances in her life, what pressures cause her to be contemplating abortion, who in her life is heading her in that direction, and who is supportive of carrying to

term. We ask her, apart from these circumstances, what does her heart tell her to do?

I think every woman's heart is telling her to carry to term, because God has placed truth in her heart, and the truth is that abortion is never the right answer. So our job is to help a woman to see that, during a time of crisis, there's a lot of pressure to make a decision that doesn't align with her values and principles. We try to provide the support structure for her to carry to term.

Besides our screening and referrals from mainstream medicine, we have a full-time registered nurse who can offer ultrasound and has the same training in it as an ob-gyn. It's amazing to me, but virtually 100 percent of women want to have an ultrasound, even if they plan on abortion. We're very clear with them about what they can expect to see, and tell them they don't have to look at the screen. We let them know that having an ultrasound will merely give them more information, and information is power. It also tells us what her due date is, whether the pregnancy is in the uterus or ectopic, and whether the pregnancy is viable or demised. In the process, the patient confronts the reality of another human being that exists.

What are the results?

Sixty percent of the women we work with who were seriously contemplating abortion decide to carry to term. Ultrasound plays a big part in this. Some women go into the procedure talking about having an abortion and come out saying, "I'd better start thinking about names."

Over the 14 years I've been doing this, we've seen 15,000 to 20,000 women, and I've never seen one come back and say, "I'm so angry that you helped me carry this baby to term." We've seen fathers and husbands that were pressuring very hard for an abortion. I remember one who said, "You have to have an abortion because I have a car payment to make"—when the baby was born he brought it back in as proud as he could be. If we can only get women to slow down and listen to what their hearts are telling them, and then empower and support them during that time, miracles can take place.

Is Hell Forever?

Q: What is the teaching that says the unsaved will be annihilated rather than suffer eternally in hell? Do any evangelical theologians believe this?

—Linda Piepenbrink
Glendale Heights, Illinois

Annihilationists anticipate one ultimate destiny for the wicked, an undifferentiated nonexistence.

A: The traditional teaching of the church—that the lost will suffer unending conscious torment in hell—has repeatedly been challenged by “universalists” since the third century. They believe that in the end, all will be saved. After the Reformation, a third viewpoint, “annihilationism” emerged as a minority position—for example, in the 1660 confession of the General Baptists, and among the Seventh-day Adventists and several other evangelical groups in the nineteenth century. Since 1960, several prominent British evangelicals, as well as Canadian theologian Clark Pinnock, have embraced this view. John Stott has likewise expressed sympathy for annihilationism while choosing to remain “agnostic” on the question.

One key difference between universalists and annihilationists is that annihilationists agree with traditionalists that many will indeed be lost eternally. By this, however, they mean that the unsaved will cease to exist for all eternity. They argue that because eternal torment serves no remedial purpose, the traditional concept of hell paints a portrait of God as a vindictive despot incompatible with the loving Father revealed in Jesus. Further, they claim that the presence of people in hell throughout eternity contradicts the Christian truth that Christ has conquered every evil foe and God will reconcile all things in Christ.

Some annihilationists who are better described as holding to “conditional immortality” claim the idea of eternal conscious punishment depends on the Greek concept of the immortality of the soul, which they say is wrongly read back into the Bible. The Bible teaches, they argue, that we are dependent on God for life, so only through participation in Christ’s resurrection are the saved given immortality.

Annihilationists believe the Bible teaches that the end of the wicked is destruction, not eternal torment. Building from the Old Testament (Ps. 37; Mal. 4), they point to how Jesus declared that the wicked will be cast into the smoldering garbage heap of Gehenna (Matt. 5:30), where they will be burned up (Matt. 3:10–12) and destroyed in both body and soul (Matt. 10:28). Similarly, Paul spoke of the fate of the lost as death (Rom. 6:23) and destruction (1 Cor. 3:17).

Peter also used such language (2 Peter 2), likening the destruction of the ungodly to the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah. And John anticipated the wicked being consumed in the lake of fire, which he called “the second death” (Rev. 20:14–15).

Whatever its appeal, the annihilationist position contains substantive problems. One is the biblical assertions that the wicked will suffer an “eternal” fate. Annihilationists argue that the word *eternal* refers to the permanence of the results of judgment and not to the duration of the act of punishment. Many Scripture passages, however, say more than this. Biblical writers use the word *eternal* to refer not only to the punishment of the lost but also to the bliss of the righteous (Matt. 25:46), suggesting a parallel that goes beyond the permanence of the pronounced judgment. The unending joy of the redeemed stands in contrast to the unending torment of the reprobate.

Also, several New Testament texts indicate that the lost will suffer varying degrees of punishment. Jesus declared that those who have received greater opportunities for belief will suffer more severe condemnation (Matt. 10:15; 11:20–24; Luke 12:47–48). While many annihilationists believe in different degrees of torment before extinction, they anticipate only one ultimate destiny for all the wicked, an undifferentiated nonexistence. But can a righteous Judge pronounce the same sentence of destiny upon the most despicable villain of human history as upon the seemingly moral pagan? Also, doesn’t passing out of existence trivialize the seriousness of the choices we make in life and the importance of our response to God’s loving offer of community?

In sum, yes, some evangelical theologians affirm annihilationism, but it is important to keep in mind that annihilationists affirm several aspects of the traditional view. This issue, therefore, should not be lumped in with the more substantial debate over universalism, which denies a final judgment altogether. The debate raised by annihilationists reminds us of the difficulties that arise whenever we attempt to pinpoint the eternal situation of the lost. Just as we cannot envision what conscious bliss will mean to the saved in their resurrection bodies, so also we do not know exactly what eternal punishment will be like. Finally, the controversy surrounding the nature of eternal damnation will serve a positive purpose if it leads us to realize that we ought never to speak about the fate of the lost without tears in our eyes. **CT**

By Stanley J. Grenz, professor of theology at Carey/Regent College in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, and at Northern Baptist Theological Seminary in Illinois.

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We are headed for Thailand and will pass through countryside where the mountains soaring above the dense, green jungle are far more dramatic than anything the travel brochures can portray.

But be warned! We are about to leave the tourist trail and travel overland to Mae Sot, near the Thai

border with Myanmar (Burma)*. We are headed for refugee camps where tens of thousands of innocent Karen and Karenni civilians—people groups from Myanmar, many of whom are Christian—have fled to save themselves from the ethnic cleansing being carried out by the brutal military junta.

In 1990, after decades of cruel military regimes, democratic elections were held in Myanmar, and the National League for Democracy party won with over 80 percent of the vote. The military ignored the election results, seized control, and has set up the illegitimate

(and wrongly named) State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) government. Since the overturned elections, the SPDC and units from the Democratic Kayan Buddhist Army (DKBA) have systematically brutalized millions within their own country (over 2 million remain internally displaced), forcing them to seek refuge across the border in Thailand.

The SPDC has been systematically attacking villages of the Karen and Karenni people, rounding them up for forced labor and for use as human mine sweepers, killing those who do not comply or who are too weak to serve. Others are sent to relocation camps, which are little better than death camps. They believe death is inevitable from disease (there is no medical care), or from contaminated food (they claim that the Burmese authorities mix sand with the meager rice rations).

On our journey we will meet some of these people

who have fled for their lives from Myanmar and now live in camps inside Thailand. You will hear how they suffered in their homelands at the hands of the SPDC and suffer still in the camps they presently inhabit.

For example, in the blackened and charred embers of what is left of their home in the Wangkha camp, you might see a group of Karen children playing, seemingly with hardly a care in the world. Around them lies a scene of devastation, dust, ash, the partial remains of broken crockery, a solitary eating bowl, and plastic bags blowing in the breeze.

On March 11, about two hundred armed men from the SPDC and DKBA attacked the camp at 1:00 A.M. A 34-year-old pregnant woman, a 7-year-old boy, and a 15-year-old girl were killed by shells fired from the military units as they ran through the camp shooting randomly and shouting that if residents failed to return to Myanmar they would be in for worse treatment in the future. Sixty people were injured in the attack, thirty of them seriously.

During another of the raids, 38-year-old MaSu was injured by shrapnel, which also destroyed her fragile home. Her neighbors in nearby homes were killed. "I don't want any more fighting, and I want to leave here and move somewhere safe with my family," she said.

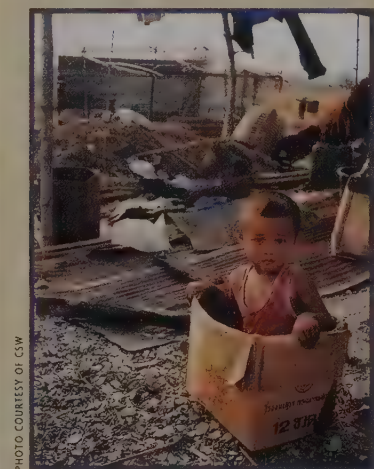
The recent brutal attacks on these camps in Thailand have left thousands of Karen and Karenni civilians terrified and homeless. About 12,000 people are estimated to be living out in the jungle, having fled from their villages and/or from relocation camps. If they are caught by government troops, they believe they will be tortured and killed.

Just when we feel as devastated as the landscape, we will have one of those amazing, redeeming experiences that so often occur during visits to our suffering brothers and sisters. Displaced from their homes and living in poverty and fear in exile, we will meet many gentle, gracious people who are enduring their suffering without complaining, without bitterness, without any trace of hatred toward those who inflict such pain on them.

MaSu said, when we asked if she had any bitterness towards the perpetrators of this outrage, "I have no hate for them. I love them because I am a Christian. The Bible tells us to love our enemies, and I forgive the soldier who injured me."

When our journey is over, we will return to the comfort and security of our homes, deeply humbled and inspired, I hope, to remember Saint Paul's letter to the church at Corinth: "When one part of the body of Christ suffers, we all suffer." **CI**

The Baroness Cox is president of Christian Solidarity Worldwide, Surrey, England.



Military units ran through the camp shooting randomly and shouting that if residents failed to return to Myanmar they would be in for worse treatment.

*Myanmar is the name adopted by the present government. Many retain the more common designation of Burma.

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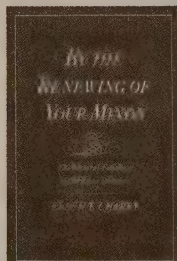
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The Cambridge Companion
to Christian Doctrine
Edited by Colin E. Gunton

Theology for the Rest of Us

The church needs to recover doctrine from its academic captivity.



By the Renewing of Your Minds: The Pastoral Function of Christian Doctrine, by Ellen Charry (Oxford University Press, 264 pp.; \$45, hardcover). Reviewed by Douglas A. Sweeney, assistant professor of church history and the history of Christian thought at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School.

W e seminary teachers complain a lot. We bemoan the theological ignorance of even our healthiest congregations, the widespread co-optation of Christian minds by secular learning, the way pop psychology informs more sermons than does the Bible, the frequency with which church meetings are conducted like those in corporate boardrooms. In short, we worry about the ways in which many secular modes of "discourse" have usurped the roles of Scripture and Christian doctrine in helping us come to terms with reality. And we hope and pray that it is not too late to shape the way Christians think by building bridges between the seminaries and the churches. That is our job: to relate theological scholarship to the practical work of ministry.

As Ellen Charry of Princeton Seminary explains in *By the Renewing of Your Minds*, however, such concerns of theologians are misguided. The very effort to bridge the gap between our theory and our practice suggests that something has gone quite wrong in the way we approach theological study. As Charry argues, the best theologians (or at least her favorite theologians) throughout the history of the church have always viewed theology itself as a fundamentally practical field of study. It is only since theology has been professionalized within the walls of the academy that it has become so esoteric, unapproachable, and often impractical.

More important, in the early years of the development of Christian thought, theologians taught that



theological study was supposed to be salutary—for all of us. The knowledge of God was supposed to be good for us. It was supposed to enhance our well-being. Christian doctrine was even supposed to make us happy. (Try telling that to a seminarian who is preparing for final exams!)

The idea was that God has created us for right relation with himself, and that this relationship cannot be maintained without theological *in-formation*. As we learn more about the One from whom we take our very being, we grow closer (both in proximity and in character) to the source of life, love, and happiness. We stop seeking endlessly for fulfillment in things like sex, money, and power, and we actually find fulfillment in the God who created our longings and desires. In the words of the church fathers, the study of theology actually enables us to participate in the very life of God.

Clearly, this vision for theological study no longer captivates many minds. Theology has become academ-

ic, ever more technical and abstract. As theological knowledge has been purveyed by "ivory-tower" intellectuals, it has been viewed as disconnected from life on the streets and in the pews. This result was not intended. Most scholastic theologians have been committed to Christ and his church. Nor has this proven entirely bad. Indeed, theological studies are now pursued with a great deal of rigor and sophistication. But it has meant that the best and brightest theologians are now professional academics who do their most important work within the confines of the schools. They converse primarily with other scholars, write their books for other scholars, and advance professionally among other scholars. Is it any wonder, then, that the laity have largely ignored them?

Charry wastes no time on nostalgic yearning for the past. Nor does she suggest that theologians abdicate their place within the academy; she herself is an academic, with no taste for the pap spooned by those who would dumb theology down. But she is earnest about her efforts to promote grassroots theological formation. She has a heart for helping everyday people come to know and love the Lord.

According to Charry, all of us—not least the theologians—should live our lives in ways that are thoroughly theological. We should recognize the ways in which Christian doctrine is *aretegenic* (a word Charry has coined, meaning "conducive to virtue"). And we should pursue the knowledge of God so that by getting to know him we might grow more like him.

What could possibly be more practical? In studying God, we come to know the One who made us for himself. In the process, we learn from him to live "the good life" (for Charry, as for many of the ancients, truth, goodness, and beauty hang together in the mind of God and are enjoyed together by his creatures the more their minds are conformed to his).

Charry unpacks her case for the "real world" relevance of Christian doctrine in a largely historical manner. After describing the New Testament foundations of what she likes to call *aretology* (particularly in the teachings of Jesus and Paul), she discusses the development of this kind of theology in three church fathers (Athanasius, Basil of Caesarea, and Augustine), three medievals (Anselm, Aquinas, and Julian of Norwich), and John Calvin. She argues throughout that Christian doc-

trine has proven the most conducive to virtue when it has depicted salvation ontologically, or in terms of participation in God's Trinitarian life—particularly in terms of our reunion with the Father, in and through the Son, by the power of the Holy Spirit—rather than functionally, or forensically, in terms of our legal release from the guilt of sin.

In the medieval period, she contends, our doctrine moved off the aretological track when the system of penance (from whose Latin root we get the English word *penitentiary*) was developed to deal with the problem of postbaptismal sin. God came to be viewed as an angry judge who was upset over human failure. And salvation came to be seen as a kind of parole that came at the end of a great deal of shameful and fearful punishment—a very forensic way indeed to view our relationship with the Lord.

During the Reformation, things changed for the better when Protestants challenged this view of salvation, recovering the doctrine of God's free grace that comes to us in spite of our many sins. But insofar as Protestants continued to encourage faith as a legal means of escaping the wrath of God, Charry argues, they too tended to truncate the earlier ontological view of salvation.

If this were not bad enough, Charry says that we moderns have ruined theology. For in the wake of the Enlightenment, "theology came to be thought of as the intellectual justification of the faith, apart from the practice of the Christian life." Consequently, Charry explains, "the wisdom of God has ceased to function in the church as the foundation of the good life. Theology is no longer expected to be a practical discipline, burdened as it is in the modern period with the awkwardness of speaking of God at all."

A dismal history indeed.

There are a few things that might be said by way of criticism of Charry's argument, one of which is that she has oversimplified much of the history of Christian thought. In her effort to explain the devastating effect of the penitential system on aretology, for example, she tends to treat its progenitors (especially Benedict of Nursia) as historical scapegoats.

And in her effort to convince us that doctrine is always best viewed as aretegenic, there are times when Charry belittles the historic importance of theological

orthodoxy. Two examples will have to suffice. She writes, incredibly, that Paul "never thought of himself as developing a soteriology, or an ecclesiology, or a doctrine of scripture. He is always telling people what the case is, now, and how they are to understand and live in its light." Must these really be viewed as mutually exclusive alternatives?

As for Calvin, "it is not so much that a teaching is profitable because it is orthodox but that it is orthodox because it is profitable, since God only does for us that which is profitable for us." Granted, Calvin did believe that Christian orthodoxy was always profitable, but he did not believe it was orthodox because it was profitable. Further, "Calvin mentions specific doctrines only rarely, and these instances refer to what we moderns would call practices rather than doctrines." Anyone who has read Calvin's *Institutes* should sense that this is a misconstrual.

Charry is so intent on making God attractive to us, and on making the knowledge of God appear beneficial (or, perhaps more accurately, therapeutic) to us, that she overrepresents the softer, alluring side of God, and she underrepresents the angry, punitive side of God—a side that is clearly revealed in Scripture and that led to a genuine concern within the church regarding the danger of human sin.

This is the case throughout the book. But it becomes clearest in Charry's adulation for the medieval mystic Julian of Norwich, who held such a high view of human nature that she had to "take the need for human redemption on the faith of the church." Indeed, in contrast to other medievals obsessed with self-abasement and the fear of the Lord, Julian taught that there is no wrath in God at all. And in Charry's view, while there are still those who need to hear of God's wrath for human sin, there are others, "those of tender conscience, whose timidity and fearfulness debilitate them," who need to hear a message that sounds much more like Julian's.

In spite of these limitations, however, this remains a timely and powerful book. The weight of Charry's argument does not rest on every detail of her case. And it would be a shame to quibble so much that we miss her overriding concern. Indeed, theology is supposed to be good for us. When done well, it is good for all of us. And there are wonderful resources in the Christian tradition that can help us make it salutary again. 

A Postmodern Primer to Doctrine

Glossary included.

The Cambridge Companion to Christian Doctrine, edited by Colin E. Gunton (Cambridge University Press, 307 pp; \$59.95, hardcover; \$18.95, paper). Reviewed by Elmer M. Colyer, assistant professor of historical theology at the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary.

The *Cambridge Companion to Christian Doctrine* is the first book in the series Cambridge Companions to Religion. Colin Gunton, one of the most important theologians in the United Kingdom today, has assembled an impressive array of essays by an equally significant cadre of authors. Gunton notes in the preface that it is a propitious moment for this volume, since Christian doctrine is no longer in the "doldrums," marginalized by the "apparent victory" of modernity. Indeed, it is no coincidence that the term *postmodern* and its variants are sprinkled throughout the book, signaling the massive cultural shift that has made the particularity of the Christian tradition a persuasive point of departure.

The two-pronged aim of the book is to "develop the promise inherent" in this "changed intellectual situation . . . and at the same time to provide an introduction for students and others of some of the central topics of theology." The tension between these two intents, however, tends to cast the book somewhat at cross purposes and undermines its conceptual and organizational clarity. The new reader or nonspecialist would be well advised to shift the order of the essays and, after reading Gunton's excellent introduction to Historical and Systematic Theology (chap. 1), turn immediately to the more introductory chapters of part 2 on the Content of Christian Doctrine. Within part 2, Geoffrey Wainwright's elegant essay on the Holy Spirit should be read before Robert Jenson's chapter on the Church and the Sacraments.

Each of the eight chapters in part 2 addresses a major topic within traditional Christian doctrine. Following the essays by Wainwright and Jenson, the reader might take up Ralph Del Colle's essay on the Triune God, a splendid overview of the biblical foundations, patristic development, medieval consolidation, and modern conversation concerning this doctrine.

Some of the essays in part 2 are lengthy and constructive. Kevin Vanhoozer's essay summarizes classic Christian anthropology, modern and postmodern alternatives, the anthropologies of Rahner, Barth, Panenberg, and recent relational (Trinitarian) perspectives, all before developing Vanhoozer's own constructive proposal, which centers on human beings as "communicative agent[s] in a web of communicative relationships with others."

Other essays in part 2 are concise summaries. Trevor Hart's essay on Redemption and Fall discusses biblical metaphors before outlining three main theories or models for redemption (deification, satisfaction, self-realization) in the history of the church. In discussing leading representatives of each model, Hart briefly considers the extent to which social location may have influenced the theories' expression of this doctrine.

Kathryn Tanner's essay on Jesus Christ (chap. 13) summarizes the entire history of Christology in a page and a half. The body of the essay is a sophisticated critique (beyond the level of beginners) of modern theology's unself-critical and habitual transposition of Christology into modern epistemological idioms. All of this is supposed to serve Tanner's agenda of pushing Christology "in a new, postmodern direction," but the constructive element never gets off the ground in this essay.

Other chapters in part 2 deal with Creation (Colin Gunton) and Eschatology (David Fergusson). Both present the biblical backgrounds of the respective doctrines, trace their trajectories through the history of Christian thought, and identify current issues that require further attention.

After completing part 2, the theological novice can return to part 1 and make better sense of the other generally more difficult essays found there. Gunton's essay on Historical and Systematic Theology delineates these disciplines in relation to one another and discusses several questions related to theological

method, including the relation between theology and culture (Irenaeus/Origen), faith and reason (Anselm/Aquinas), and content and method (Schleiermacher/Barth). Gunton is clear in his preference for Irenaeus, Anselm, and Barth as providing the most fruitful way forward for Christian theology in the aftermath of the postmodern criticism of criticism.

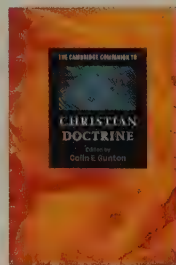
Stanley Hauerwas's essay on Doctrine and Ethics is not an introduction at all, but rather a clever apologetic (beyond most beginners). Hauerwas offers a carefully constructed and scintillating genealogy of the relation between doctrine and ethics, showing what led to their divorce in the modern period and calling for their reunion.

Gerald Loughlin's fine essay (again not for beginners) on the Basis and Authority of Doctrine acknowledges the postmodern context of current work in theology but rejects dogmatic postmodern pluralism. Loughlin calls for an understanding of doctrine as "the grammar and rule, the stage-direction, of a traditioned performance of the story that alone calls it into being: the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ."

The remaining three essays of part 1 include Francis Watson on the Scope of Hermeneutics, Bruce D. Marshall on the Jewish People and Christian Theology, and Jeremy Begbie on Christianity and the Arts. All three present outstanding constructive proposals.

The fragmentation that remains after the collapse of modernity's pretensions to universality is somewhat exemplified in the multiple visions encoded in these essays. The postconservative, postliberal centrist perspective that holds the collection loosely together repeatedly comes into tension with the multiple philosophical commitments, ecclesial traditions, and university communities of the various authors.

Make no mistake—this is a stunning collection, one that I will include on the collateral reading list for my course on Christian doctrine; but I fear that what makes this Cambridge Companion a complex and intriguing friend for a seminary professor like myself creates a companion with a rather complicated personality that may well bewilder the new reader or nonspecialist. Then again, maybe this complexity is what makes this text an ideal initiation into Christian doctrine in the postmodern context: though fruitfully diverse, it is in danger of being frustratingly plural.



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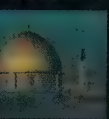
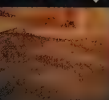
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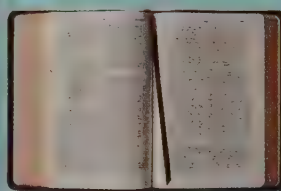
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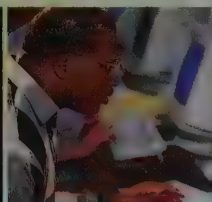
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GRADUATE THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION:

Who PAYS the BILL\$?

Those responsible for the financial health at theological graduate schools have had to change with the times.

Virtually every day, men and women throughout the U.S. and around the world hear God calling them to specialized Christian ministry, ministry that either requires—or could greatly benefit from—higher theological education.

But one of the biggest reasons people hesitate to respond to that call is money. Many feel they do not have sufficient financial resources to pay for graduate education. Some are already saddled with debt from their undergraduate school days and hesitant to borrow more money because they know that a career as an overseas missionary or small-town pastor will probably not enable them to pay it back anytime soon.

Fortunately, theological seminaries and Christian graduate schools do not operate like businesses—opening their doors only to those who can clearly afford the price—but rather as ministries, trying to find ways to help

people financially. By and large, these Christian institutions believe a lack of financial resources should not be enough reason to prevent a person from pursuing God's call to ministry.

This does not, of course, mean that someone who wants to attend seminary or graduate school should ignore the financial realities. Rather, such persons will likely have to make personal financial sacrifices and step out in faith. But they should do so realizing that there are people at the institutions they want to attend who will do all they can to help them fulfill their vision for a ministry career.

Bridging the gaps

Statistics available from the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) readily reveal the extent to which institutions go to help students financially. According to the 1997–98 ATS Fact Book, full-time students from member institutions paid an average of about

\$6,200 in tuition and fees during the 1996–97 academic year. At the same time, the actual annual cost of educating a single student was over \$24,500. Thus, ATS schools on average charged students only about one-fourth the real cost of a seminary or graduate school education.

The remaining three-fourths of the cost comes from a variety of sources, ranging from gifts from alumni to churches to foundations to individuals who care about and recognize the importance of graduate theological education. These fundraising efforts are coordinated by the development (sometimes called “advancement”) offices at each institution. The gap between tuition income and what it costs to educate students is bridged by donations, typically referred to by each institution as its “annual fund.”

How well are seminaries and graduate institutions doing in the effort to raise funds? According to one

(Continued on page 102)

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Graduate Theological Education: Who Pays the Bills?

(from page 101)

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figure from the ATS Fact Book, they are doing extremely well. As noted above, while the average expenditure per full-time student amounted to \$24,500, the total average revenue per student was over \$38,000.

Does this mean that seminaries and theological graduate schools have arrived on easy street? Not by a long shot—at least, not according to ATS official Matt Zyniewicz. Zyniewicz says the \$38,000 figure is distorted by the handful of institutions that have huge endowment income and thus, for the most part, never have to worry about finances. According to Zyniewicz, however, a solid majority of seminaries and graduate institutions must work hard to balance their budgets each year if they are to succeed at keeping the cost to students as low as possible.

This becomes a particular challenge in light of the rising costs of education generally. The case could be made that the technological revolution

of recent years has created a unique era of rising costs. For example, virtually all seminaries now have their own Web sites. Graduate schools and seminaries have worked hard not to be left behind, updating classrooms to accommodate the latest technology and equipping dormitory rooms and study areas with computer ports.

Specific sources and percentages of revenue vary from institution to institution.

"To stay up to date from a technological perspective takes money," observes Ann McKusick, vice president for institutional advancement at Fuller Theological Seminary. "I think most would agree that we cannot expect students to pay for it." Perhaps this helps

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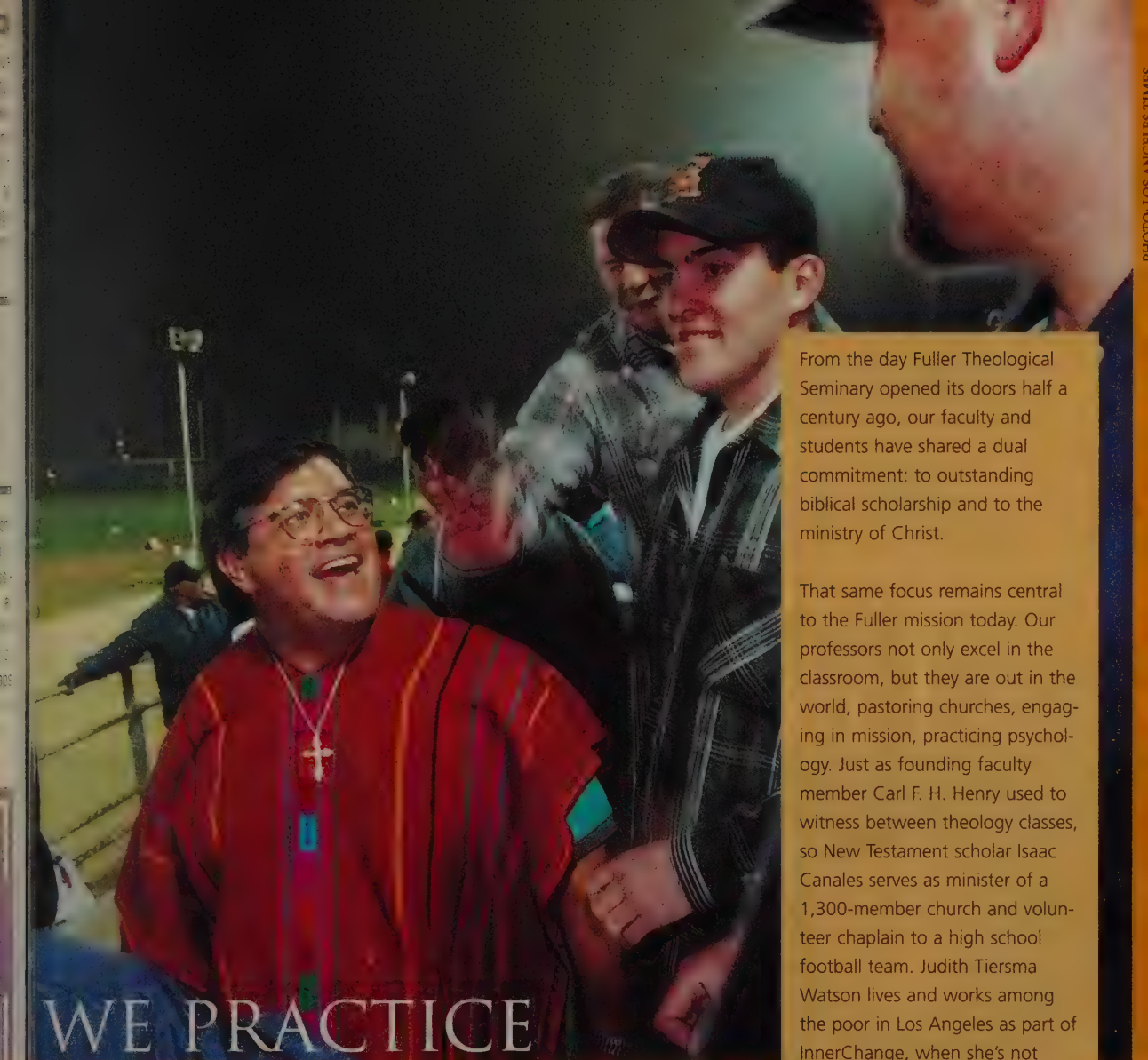
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Churches Can Help Seminaries and Graduate Schools

When local church leaders consider how they will distribute dollars earmarked for missions, they typically think first of overseas ministries. Or perhaps they have in mind a local food bank or an outreach to the homeless. Whatever the case, for some churches, giving to a seminary or graduate school seems to fall outside the definition of missions giving.

This is not true for all churches, of course. Yet, to the extent it is true, it is unfortunate. For the reality is that neither the institutional church nor the collective missionary enterprise could long survive without the educational and spiritual anchors provided by theological seminaries and graduate schools.

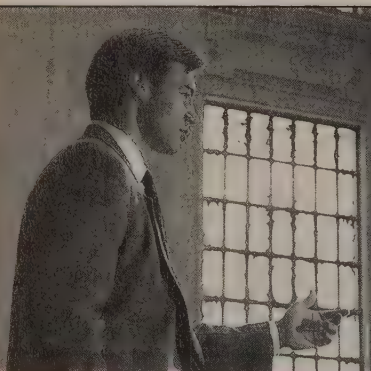
The value of graduate theological training

The overwhelming majority of pastors who are serving faithfully in local congregations got their training from a theological seminary. Their ability to teach sound doctrine came from their study of biblical languages and the Old and New Testaments. Homiletics classes enabled them to hone their preaching skills. Their faith and spirituality have been enriched by their understanding of biblical cultures and church history. Their understanding of how to deal with the problems and challenges of ministry was most likely enhanced by the field experiences they had while pursuing a seminary degree. At seminary, they

learned how to help people overcome their personal problems or to refer those people to others who are better able to help.

True, no one can learn all he or she needs to know about ministry in just three years of seminary. But without having attended seminary, many pastors would not even know where to begin. Many typical churchgoers take seminaries for granted. They know that a seminary is a school where people go to prepare for pastoral ministry, but somehow they do not always make the connection between the vigorous work, pain, and prayer that characterize the seminary experience and the fruit of effective ministry. Any church that takes

(Continued on page 106)



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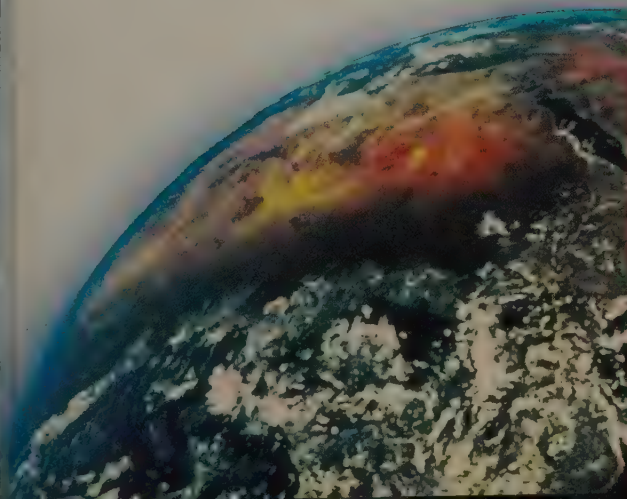


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seminaries for granted is almost certainly unaware of how central a role these institutions play in preparing people for pastoral ministry.

This same line of reasoning applies to Christian graduate schools, which provide the theological bases out of which the church operates and which, in many cases, train those who will be taking the gospel to other cultures and lands around the world. It is at graduate school where future missionaries grapple with the dynamics and implications of cross-cultural ministry. It is here that they learn about the customs and beliefs of the people to whom they will be going. It is here that they solidify their own understanding of the Christian faith and develop the spiritual and emotional resources necessary to sustain them over the long journey ahead.

Any church that recognizes the relationship between sound theology

and effective ministry—as well as the relationship between thorough preparation and successful mission outreach—should be among the most ardent supporters of graduate theological institutions.

To put it another way, when churches consider how to divide their missions budgets, they should not think of giving to seminaries and graduate schools as an alternative to giving to missions, for the truth is the two cannot be separated. Any church that channels a portion of its giving to a seminary or graduate school is in effect really supporting missions in a very significant and important way.

Churches should not make the mistake of thinking that supporting seminaries and graduate schools has been and continues to be someone else's duty. Some seminaries are calling on churches to do more than they have in

the past because of rising costs and because some traditional sources of funds, such as money from a denomination, are drying up.

Ways churches can contribute

Some churches with a high regard for higher theological education may be hesitant to provide general financial support to just any seminary or graduate school. Such churches may want to give based on some personal connection to a seminary or graduate school. Perhaps a church—out of a commitment to overseas missions—could help underwrite the educational costs of a student who is coming from another country who plans to return to his or her country as a more effective ambassador for Christ.

Certainly churches who have within their membership men and women who

(Continued on page 108)

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have been called to ministries that require graduate theological preparation can support their own students and perhaps, through them, establish a relationship of support with the institution.

Churches pleased with the work their own pastor is doing can assume that seminary had something to do with it and can support their pastor's alma mater financially. Sometimes it may be difficult for a pastor to ask a congregation to support his or her seminary. For a congregation to take the initiative is an expression of high praise, as if saying to the pastor, "We affirm you in what you are doing, and we want to do our part to make sure that the church of Christ has more people like you in positions of pastoral leadership." Some churches may even want to launch or contribute to a scholarship fund or academic chair—or build and furnish a new classroom—in their pastor's name.

No church should ever think that a

financial gift is too small to be worth giving. Virtually any development officer at a seminary or graduate school would say that if all churches and individuals declined to give because they thought their gift was too small, their institutions would be in big trouble.

Money is not the only way churches can support theological education.

Even a small gift to a seminary can go a long way, based not on its size, but rather on what it communicates. For example, more and more seminaries are looking toward philanthropic foundations in order to launch new educational programs or building projects. Some of these foundations base their decisions not on the depth, but on the

breadth of support for a particular institution. Participation in donor campaigns by alumni, friends, and faculty and staff is sometimes viewed as a barometer of an institution's commitment to communicating its message and to serving its various constituencies.

Thus, sometimes to give a small gift can communicate more about caring than by giving a big one. The more churches who demonstrate that they care enough about a school to give a small gift, the better the chances that school has of being deemed worthy by a foundation to receive significant financial support. The widow was not ashamed to give her mite. Nor should churches be.

Churches—once or twice a year—might consider inviting a representative from a theological seminary or graduate school to host a seminar or preach. Such an event could include a freewill offering taken on (Continued on page 110)

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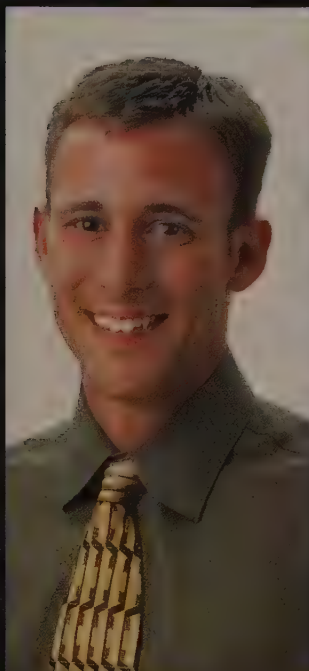
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behalf of the institution. This gives the institution an opportunity to raise awareness about what it is doing.

Beyond money

Support for seminaries and theological graduate schools need not be limited to money. Among the best ways churches can support seminaries, for example, is by recommending students. Church leaders, including pastors, can be on the lookout for young men and women (or even older persons looking for a career change) who possess the qualities necessary to succeed in ministry. After all, sometimes God calls through other people in the community, especially the church community.

Churches can identify potential institutional board members who have an interest in graduate theological education and can make a contribution in terms of organizational leadership. A businessperson, for example, may not

be able to contribute a great deal financially, but the administrative or investment advice he or she provides as a board member could save the institution thousands of dollars annually.

Those churches that are within an hour's drive of an institution can support it by providing volunteers, perhaps to serve in the library or to stuff envelopes for a mailing. Faithful and dependable volunteers can help institutions save thousands of dollars over the long run. And it sometimes happens that when volunteers visit a campus, they get excited about what is happening there and are transformed into goodwill ambassadors for the school.

Churches—near or far—can also open their doors to student interns. Seminaries especially are constantly in search of more options for students to do field education. This benefits the church by adding to its pastoral staff. It benefits seminary students for obvious

reasons. It also benefits the seminary to have the chance to raise awareness of its mission through its students, who are among its best representatives.

Those involved in development work recognize the close relationship that exists between raising awareness of a school's mission and acquiring the financial support needed to fulfill that mission. Generally, people do not give to institutions. But they do give in response to worthy visions and to stories of worthy people who need help to continue on their ministry paths.

Churches would do well to explore the many options open to them when it comes to helping seminaries and graduate schools tell their stories and spread their vision. Of course, if in addition a church wants to consider giving to a seminary or graduate school as part of its missions budget, no development officer will attempt to intervene.

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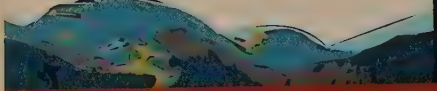
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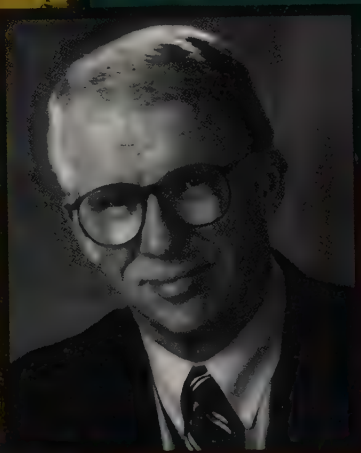
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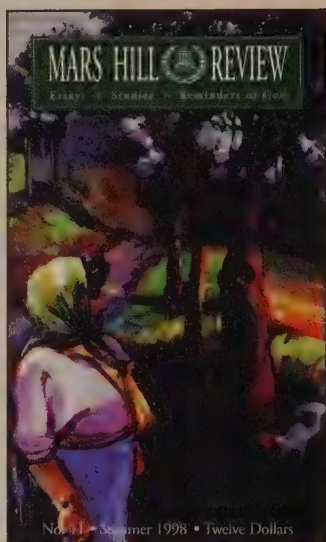
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TOTAL GIVING TO ALL MEMBER SCHOOLS BY SOURCE, 1996-97

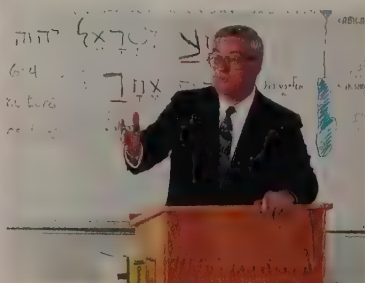
Category	OPERATIONAL GIFTS		CAPITAL GIFTS	
	Amount (\$000)	% of Total	Amount (\$000)	% of Total
Individuals				
Alumni/ae	\$15,772.2	5.9	\$12,442.0	9.8
Others	85,692.1	32.2	81,433.1	64.1
Subtotals	101,464.4	38.2	93,875.1	73.9
Organizations				
Foundations	\$29,178.6	11.0	\$18,171.7	14.3
Corporations	11,114.0	4.2	4,074.8	3.2
Religious Organizations	112,709.7	42.4	9,162.6	7.2
Consortia	3,017.7	1.1	581.8	0.5
Other	8,471.4	3.2	1,182.2	0.9
Subtotals	164,491.4	61.8	33,173.2	26.1
Total	\$265,955.7		\$127,048.3	

Number of Respondents: 217

Figures are reported in U.S. dollars. Canadian dollars have been converted at a rate of \$0.72 U.S.

Based on the 1997-98 ATS Fact Book on Theological Education

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explain why, according to ATS, tuition increased by 4 percent during the 1995-96 academic year, while the expenditures per full-time student increased by over twice that amount.

Nevertheless, says ATS's Zyniewicz, the last few years have, in general, been healthy financial years for seminaries and graduate schools. "The numbers that were coming in to us last year were so good," he says, "that in some cases we went back to the institutions to check if their figures were accurate." They were.

A variety of revenue streams

For the most part, all seminaries draw revenue from alumni, churches, foundations, and individuals committed to graduate theological education. In addition, some draw significant percentages of revenue from investment interest or church denominations, though the specific sources and percentages of revenue vary greatly from institution to institution.

It would seem apparent that a \$10 contribution to a seminary or graduate school would not go very far. But thousands of \$5 and \$10 contributions can go a long way indeed. By and large, that is how Moody Graduate School (of Moody Bible Institute) is able to offer an education at a tuition rate that is about one-third the average for similar schools.

Moody has no endowment and no desire to begin one. Bud Hopkins, Moody's dean of graduate programs, says, "Our goal each year is to give the students the opportunity to get a quality education for as little as possible. We encourage them to apply for whatever money is available, and we distribute it till it's gone."

The same kind of approach applies when the institution wants to expand, either in terms of buildings or programs. Says Hopkins, "We spend only what we have. We don't build a new building until it's already paid for."

To some, it may seem impossible to imagine a school being able to survive year after year in this fashion. Yet Moody not only survives; it thrives. It

(Continued on page 116)

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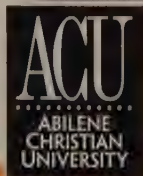
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Graduate Theological Education: Who Pays the Bills
(from page 115)

is able to do so largely because of the trusted reputation it has established for over a century, not just in the U.S., but across the globe. Hopkins notes, "One out of every sixteen Protestant missionaries around the world has gone through Moody."

Communicating a vision and raising financial support are related.

Moody's ability to communicate its vision, its activities, and its financial needs is enhanced by an extensive radio network, a book-publishing arm (Moody Press), and a well-known monthly magazine. The organization also has 24 field workers around the U.S. to help coordinate its fundraising efforts. No better example can be found of the relationship between communicating a vision and raising the necessary financial support to carry out that vision. To be sure, Moody gets support from a few donors who contribute several thousand dollars a year. But according to Hopkins, it's the small contributions more akin to the widow's mite that account for Moody's financial stability: "There are an awful lot of people out there who have a great and deep love for Moody and who support us faithfully."

"The point of the development spear"

Recent years at Fuller Theological Seminary also testify to the relationship between communicating a vision and raising financial support. The school's celebration of its fiftieth anniversary included eight regional events at which school officials were able to reconnect with many of the school's alumni. Advancement VP McKusick says, "We take advantage of events such as these to reassure people of the sense of continuity. We want our graduates and supporters to know that we are still doing faithfully."

(Continued on page 120)

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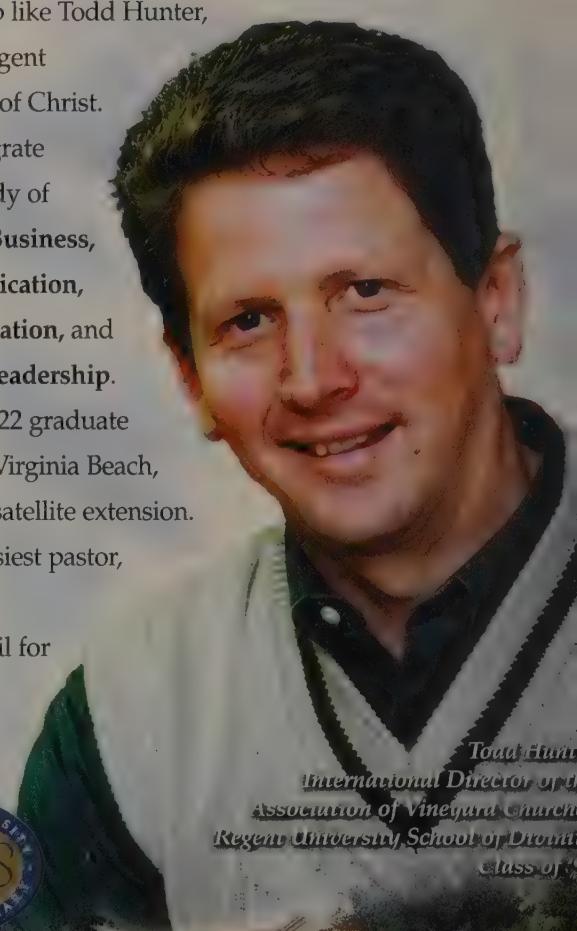


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Graduate Theological Education: Who Pays the Bills?

(from page 116)

what we have always said we were going to do."

According to McKusick, both the percentage of alumni supporters and the size of their gifts have increased significantly over the past few years. She attributes this in part to solid enrollment figures at Fuller during the decade of the eighties. Many who attended during those years have reached a point in their careers and in their lives where they are willing and able to begin giving back.

Development officers have to work ever harder to earn support from alumni.

The situation at Fuller appears to reflect the development adage, often repeated at fundraising workshops and seminars, that alumni and board members represent "the point of the development spear." But that is not the case at Westminster Theological Seminary, according to its vice president for development, Bob Anderson.

Anderson says the school learned long ago that it could not build a fundraising program around its alumni, because such a development spear would be very dull indeed. The reason, somewhat unique to Westminster, is the school's historically high percentage of students, and therefore alumni, who come from overseas. Last year, for example, 250 of Westminster's 680 students (well over one-third) were born overseas, and a solid majority of those students will return to their home countries.

But attempting to raise financial support from overseas alumni, according to Anderson, is likely to bear little fruit. For one thing, few—if any—countries have traditions of philanthropy as deeply rooted as they are in the U.S. Furthermore, most countries have regulations limiting the amount of money in charitable contributions that may leave the country.

Westminster has a very modest endowment. And since it is not

(Continued on page 122)

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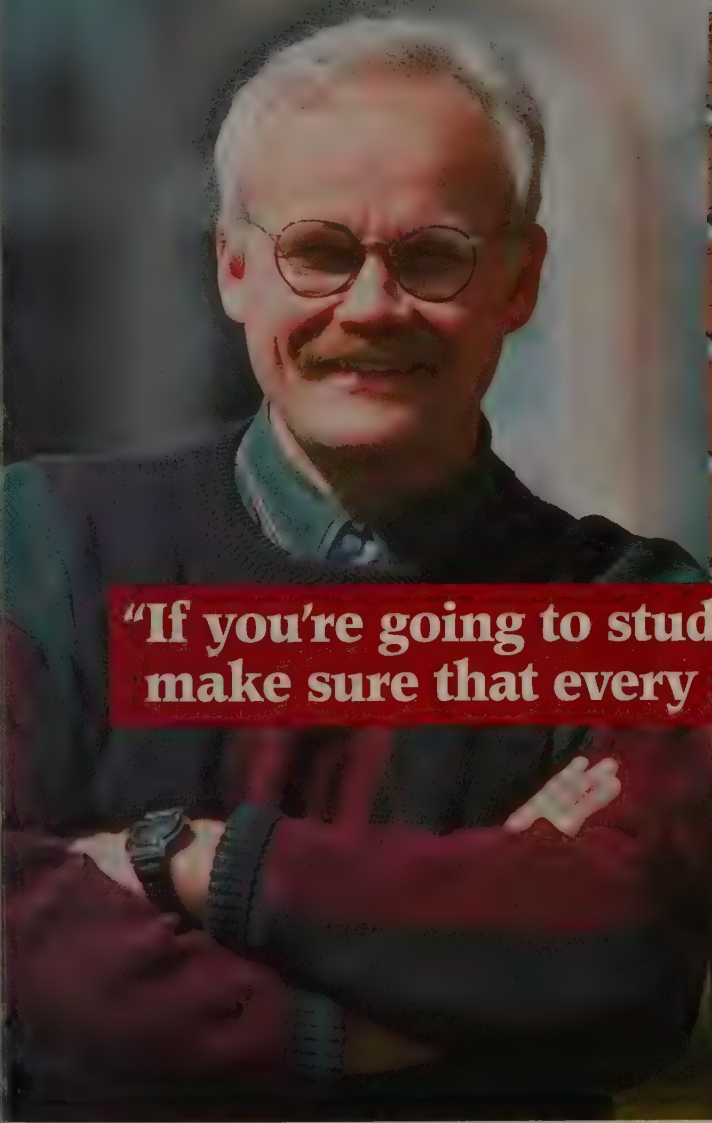
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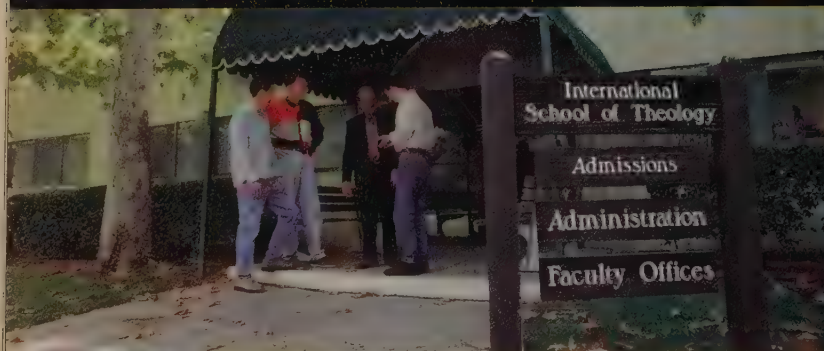
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Graduate Theological Education: Who Pays the Bill?

(from page 120)

affiliated with any denomination, it obviously receives no denominational funding. So what is the point of the development spear at Westminster? "There is none," says Anderson. "Or perhaps you could say we have several spears, none of which is sharper than the others."

Although it draws some support from its alumni, Westminster largely depends on financial support from the churches where alumni are serving. It also receives support from people who, in one way or another, come into contact with the school and want

Second-career students don't fit the struggling-student stereotype

to advance its mission. Sometimes this happens through a book a faculty member has written or a sermon some representative of the school has preached at a local church.

Ironically, the person one would think should worry most about Westminster's sources of financial support (Anderson) appears to be among those least worried. He says, "Our development efforts begin with the understanding that it is the providence of the Lord that keeps us here. So our primary goal is to be faithful to the Bible. God will take care of the rest."

Changing times

Unlike Westminster and Moody, 20-year-old Regent University (begun by Pat Robertson) has a very substantial endowment that resulted from the sale of stock in the International Family Entertainment Network. Says Kerry Park, director of marketing for the school's eight graduate programs, "Our endowment is in the top 25, not just of Christian universities, but of all universities."

Interest earned from the school's endowment is applied toward the school's operating costs. Thus, according to Park, the lion's share of

(Continued on page 130)

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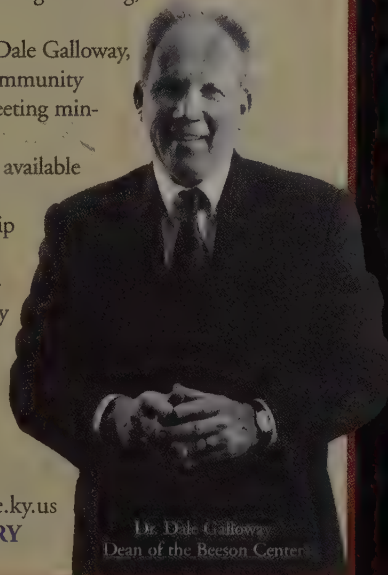


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The Capital Campaign

Financial management at a theological institution in many ways parallels the way a family budget is run. Many families can manage the normal monthly expenses such as groceries, house payments, electric bills. Then an expense comes along that is both extraordinary and unexpected, and the family must adjust financially.

The same is true at institutions. Many have no problem handling regular expenses—meeting payroll or buying equipment and supplies or carrying out routine upkeep on the buildings—until something happens that throws the financial picture out of whack.

For the record, a school usually needs money over and above what it normally receives not because something has gone wrong, but

because something has been going right. Perhaps it is growing and needs a new building to accommodate more students. Perhaps it wants to add new programs or emphases to expand its academic offerings, and this requires adding faculty and staff. Perhaps it wants to invest in faculty-development programs or take its library to a new level.

Sometimes it is necessary to spend money just to stay current, as has been the case with the technological revolution of recent years. Schools have made their campuses “user friendly” in terms of personal and portable computers in the dormitories and in classrooms. Many have built or transformed their buildings to accommodate distance learning or multimedia approaches

to teaching.

Whatever the reason for the need, many seminaries and graduate institutions are regularly placed in the position of having to come up with money over and above what they regularly receive from donors. One of their options is to turn to foundations. Not long ago, for example, Fuller Seminary received a \$200,000 foundation gift to be applied toward equipping its classrooms with new technology.

Calling on alumni and friends

Another option many institutions exercise on a regular basis is the capital campaign, which essentially consists of a concentrated effort to reach a specified financial goal over a designated period, typically three

(Continued on page 126)

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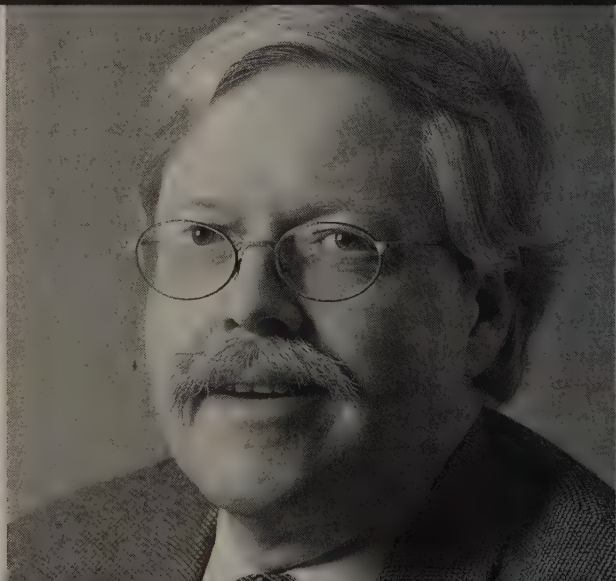
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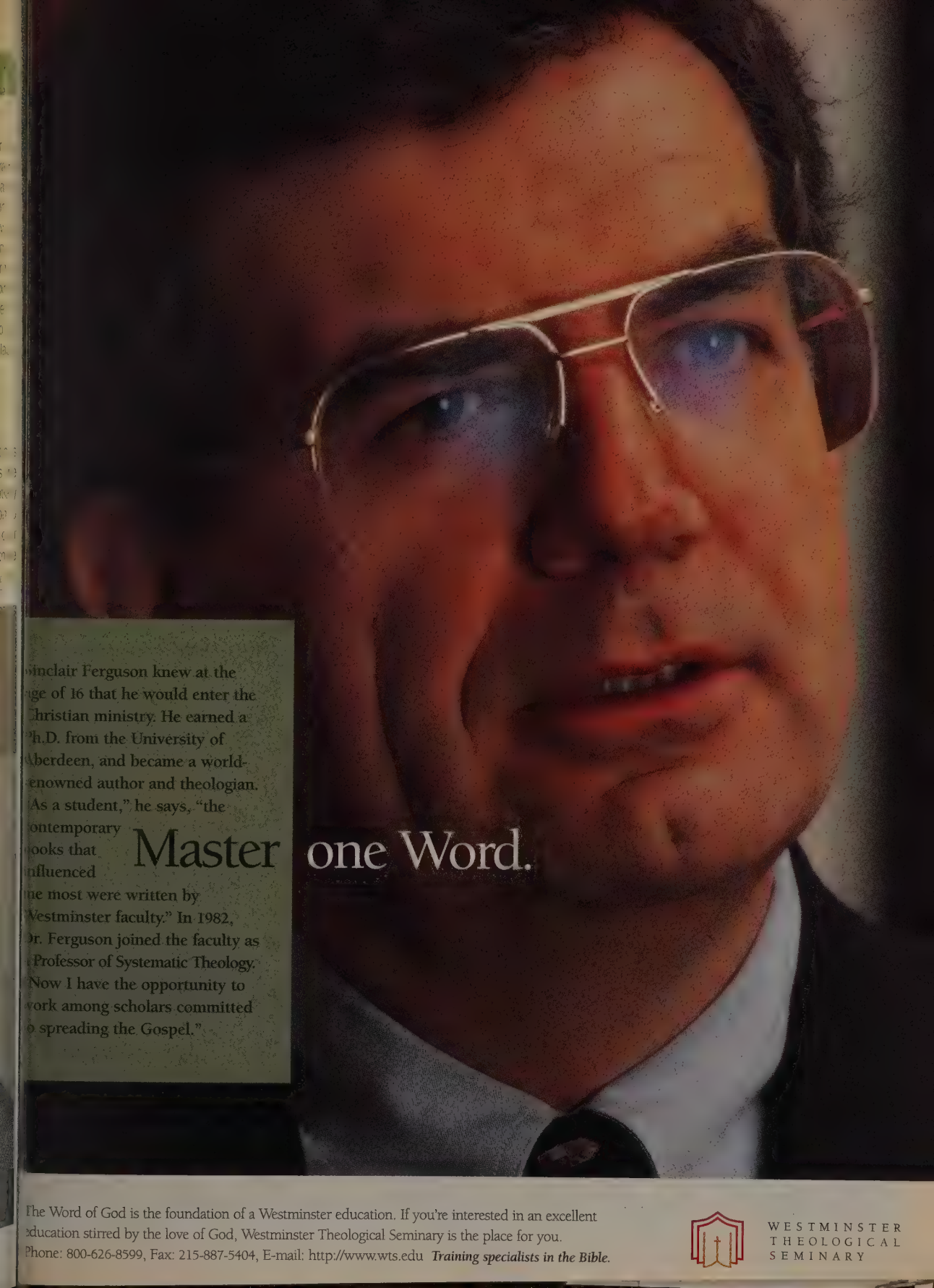
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or four years. Though some capital campaigns include the goal of strengthening the school's endowment, most are geared toward capital improvements—such as a new dormitory for students or new classrooms equipped with state-of-the-art technology. Some capital campaigns focus on student scholarship programs or enhancing the library.

Figures available from the Association for Theological Schools (ATS) suggest that the capital campaign is a time for individuals—alumni and friends—to shine. ATS distinguishes between “operational gifts” and “capital gifts.” In the 1996–97 academic year, individuals accounted for 38.2 percent of institutions’ operational gifts, with foundations, corporations, and religious organizations accounting for most of the rest. When it comes to capital gifts, however, individuals accounted for nearly 74 percent of

institutional giving.

The capital campaign approach testifies to the fact that people are more likely to give to specific causes. Many donors, for example, might never give to support a particular missionary in Africa. But if that missionary lets it be known that he could use a bicycle to ride around the village, he is likely to get dozens of offers.

The same principle applies to institutional fundraising. If a particular need or needs can be identified and highlighted, many people will come forth with financial support. They know exactly how the dollars they contribute will be used.

Communicating the mission

In addition to raising money, the capital campaign presents an opportunity for an institution to communicate its vision and mission.

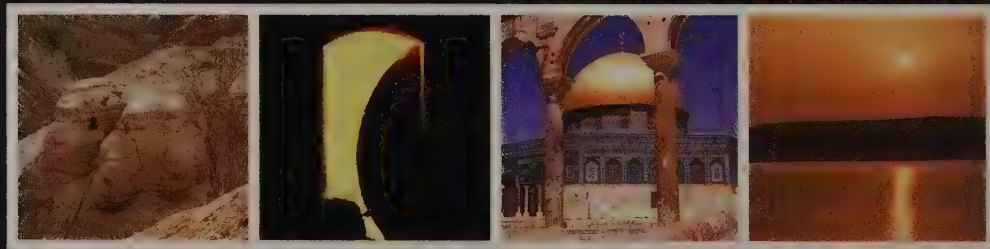
Typically, a theme for a capital campaign is chosen and communicated in various publications and in personal meetings with potential donors. In some instances, the occasion of the capital campaign opens the door to meet with people who have never given previously to the school.

Finally, the capital campaign presents the opportunity for institutions to inspire its traditional supporters to new levels of commitment, including financial commitment. The excitement generated around a capital campaign is designed in part to inspire alumni to renew their love and support for their alma mater. Perhaps they will raise the level of their giving for the period of the capital campaign and then keep it there permanently. Thus, the benefits of a capital campaign often live on well after the campaign itself has ended.

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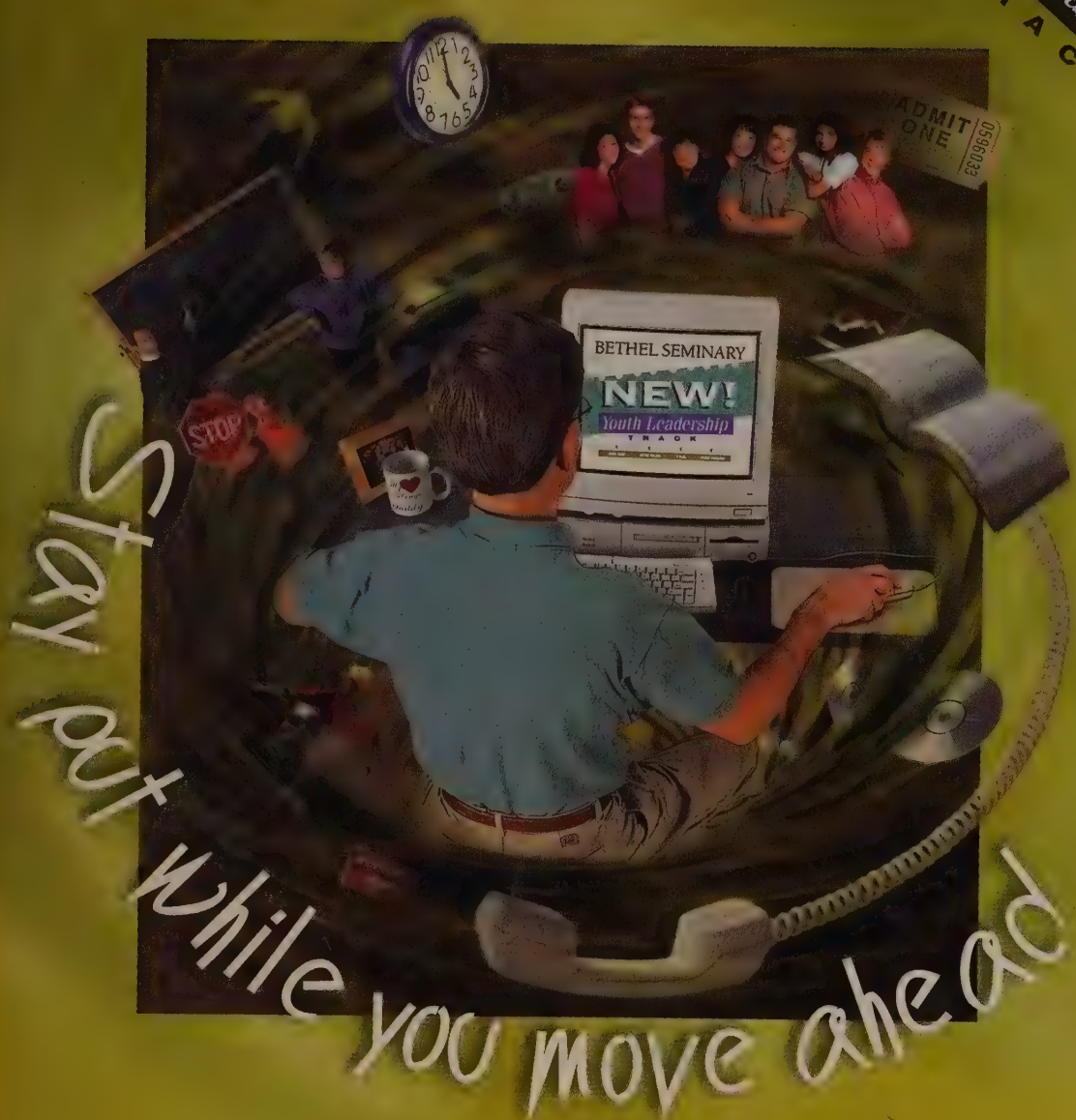
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AMOUNT OF REVENUE AND EXPENDITURES PER FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT

Category	1995-96		1996-97	
	N Schools	Average	N Schools	Average
Revenue				
Tuition and Fees	213	\$5,834	222	\$6,209
Govt. Grants, Contracts	72	1,039	67	1,048
Gifts & Grants from Religious Org.	180	4,258	184	4,713
Gifts & Grants from Individuals	207	7,663	214	8,448
Value of Contributed Services	53	3,113	52	3,507
Endowment/Investment Income	199	4,072	209	4,694
Auxiliary/Ancillary Enterprises	176	3,058	181	3,202
Net Realized Gains	116	9,112	115	8,870
Net Unrealized Appreciation	78	9,712	96	13,533
Total Revenue	214	\$33,835	222	\$38,120
Expenditures				
Instruction	211	\$6,727	219	\$7,477
Research	41	791	38	1,038
Public Service	55	786	54	552
Library	193	1,527	204	1,626
Academic Support	152	1,431	155	1,567
Student Services	182	968	186	1,042
Admissions	144	643	155	684
Inst. Support/Admin. & General	209	5,315	215	5,600
Op. & Maintenance of Plant	204	2,857	206	3,246
Scholarships & Fellowships	179	2,272	189	2,313
Subtotal: Education & General	213	20,550	221	22,134
Auxiliary/Ancillary Enterprises	165	2,821	177	2,975
Total Expenditures	213	\$22,736	221	\$24,516

The data reflect the average revenue and expenditure that member schools reported on a per-student (full-time equivalent) basis in specific categories. Not every school reported data in each category. For each year the full-time equivalent divisor is calculated from the previous year's data. All figures are reported in U.S. dollars. Canadian dollars were converted at a rate of \$0.72 U.S.

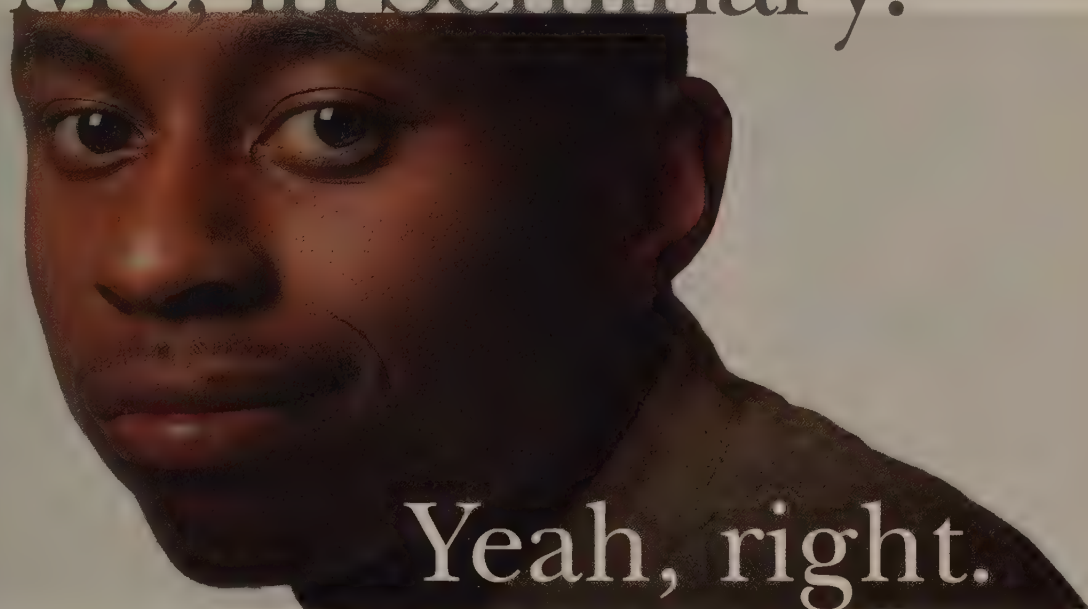
Based on the 1997-98 ATS Fact Book on Theological Education.

the school's fundraising efforts can be geared toward student scholarships. "Some schools are in the position of having to raise tuition. Our goal is to lower tuition so that students attend here with as little financial burden as possible."

One of the secrets to fundraising success at Regent, says Park, is that virtually everyone feels responsible. "Each of the deans of the eight graduate schools, as well as the upper administration, views it as their responsibility to raise money. It's a commun-

(Continued on page 138)

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In Search of a Better Image

Some are called to serve as missionaries in foreign lands. Some are called to pastor local churches. Some are called to serve the poor in inner cities. And some are called to raise money. Raise money? Does that calling really deserve to be on the same list as those other callings, which are often perceived as more noble and sacrificial? Unfortunately, many think not.

The reality, however, is that ministry does not take place magically and at no expense. For missionaries to travel and live overseas takes money. For pastors to get the education they need to be effective in ministry takes money. For many ministries, money—or the lack of money—is a problem. Thankfully, many a seminary and graduate school development officer (fundraiser, to the uninitiated)

believes he or she has been called by God to solve this problem.

Used-car salesmen?

For the record, the development offices at graduate institutions are sometimes not the most popular offices on campus. Development officials are sometimes viewed in much the same category as used-car salesmen. This may disappoint development officers, but it does not deter them, for by and large they view their work not as a job, but as a calling, one that is foundational to the success of virtually any ministry.

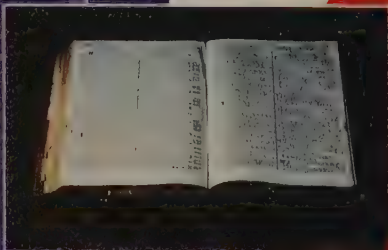
Yes, there may be some who look askance at the whole fundraising venture. But there are others who in some way view development officers as heroes. Imagine, for example, a theological student

from Africa who has been studying in the U.S. for two years, during which time he has not been able to see his wife and children. A development officer tells his story to one of the school's benefactors, who in turn pays the airfare for the man's family to come to the U.S.

Or imagine a faculty member who has developed an interest in some specific area of ministry. Perhaps he has a vision for a new approach to urban ministry and wants to test his theories through a major research project. He has the time and he has the energy, but he does not have the money. A development officer identifies a foundation whose humanitarian or ministry interests are similar to the professor's. Suddenly, money is no longer a hurdle, and the professor can help his students,

(Continued on page 134)

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Institutional lifelines

The truth is that fundraisers constitute the lifeline of most charitable institutions, including seminaries and graduate schools. More than most, presidents and governing boards are acutely aware of this fact. It has been said that a seminary president's best friend is a good development officer. The last thing a seminary or university president wants to worry about is money.

Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary President R. Scott Rodin seeks to provide a new and refreshing biblical perspective on these matters in a book scheduled to be released next spring by InterVarsity Press. The book examines biblical stewardship within a framework of Christian ethics. Says

Rodin, "I'm attempting to call the church to be directly involved in raising up godly stewards and to help the church confront directly those things in our lives that come against the principles of biblical stewardship."

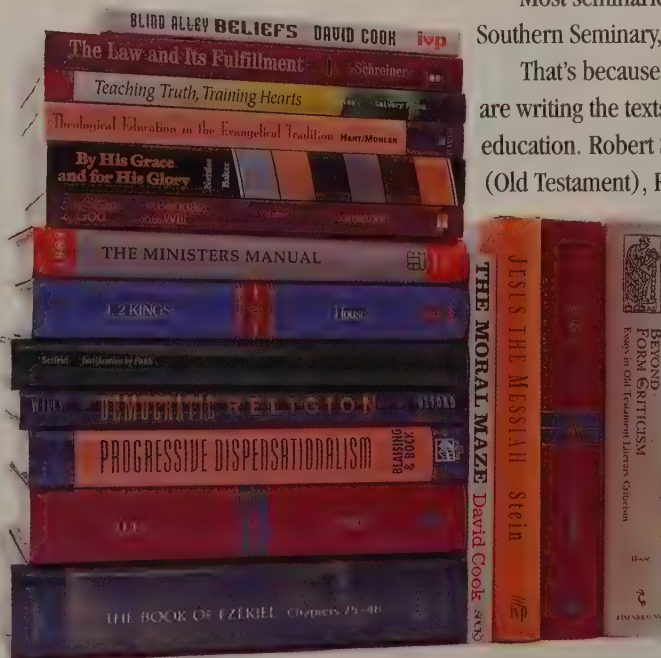
Westminster Theological Seminary vice president for development Bob Anderson believes that those who hold a negative view of fundraisers probably do not know much about the values or the methods that drive Christian fundraising. "It's important to view the development efforts at seminaries within a context of a concern for stewardship, Anderson says. "It's not about some wheeling and dealing business school technique. It's about people and the desire to be obedient to God."

Anderson says he worries as much about bringing in too much money as he does about not bring-

ing in enough. "I believe that it's important for any ministry to be accountable on a regular basis to God's people," he believes, if a ministry has access to funding sources sufficient to free the ministry from dependence on those who care about it the most. "To count on people financially," he observes, "is one way to insure accountability."

Rodin hopes his book will help transform the negative views pastors and churches have toward fundraising into positive views of faithful biblical stewardship. "My goal is that those who read the book will be called, convicted, and inspired to take a new look at what it means to be a steward of God's kingdom. That will translate into new conclusions about how we give, how much we give, and also how we view those of us who consider raising money calling from God." —KLE

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tywide mission." Despite its financial health, Regent places a great emphasis on fundraising because of its desire for continued growth. And with Moody, the worldwide reputation of Pat Robertson and the Christian Broadcasting Network go a long way toward raising financial support.

But Moody and Regent do not represent the status quo when it comes to fundraising. Most schools do not have access to television airwaves or high-volume publications. Yet they press on in their own ways toward the same goal. According to R. Scott Rodin, the former vice president for advancement at Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary who was recently appointed president of the school, development officers today have to work ever-more harder to earn the support from alumni. This is the case at Eastern Seminary—and

Those responsible for the financial health of theological institutions must change with the times but stay true to their visions.

no doubt at many other places—because fewer and fewer students attend seminary full-time or live on campus.

Says Rodin, "There was a time when virtually all Eastern Seminary students studied full-time and lived on campus for three years. They formed incredibly close relationships with other students and with faculty and staff. When students attend part-time and commute from home, it's more difficult to develop those emotional ties."

Also in "olden days," the overwhelming majority of Eastern Seminary's students were American Baptists and were able to receive significant financial support from the denomination (American Baptist Churches, or ABC). But for all intents and purposes, while still affiliated with the ABC, Eastern Seminary has

(Continued on page 131)

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Graduate Theological Education: Who Pays the Bills?

(from page 138)

become interdenominational, signified by the fact that Rodin is Presbyterian. Fewer than half of Eastern Seminary's students today are Baptists of any kind, let alone American Baptist. The school boasts high percentages of students from United Methodist, Presbyterian, and African Methodist Episcopal traditions, as well as students with no denominational ties. It should come as no surprise that it is difficult for students to get support from their denomination when they are, in essence, attending a non-denominational school.

Yet, according to Rodin, there is a positive financial side to the fact that many schools have become predominantly commuter institutions. As schools such as Eastern Seminary have made adjustments to accommodate older, second-career students, they have discovered that many of these students come with the financial means to pay for their own education and even to continue supporting the school when they leave. Students have come to Eastern Seminary in recent years after serving as doctors or attorneys or in business. Though they have experienced the same call to ministry, they do not fit the stereotype of the struggling student who isn't sure where his next meal will come from.

Times have changed, and they will continue to change. New technologies and student demographics have registered their impact on how seminaries and graduate schools are funded. Those responsible for the financial health of these institutions have had to change with the times, while remaining true to the various visions out of which they were born. The fact that so many of these institutions have grown while remaining on sound financial footing is a testimony both to the faithfulness of God and to the faith, ingenuity, and hard work of those who have been called to ensure that graduate theological training not only survives, but flourishes.

By L. Katherine Robbin, a freelance writer in Philadelphia, PA.

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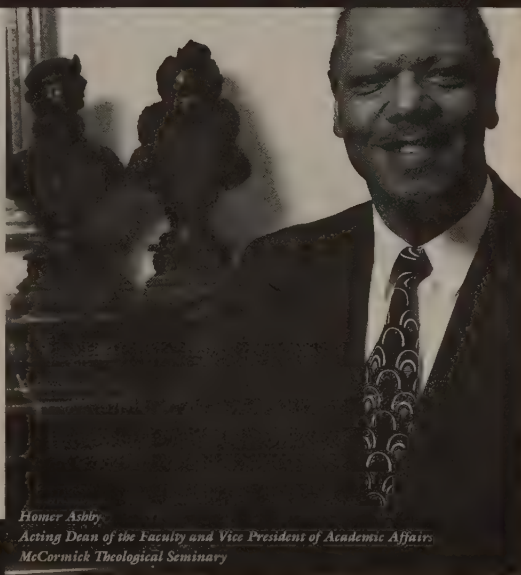
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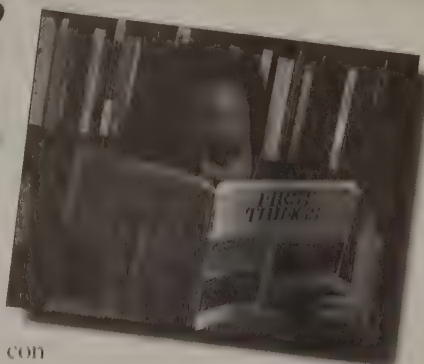
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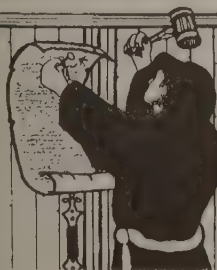
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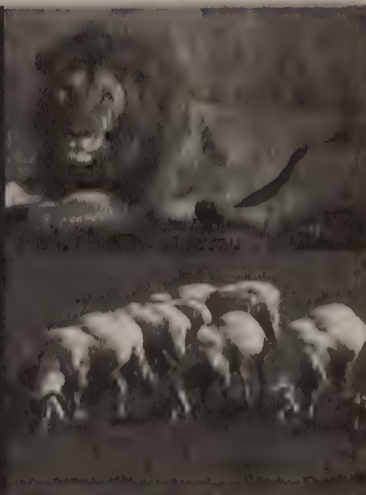
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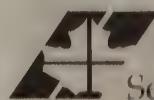
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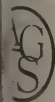
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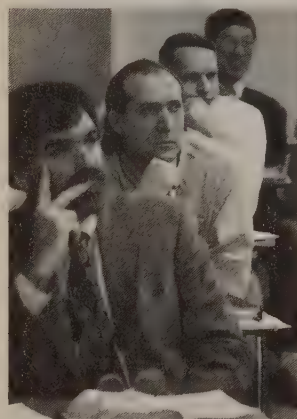
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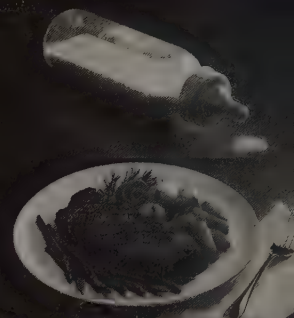


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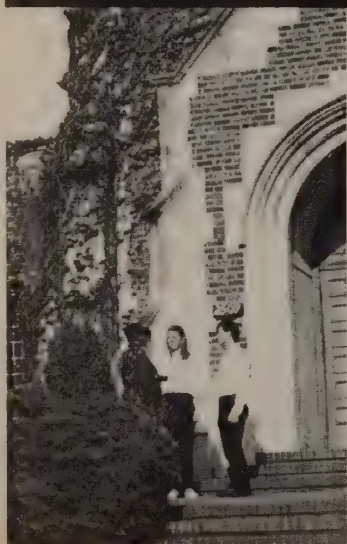
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EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

ROBERTS WESLEYAN COLLEGE in Rochester, New York, anticipates the following faculty openings for the 1999-2000 school year: Business Management; Graphic Design; Philosophy; Old Testament; Teacher Education. Each will be ongoing tenure-track positions. A terminal degree is expected. Send vita to Dr. Burton Jones, Dean of Faculty, Roberts Wesleyan College, 2301 Westside Drive, Rochester, NY 14624-1997.

TYNDALE HOUSE PUBLISHERS, a leading Christian publishing firm, is seeking a senior book editor. Will edit content and style of adult Christian fiction and general trade books; review manuscripts and determine editing strategy; develop and maintain author relations. CBA market and 3-4 years editorial experience preferred. Please send résumé to: Tyndale House Publishers, Attn: HR, P.O. Box 30, Wheaton, IL 60189; fax: (630) 668-9092. visit our Web site at www.tyndale.com. EOE.

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San Francisco Theological Seminary seeks a person to direct its educational mission in Southern California. Based in Claremont, this program offers nonresidential courses of study leading to M.Div. and MATS degrees. It serves mature church persons of this ethnically and culturally diverse region. The position carries both faculty and administrative status. Responsibilities include teaching, administration of staff, development of programs, implementation of culturally specific initiatives, and representation to the larger church. Preference will be given to candidates of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and to those who have an earned doctorate or its equivalent, academic and administrative experience, and knowledge of Southern California. AAEE standards will be applied. Send résumé to Dr. Donald W. McCullough, President, San Francisco Theological Seminary, 2 Kensington Road, San Anselmo, CA 94960-2905.

SENIOR PASTOR

located on the north side of Chicago, First Evangelical Free Church is seeking a dynamic full-time senior pastor with a minimum of 5 years experience as a senior pastor preferably in an urban, multicultural setting. In addition to preaching and teaching, strengths must include shepherding and equipping, vision-casting, and an ability to lead a small team of associate pastors and large group of lay leaders. M.Div. required. Our church emphasizes discipleship of believers through a small-group ministry and caring for our community through a major outreach program to the homeless, children, and youth. Our worship style is contemporary, and our 500-person congregation is predominantly young (both singles and families) and diverse. Qualified individuals should send résumé and cover letter to: Pastoral Search Committee, First Evangelical Free Church, 5249 N. Ashland, Chicago, IL 60640.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

DO YOU NOW, or have you in the past, sold institutional organs at the retail level? A major manufacturer of electronic institutional organs is seeking to fill an entry-level marketing position to work educating a nationwide group of dealers in proper demonstration techniques and modern marketing strategies. The following skills are vital to be considered for our selection process:

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- Extensive travel is required.
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Please send your résumé in confidence to: CT Classified Ads Box 217, 465 Gundersen Dr., Carol Stream, IL 60188.

DIRECTOR OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION/ ASSOCIATE PASTOR FOR DISCIPLESHIP Vital, evangelical, Reformed, 900-member North Avenue Presbyterian Church in Atlanta, GA, seeks vibrant, committed Christian educator to become Director of Christian Education/ Associate Pastor for Discipleship. Developing disciples through a creative adult education program (covering all post-college ages) to equip God's people from entry level to maturity is high priority, along with reaching large single-adult population in adjoining areas. Position will oversee children's ministry director. M.A. in Christian Education and a heart for and experience in urban ministry desired. Send inquiries/résumés to: Betty Henderson, Chair, Director of Christian Education Search Committee, 4192 Lawhon Court, Tucker, GA 30084.

DIRECTOR OF YOUTH: 1,100-member PCUSA located in historic district. Minister to 6th-12th graders. Salary \$25,000-\$35,000 plus benefits. Send résumé, statement of faith and cover letter to: Matt Fowler, Chair, Director of Youth Search Committee, First Presbyterian Church, 307 Gates Avenue, Huntsville, AL 35801-3102.

IS GOD CALLING YOU to a ministry as an associate pastor for congregational care and fellowship in the San Francisco Bay area? The First Presbyterian Church of Hayward, with a membership of over 900, seeks a full-time associate pastor for a ministry team. Primary duties include:

- Home and hospital visitations
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 - Nurturing the spiritual development of members through adult education activities
- An ordained Presbyterian minister who has three to five years experience is desired, or a person of related experience who is eligible for ordination. Send dossier to APNC First Presbyterian Church of Hayward, 2490 Grove Way, Castro Valley, CA 94546.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH (ABC), Amherst, MA (college/univ. town), seeks flexible, experienced pastor with a deep personal relationship with God. Our two services with diverse worship styles need leadership with particular skill in preaching, interpreting the faith, evangelism, counseling, and nurturing and developing spiritual leadership in the body. Send résumé to Gerald Gates, 123 River Rd., So. Deerfield, MA 01373.

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC MINISTRIES PCUSA evangelical congregation seeks full-time dedicated individual desiring Spirit-empowered music ministry that glorifies God throughout the covenant life of the 1,000-member Fletcher Hills Presbyterian Church in beautiful San Diego area. Two worship services: one contemporary, one traditional. Please send to: Dr. R. Geoffrey Brown, 455 Church Way, El Cajon, CA 92020.

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Communications firm serving Christian ministries seeks a writer who believes in the power of words and knows how to use them—both to gain attention and get a response. Minimum two years experience in direct mail fundraising (or proof that you qualify without that experience). Good salary and benefits. Great place to live. Outstanding clients. Send résumé to: Creative Director, 19265 Power Hill Place NE, Poulsbo, WA 98370.

CENTER CITY PHILADELPHIA Messianic Jewish Ministry is seeking exec. dir./pastor. This unique evangelistic outreach ministry under PC (USA) has been in existence for over 50 years. We prefer a Hebrew-Christian Minister to fill this position; however, all résumés are welcome. Submit résumé and letter of introduction to C.C.A.J., 1907 Chestnut St., Philadelphia, PA 19103, or call (215) 568-1030.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES: Advent Group Ministries, a Christian social service agency located in San Jose, CA, seeks resident counselors, night counselors, summer interns for adolescent residential treatment programs. Competitive salary, benefits. Residential positions provide room & board. Contact Carol Fryer: (408) 281-0708; (1-800) 98ADVENT; fax: (408) 281-2658.

INDEPENDENT RESTORATION MOVEMENT CHURCH seeks a senior pastor who can help us grow our people. We are a church of about 150 in a community experiencing an influx of white-collar professionals because of our schools and proximity to Chicago jobs. This man, who will be considered an elder, should have an established record of solid teaching and leadership in a healthy, Bible-based church. Responsibilities will include preaching, teaching, and coaching. Send résumé and statement of beliefs to Lincolnway Christian Church, Attn: Ron Burnam, 141 S Schoolhouse Rd., New Lenox, IL 60451.

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ASSOCIATE PASTOR needed at an international, interdenominational church in Athens, Greece, who will assist the senior pastor in all areas of church ministry. Job description to be tailored to our present needs as well as his spiritual gifts. Must be willing to raise half support. If interested, contact Patti None-maker, Romilias 20, Kastri 14671 GREECE; gnone@hol.gr

YOUTH PASTOR for a growing suburban church in Medway, Massachusetts. We are evangelical and Calvinistic. Morning attendance 450. Call Pastor Stewart (508) 533-7032.

UNIVERSITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (PCUSA), a 3,800+ congregation in Seattle, Washington, is seeking two positions to lead the Department of Urban and Global Mission. Senior Director/Associate Pastor of Urban and Global Mission should have a minimum of 10 years cross-cultural experience as an individual contributor and leader in urban and global mission ministry. This person will be senior member, communicator, leader, and pastor of the department. (This position will be selected first.) Assistant Director/Associate Pastor of Urban and Global Mission should have a minimum of 5 years of similar experience and will have an urban or global focus area that complements the Senior Director. Both candidates should have the following qualifications: deep personal love for Jesus Christ; ability to lead a department with a staff of 12, over 400 volunteers and a substantial budget that supports over 70 career missionaries; proven team-building and pastoral skills with staff, missionaries and local, national and international partners; ability to articulate a vision of mission to equip, encourage, and work alongside lay volunteers and career missionaries; effective preacher and teacher of the Scriptures and biblical mission mandate; personal, hands-on, cross-cultural field and administrative ministry experience. Please submit résumé and references to: University Presbyterian Church, Attn: Christi Scovill, 4540 15th Ave. NE, Seattle, WA 98105; (206) 524-7300 or e-mail to: christis@upc.org. Web page: www.upc.org

NORTH PALM BEACH, FLORIDA

A small, active community in North Palm Beach, Florida, is seeking a minister for an ecumenical Protestant chapel. Services are held each Sunday from mid-October until mid-May. The chapel, which just celebrated its 20th anniversary, is well established and serves the needs of the 300-member congregation. Activities include a library, a religious-study program, and benevolence activities. We offer a beautiful chapel with excellent facilities and a well educated, caring congregation. Please send your personal information to: Search Committee, Lost Tree Chapel, 11149 Turtle Beach Road, North Palm Beach, FL 33408.

ASSOCIATE PASTOR

Growing, active evangelical church of 600+ members in suburban York, PA, seeks full-time associate pastor (new position) for strengthening programs in Christian education and youth ministry. Will also assist senior pastor in providing spiritual and administrative leadership. Candidate should be evangelical in faith, have strong teaching and leadership skills and the passion to encourage and enable believers to do God's will. Ideal candidate has graduate-level ministry training and a track record of effective ministry. Excellent salary and benefits. Send pastoral profiles/résumés to: Dr. Karen Elizabeth King, Penn Central Conference, United Church of Christ, 900 S. Arlington Ave., Suite 126, Harrisburg, PA 17109; phone/fax: (717) 560-0268; e-mail: revkeking@worldnet.att.net

VICE PRESIDENT OF DEVELOPMENT

The Baptist General Conference is seeking a Vice President of Development to serve as a key member of the executive ministry team of this denomination of 900 churches headquartered in Arlington Heights, Illinois. The candidate should be a spiritually motivated individual with a world-view of ministry who possesses excellent verbal and written communication skills. An individual with a strong church leadership background, lay or pastoral, is desired. This position requires strong relational skills blended with the ability to lead, motivate, and hold accountable a field staff of regional representatives. Applicants should have several years of resource-development ministry experience and have the ability to work nationally and regionally. The position also requires strategic and planning skills and experience in providing stewardship-education experiences. Inquiries should be directed to: Don Goehner, President, Goehner Resource Group, 4125 Blackford Ave., #205, San Jose, CA 95117-1705; office: (408) 246-6002; fax: (408) 246-6083; e-mail: Don GRG@aol.com

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Send vita to Daniel C. Fredericks, Provost, 1500 Peachtree St., Jackson, MS 39202. Minorities are encouraged to apply.

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NATIONAL CHURCH PLACEMENT SERVICE VICE Churches and Ministers are connected with CMPN, P.O. Box 1132, Barre, VT 05641 (802) 476-8902.

CALVIN COLLEGE

VICE PRESIDENT FOR STUDENT LIFE

Calvin College seeks applicants for the office of Vice President for Student Life. The Vice President for Student Life is the leader and chief administrative officer of the Student Life Division. She/he reports to the president and is responsible for the effective functioning of the Student Life Division. The vice president is responsible for the planning, execution, coordination, and evaluation of goals, programs, policies, and staff members of the Student Life Division. Calvin College is a Christian college in the Reformed tradition. The position requires a Christian commitment compatible with the mission of the college. The successful candidate will have: master's degree in an appropriate area; an earned doctorate is preferred; expertise and experience in student services and development; commitment to the development of multicultural community and experience with ethnic minority people; proven skills in human resource management and managerial leadership; Commitment to integrity of faith, learning and living in student life. Candidates should submit a résumé, including the name and telephone numbers of three references by October 31st to: Connie Bellows, Director of Human Resources, Calvin College, 310 Burton SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49546. Calvin College is an equal employment opportunity employer.

U.S. DIRECTOR

Our client is a Christian, nonprofit, international social-development organization. We are seeking a U.S.-based, experienced fundraising professional who will feel comfortable working in a variety of cultural contexts. The successful candidate will be responsible for setting strategy and implementing all fundraising activities. The position reports to the U.S. board of directors and will implement major-gift, direct-mail, special-event grant-proposal strategies. Please send résumé and current salary information in confidence to: Van Dyke Associates, 1755 South Newville Road, Suite 100, Wheaton, Illinois 60187.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

THE CHRISTIAN RESEARCH INSTITUTE (CRI) seeks an on-site assistant editor. CRI is the premier research ministry equipping Christians to respond to the cults and other challenges to faith. Duties include serving as editor to CRI's newsletter and assisting with editing its magazine, the Christian Research Journal. Editorial experience, the ability to make scholarly articles understandable to lay readers, and a graduate degree relevant to CRI's focus (e.g., theology or philosophy) are required. Send résumé and salary history to Paul Young, CRI, Box 80008, Rancho Santa Margarita, CA 92688-0008, or fax (949) 358-6123.

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ULL-TIME YOUTH PASTOR with minimum three years experience. Interested applicants should send written résumé to First Baptist Church, 310 West Taylor Street, Kokomo, IN 6901, Attn: Pastoral Search Committee.

MIDWAY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, a 173-member suburban church in a beautiful country setting surrounded by rapidly expanding housing developments, is seeking a person who loves Christ and wants to grow a church leading its many committed leaders to accomplish Christ's mission here. Please send IF to PNC, 3238 Midway Rd., Anderson, SC 9621, or e-mail: rm_farmer@juno.com

ROWING EVANGELICAL CHURCH of 10+ in Arlington, VA (bedroom community Wash., DC) seeks full-time SINGLES/OUT-EACH PASTOR. Experience, seminary, and vision for reaching and maturing singles in Christ required. Send résumé to Search Committee, Cherrydale Baptist Church, 3910 Orcom Lane, Arlington, VA 22207. Phone: (03) 525-8210; fax: (703) 525-8254; E-mail: cherrylee@compuserve.com

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RESEARCH OPPORTUNITY

The Pew Evangelical Scholars Program announces its program of Research Fellowships for the academic year of 1999-2000. Sixteen grants of \$35,000 each will be awarded to scholars pursuing research in the humanities, social sciences, and theology. Applicants must have a Ph.D. and be a Canadian or U.S. citizen or have a long-term appointment in North America. Christian scholars from all religious backgrounds are most welcome to apply. Applications are due by November 30, 1998. For further information contact: Michael S. Hamilton, Pew Evangelical Scholars Program, 810 Flanner Hall, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, IN 46556. Phone: (219) 631-8347; fax: (219) 631-8721; E-mail: ND.pesp.1@nd.edu

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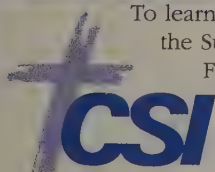
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Evangelicals Are Not an Interest Group

As the election approaches, politically minded conservative evangelicals are discovering they are not involved in the issues so much as they *are* the issue. "Religious Right Shows Its Muscle" reads a headline in the *Chicago Tribune*. The *Arizona Republic* warns that "the religious right is causing near-civil war in some campaigns." The buzz on Capitol Hill is that the Religious Right is splitting conservative ranks.

But this bellicose imagery could cause real harm to evangelical political activity.

The latest round of press attention was triggered when Jim Dobson gave his celebrated speech threatening to abandon the Republican party. Worried party leaders convened a Values Summit and agreed to take action on such things as abortion and the marriage penalty.

Dobson did a noble service in jarring Congress out of its lethargy, but nothing sets off alarm bells in the press faster than political stirrings among the Religious Right. Journalists immediately warned in apocalyptic tones that religious conservatives were "marching on Washington" and "demanding their due." Articles described Christians as a powerful voting bloc that delivered 45 percent of the vote in the 1994 Republican sweep of Congress. Many alluded to Ralph Reed's phrase that Christian conservatives are demanding "their place at the table" and depicted them in the same terms used for a labor union or any other special-interest group.

Sadly, Christians have sometimes contributed to this image. Of course, we have a right to a place at the table, like any other citizen. And yes, we have political clout because millions of Americans share our moral concerns. But that can never be the basis of our political stance. We contend for certain truths in the political arena precisely because they are *true*, and because these transcendent truths are crucial to public justice and freedom.

Our message is *not*, We put you in office, now pay up; but rather, This should be done because it is right, it is a principle that undergirds any well-ordered civil society. We must be clear that the moral positions we urge are not partisan; they apply to Democrats and Republicans alike.

Our principles are derived from Scripture, but in a pluralistic society they must be translated into terms nonbelievers can understand, language that appeals to the objective moral order recognized by the ethical systems of all great civilizations—what C. S. Lewis called "the Way" or "the Tao."

For example, when we work to change abortion laws, we appeal not only to divine revelation but also to the most fundamental duty of government:

to defend the defenseless. Our nation was founded by a generation willing to fight and die for the "inalienable" right to life. Both Christian belief and Enlightenment deist agreed on the rights the government must protect.

Or consider assisted suicide and eugenics. The reason we oppose legalization is that these things are contrary to the fundamental duty of government recognized since our founding. As G. K. Chesterton wrote, eugenics "is chiefly a denial of the Declaration of Independence. It urges that so far from all men being born equal, numbers of them ought not to be born at all."

Finally, when we oppose gay marriage and domestic-partner laws, our purpose is not to punish homosexuals but to preserve the unique legal status of the heterosexual family. This is not someocratic power grab; it is asking government to recognize a fundamental social pattern that has undergirded every successful society throughout history.

In seeking limits on government, our motivations stem from a rich tradition of political philosophy rooted in the Reformation—a tradition that makes constitutional democracy possible. It rests on the recognition that every sphere of society has its own function, its own authority, which government must not usurp but rather must protect. Dutch statesman Abraham Kuyper coined the phrase "sphere sovereignty" to assert that the individual, family, church, school, and business enterprise all owe their origin to God, not government. Therefore, their proper function and structure comes from God; there are lines that government may not cross in its social-engineering schemes.

As Kuyper put it, we live "coram Deo" (before the face of God), and we are directly responsible to God in each area of life. For Christians, politics is the high calling of ensuring that government protects the proper political institutions and preserves the moral order.

This is why it is so crucial not to allow ourselves to be tucked into any party's hip pocket, or cast as just another political interest group in the ideological struggle. Our concern is on a higher level: that all spheres of society are free to fulfill their God-ordained function. At times we may represent a majority, other times only a small percentage of the vote, as in the early abolitionist movement. But our position remains the same: that there exists a natural order that government is morally obligated to respect.

Our task is to serve as society's conscience, seeing all of life from God's perspective and interpreting that vision in prudential terms for our fellow citizens. We don't seek power; we seek a society where government promotes justice in all spheres of society and protects the public good.

**Our message
is not,
We put you
in office,
now pay up;
but rather,
This should
be done
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it is right.**

The President's Small Group • News: A Pre-Election Report

CHRISTIANITY TODAY

OCTOBER 26, 1998

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David Horn ON Distance Learning

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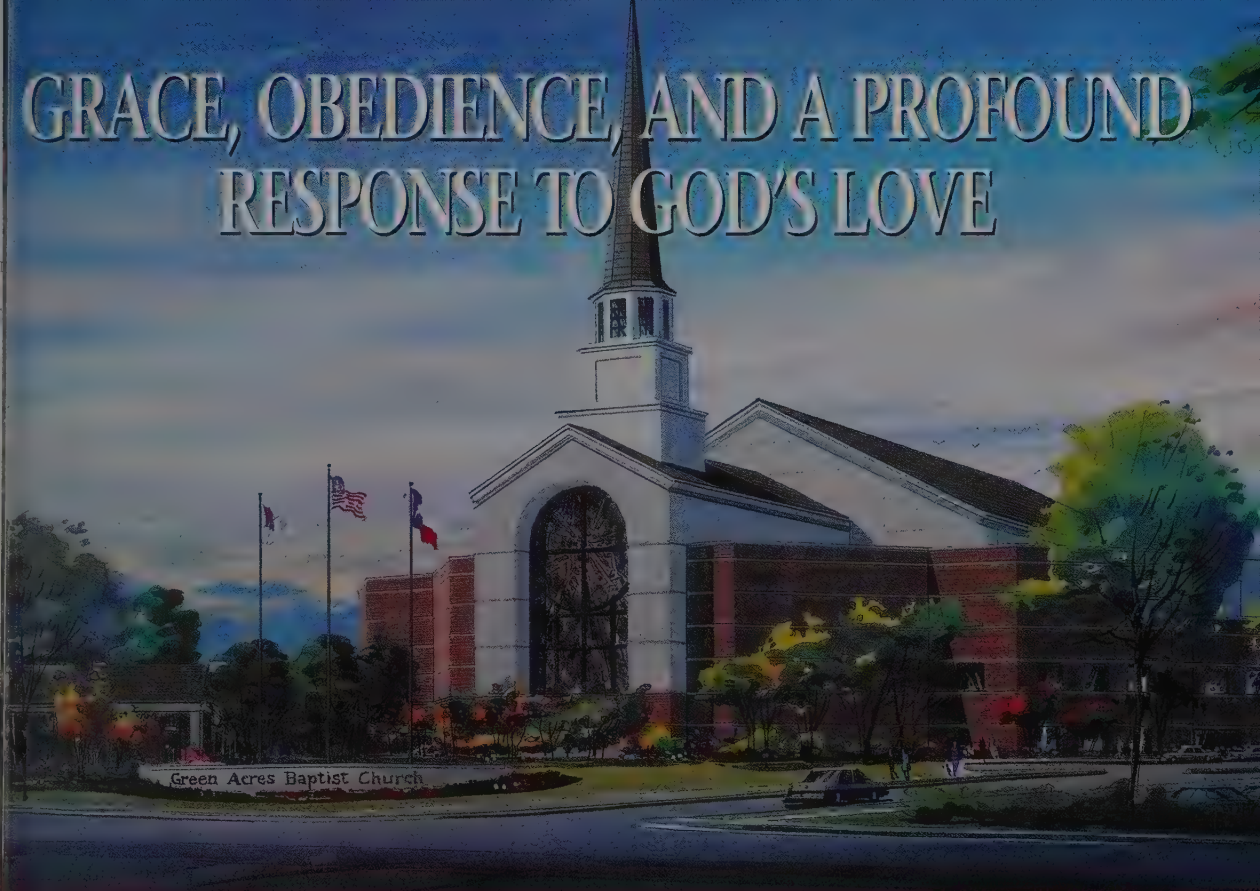
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CHRISTIANITY TODAY

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A Magazine of Evangelical Conviction

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THE PRODIGAL

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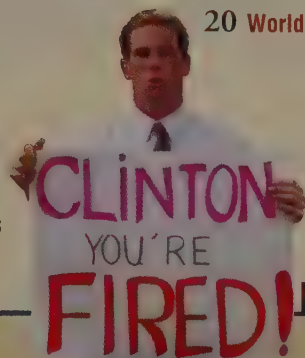
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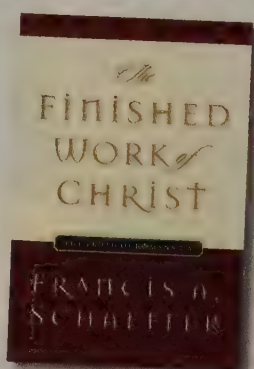
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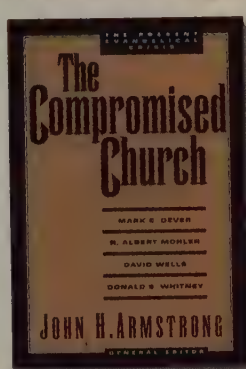
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Biblical "Myth"

■ I really enjoyed "Did the Exodus Never Happen?" [Sept. 7]. I find the assumption that history as recorded in Scripture is myth unless it can be verified by secular sources to be laughable. Anyone who has tried to follow the news stories of the past few years knows that news disseminated in the mainstream press must be seen with a critical eye. The number of retractions of inaccurate and even bogus reports and stories have been frequent and numerous. Are we to believe that records of events written hundreds and thousands of years ago are to be taken uncritically simply because they were written on papyrus or etched in stone? "Let God be true and every man a liar."

One assumes the inaccuracy or falsehood of the Bible at one's own peril. It is the wise man that begins his research with the assumption that the Scriptures are true, and other types of evidence should be judged based on that assumption. I would much prefer to meet the Lord one day and have him perhaps call me on the carpet for taking his word too literally than to have to explain why I couldn't find the Scriptures plausible until I had verified them by other, human sources.

Keven Fry
Houston, Tex.

I wish to commend Kevin D. Miller for his timely and informative article on the Exodus. It should be noted that Kenneth A. Kitchen, who is the world's leading authority on Ramesses II, the pharaoh of the Exodus, and on the later history of Egypt, has detailed his reasons for defending the Old Testament in "The Patriarchal Age: Myth or History?" *Biblical Archaeology Review* 21.2 (1995). I addressed some of these same issues in *Faith, Tradition, and History* (D. Baker, J. Hoffmeier, and A. Millard, eds.). Professor Hoffmeier's colleague Alfred Hoerth has just published an excellent survey, *Archaeology & the Old Testament* (Baker), and I have edited *Peoples of the Old Testament World* (Baker, 1994), to which Hoffmeier contributed the chapter on the Egyptians.

Prof. Edwin Yamauchi
Miami University
Oxford, Ohio

■ The article begins with a reference to my colleague Baruch Halpern, who is cur-

rently out of the country and unable to respond directly; it lists him among the so-called minimalists who deny the authenticity of large sections of the Old Testament narrative. It is misleading for you to confuse the skeptical, scholarly work of Halpern and others with the extreme minimalists like Thomson and Lemche, particularly when Halpern himself is the author of a widely read article which excoriates the minimalists for their cavalier treatment of historical evidence.

The mainstream scholarly position raises serious questions about the Exodus narrative but accepts the broad truth of the biblical account of the kingdoms attributed to David and Solomon, while the minimalists deny basically everything before the sixth century B.C. That is a basic and radical difference, and it is disturbing that your article does not make that distinction clear.

Prof. Philip Jenkins
Pennsylvania State University
University Park, Pa.

■ When I was in graduate school I would have given all I owned to read an article like this, or a book like Hoffmeier's *Israel in Egypt*. I had to find out for myself that some of my professors were biased and did not decide on the basis of the evidence what to believe about the Bible.



They made it clear to me that I could never be considered an intellectual unless I agreed with their biblical revisionism. In all my college teaching, I did my best to prepare students to face such professors without losing faith or courage.

Kenneth E. Jones
Louisville, Ky.

■ When I read essays on this subject, minimalist and maximalist, I often have the feeling I'm reading attacks on straw men. In reality, few conservative authors take everything in Genesis literally, and few liberal authors argue that everything is fiction.

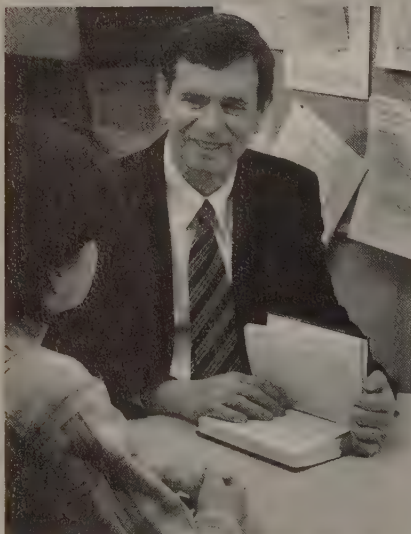
Donald V. Etz
Dayton, Ohio

A Jewish Olive Tree

Thank you for the article explaining Messianic Judaism ["The Return of the Jewish Church," Sept. 7]. As the article pointed out, nearly every form of Protestant and Jewish expression of worship is represented within the Messianic movement. But it is not so much this diversity that causes discomfort for many outside observers. Many simply dislike the fundamental message, "Christianity is Jewish." Many Christians don't like the implication that the church is closer to Judaism than it would care to admit. And unbelieving Jews do not like the message that Christianity is in essence a Jewish olive tree growing to fruition in Messiah (with an accommodation of the Gentiles). It hits too close to home!

As a Gentile believer, I always appreciated the niche being filled in Messianic Judaism by providing a place for Jews to worship their Messiah without forsaking their cultural traditions and ethnic heritage. In fact, their Jewish heritage becomes more fulfilling and meaningful in Messiah. However, it was a bit of a let-down when I realized that Scripture suggests the real recipient of accommodation is the "wild olive branch" of the believing Gentiles. It was ten chapters into the Book of Acts before the major grafting of Gentiles was initiated, and not until the Jerusalem council that the Nazarene Jews met to decide how to accommodate the Gentiles into this new (renewed) covenant of promise with Israel. Over the

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C. Stephen Evans

Ph.D. from Yale; author of *The Historical Christ and the Jesus of Faith* (Oxford University Press, 1996) and *Why Believe? Reason and Mystery as Pointers to God* (William B. Eerdmans, 1996), honored by *Christianity Today* as one of its top books of the year in 1997; internationally known scholar on the life and thought of Søren Kierkegaard; editor for *Books and Culture*; Calvin philosophy professor.



John E. Hare

British-born; Ph.D. from Princeton; author of *The Moral Gap* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996); former staff associate in the House of Representatives' Foreign Affairs Committee and American Philosophical Association Congressional Fellow; international reputation in Christian ethics and the morality of war and nuclear deterrence; Calvin professor of philosophy.



Del Ratzsch

Ph.D. from the University of Massachusetts; author of *The Battle of Beginnings: Why Neither Side is Winning the Creation-Evolution Debate* (Inter Varsity Press, 1996), named by *Christianity Today* as one of the top books of the year; widely known scholar in the philosophy of science and in the relationship of science and religion; professor of philosophy at Calvin.

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course of history, the roles have become reversed as the Gentile-dominated church has, in effect, erased its Jewish roots.

The net effect of church history has been to accomplish implicitly what the heretic Marcion tried to do explicitly in the second century as he tried to eliminate anything Jewish from the Scriptures. Gentile bias pervades today's covenant and dispensational theological frameworks as they relegate the "natural branches" irrelevant in the present age.

Messianic Judaism, by its very existence, points to the need for a new unifying theological paradigm based on the growth of the body of Messiah throughout history in which the Gentiles are grafted into a single branch grafted into the olive tree that continues to be Jewish. Ironically, such a theological framework has great potential for unifying the church and ultimately ushering in the time Paul talks about in Romans 11 when "all Israel will be saved."

Charles McGraw
Kehilat Ariel Messianic Congregation
San Diego, California

The article left the impression that, prior to 1967, "there was not a single Messianic Jewish congregation in the world." This is not accurate. One or more congregations of Yiddish-speaking Jewish believers existed in Warsaw prior to World War II. The leader of one congregation in Romania, Isaac Feinstein, was martyred by the Iron Guard. Congregations in Odessa and Kiev were established long before the Communist takeover. Jewish believers in Budapest formed their own independent Messianic movement during the 1920s.

The existence and viability of a Messianic movement, especially in Europe during the first half of our century, should be noted and explored. Some, perhaps, would have been quoted in the article, but their voices were silenced by the ultimate sacrifice as Jews who identified unto death.

Mitch Glaser, President
Chosen People Ministries
Charlotte, North Carolina

A small number of Messianic congregations (maybe four or five) were already in existence in 1966 when I first went [to Jerusalem] to study. They had been going on for some time. Furthermore, there were also four or five such congregations in the U.S., established decades earlier. They may have been called "Hebrew Christians," but they were definably Jewish congregations.

The author also states: "There are v

over one million Jews in the United States who express some sort of faith in *Yeshua*." From his mouth to God's ears! If only that were true! The total Jewish population in the U.S. numbers a little under 6 million Jews. This would mean that one of every six Jews in the U.S. is a believer in *Yeshua*. That figure is simply far too exaggerated.

Third, the author claims "The MJAA [Messianic Jewish Alliance of America] wing of Messianic Judaism is not interested in any of the cultural trappings of Gentile Christianity, unless those cultural practices reflect a specific, biblically prescribed practice." Such a statement is probably true of a very small minority of Messianic congregations, but not really totally true of the MJAA movement as a whole (of which I am a member). Much of the theology and practice is directly borrowed from traditional Pentecostal theology, and other elements have been incorporated from the more recent charismatic movements of a variety of kinds. The most accurate statement is from Eliezer Maass: that "there are many different models of messianic congregations; there is a lot of diversity in this movement."

Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, Director
Ariel Ministries
Tustin, Calif.

Your article refers to Catholic sympathy for the movement by citing Cardinal Lustiger of Paris calling himself "a Jew" (since he is a convert from Judaism). You need to be aware of the Association of Hebrew Catholics, a voluntary organization of Jewish and Gentile Catholics founded in 1979 by Elias Friedman, a convert from Judaism, now a Carmelite monk living in Israel. This association aims at ending the alienation of Catholics of Jewish origin from their historical heritage by the formation of a Hebrew Catholic community approved by the church. Jewish ethnic identity and many practices will be preserved in this community whose members will also be fully Catholic. Members are already found in many countries of the world.

Jerome F. Tracy
Highland, N.Y.

The return of the Jewish church is an enigma wrapped in a mystery. Why not make the title "Let's Go Back to the Things Paul Said Are Dead"? We who have been born again are believers in the Lord Jesus, and hyphenating ourselves is spiritual immaturity. It is noteworthy that the Book of Hebrews is not addressed to Jews or Israel, but to Hebrews.

God has declared "there is no distinc-

tion between Jew and Greek"; for "all have sinned." There are Jewish or Hebrew believers, whichever term you may prefer, but from a New Testament point of view, there are no such things as Messianic Jews, or Hebrew Christians, spiritually speaking. God is no longer offering a Messiah to the world but the Savior.

I have no desire to make Jewish believers Gentiles, but I oppose any attempt to make the Lord's redemptive work somehow incomplete for Jewish people if it does not incorporate Jewish tradition as a spiritual part.

The offense of the cross is no less today than in Paul's day. Richard Ellison
Elmwood Place, Ohio

Whether Jew or Gentile, those who profess Messiah as Lord are baptized by the Holy Spirit into *one* body (1 Cor. 12:13). First used in Antioch (Acts 11:26), the name *Christian* was given to professing believers signifying a new life under grace. That name has remained in use to this present day. Do we really need another division within the body?

Vincent G. Gustafson
Westminster, Colo.

I do not feel repulsed by "Messianic Jew." I want to be sensitive to my Jewish people as I have a witness in their lives, but the word *Christian* is biblical. I do not refer to myself as a Jewish Christian, but I do not shy away from that reference either. As I speak in churches throughout the year (and have for 25 years), I find that Gentile believers assume that if you are a "Messianic Jew" you automatically attend a Messianic congregation. The fact is, a large portion of Jewish believers attend mainline or independent churches. On page 68 you say that in the early seventies "some of the Jews who became believers in Jesus were 'assimilated' into Gentile churches. Others began joining Messianic congregations." You did not provide for any middle ground. I came to faith in the early seventies when I started attending the base chapel at the air force installation where I was stationed and never felt "assimilated." In fact, the beauty of being in a "regular" church all these years is that it has provided a natural springboard to the rest of the body for teaching and consulting, because other believers have felt that I am a part of who they are.

Stan Kellner
Sheresh Ministries
Colorado Springs, Colo.

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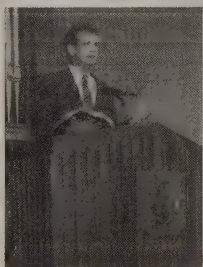
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ancestry is interesting trivia. They would say that being Jewish is something their ancestors *were*.

Can it plausibly be God's will that a Jewish person who comes to faith move into the body as a whole, losing all identity? If so, why do Paul and James take so much trouble to disabuse fellow Jews—believers and nonbelievers alike—that Paul did not encourage *Jewish* believers to forsake *Torah*?

Instead of being the only one of my family in a Messianic congregation, which would the movement look like today if most of my family members had been in Messianic congregations for the last 20 years?

Rob G.
Franklin Square, NY

The Tabernacle as Model?

✉ I found Tim Stafford's article ["God in the Blueprints," Sept. 7] very thought-provoking. In dealing with the problem of the tension between "horizontal" and "vertical" emphases in church architecture, building committees and architects should perhaps consider the simple form of the wilderness tabernacle with its large outer court (emphasizing the horizontal) and its smaller inner sanctuary (focusing on the vertical).

Fredric McCormick
Coon Rapids, MN

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✉ As a pastor, I church hop when I'm on vacation. What I found this year was growth in the God-is-here-for-you mode of worship. So when I read Tim Stafford's article on church architecture, I thought of Marshall McLuhan's aphorism "the medium is the message." Here is the message of most new church buildings: Everyone can be comfortable in God's presence. While I want to do what I can to draw people into God's presence, the fact is that few true encounters with God are comfortable. Everyone in Scripture who meets God, even an angel, falls down in fear. No believers I meet tell me their own recent experiences in prayer and worship speak of little comfort and more of reverence and awe. They yearn to be in the presence of holiness. CT's own Frederica Mathew-Green speaks of her conversion in a church in Dublin, Ireland, as a "confrontation" that set her "reeling" [CT, May 18, 1998, p. 54]. Honestly, I think most Americans are sick of everything being essential, "relaxed-fit." But when we hear of the seraphim crying out "Holy, Holy, Holy," we are filled with an aching desire.

Eric Irwin
Issaquah, WA

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Drawn to Lewis

■ I really appreciated the commentary on C. S. Lewis by J. I. Packer ["Still Surprised by Lewis," Sept. 7]. Packer does not explicitly state that Lewis appeals to evangelicals today because he (Lewis) was not one, but that is precisely why I am so drawn to him. Lewis's faith was shaped by the Anglican Church with its orthodoxy and centuries of experience, and he was enabled to admire the depth and mystery of God. Few modern evangelical writers (especially of fiction) display the fullness and majesty of God. Our more subjective faith may actually limit God.

Rebecca C. Hughes
Avon, Conn.

■ The article brought to my mind the quotation by David Luvell: "On the day that both John F. Kennedy and C. S. Lewis died, we can remember one as a monument, Kennedy, along the road and the other, Lewis, as a signpost, pointing to the greater hope."

Don Mechlin
Philadelphia, Pa.

Veggie Tales or Freddy Krueger?

■ Your David Grossman article ["Trained to Kill," Aug. 10] completely stunned me. Thanks for publishing it. I have a six-month-old son who loves watching Veggie Tales Christian videos. I shudder to think of him watching Freddy Krueger or Jason Vorhees movies with the same glee—yet I watched and enjoyed some of those violent movies myself as a teenager. I don't watch TV much anymore.

Dennis G. Jerz
Eau Claire, Wisc.

It was undoubtedly a shrewd marketing decision to print such a sensational article, and then to choose to use it as your cover story. Violence is a hot topic that sells—a source of revenue these days—because it's not easy to navigate through the deep waters of our times. Grossman is right to say that "this virus of violence is occurring worldwide," but it does not logically follow that "the explanation for it has to be some new factor that is occurring." Modern Christians are falling for easy answers and looking for places to lay blame instead of swallowing the bitter pill of our humanity's fallen nature.

I thought Grossman described beautifully and accurately the way God designed his creatures with a natural aversion to killing their own kind. He's right that the increase of "desensitization and brutalization" of our youth is a cause of the increase in violence in our culture. But he's

wrong to let the blame fall squarely on forms of entertainment our kids have access to instead of on the homes the children are being reared in that leave them in front of the TV, on parents who give any place for such damage to entertainment at inappropriate ages, on the acceptance of abortion, and an attitude, even among Christians, that children are a negative, an inconvenience, a burden in an otherwise happy adult life.

Why would we think that outlawing some games will make better kids? We need to stop all this "alarmist" thinking that these kinds of articles promote.

Mrs. Amy M.
Jacksonville,

■ As an Anabaptist, I'd like to ask fellow evangelicals: Why haven't Bible-based churches taught pacifism for the last 20 centuries, let alone 20 years? Why don't you even teach and then apply the nonscriptural "Just war theory," rather than ignore the subject? Why have almost all evangelical groups blessed WWII, Korea, Vietnam, and the Gulf War? If I were a betting Christian, I'd bet 99 percent of American believers are in denial about New Testament pacifism.

Frank M.
Houston,

■ Thank you so much for this long-awaited explanation of why my conditions are founded.

Lynn Th.
Minnesota City, M

Reconcilers in Turkey

■ I was excited to read the article about Turkey ["In Search of the Lost Churches of Paul," Aug. 10]. I found it accurate except for one exception: the Reconciliation Walk is sponsored by Youth With A Mission. Those who participated in the Reconciliation Walk were implicitly instructed not to evangelize in any way (including giving out New Testaments). The walk is totally committed to apologizing for the Crusades. To those they are affiliated with a missions organization undermines their work of repentance and seeking forgiveness.

Pennye Kona
Baytown,

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INDIGENOUS PEOPLES



Freedom to worship: Cree elder Wally McKay prays to dance as David danced, as a native girl (below) follows through after the supplication.

Native Christians Reclaim Worship

After 500 years of being told by other cultures how to worship Christ, native people from 15 countries met at the second World Christian Gathering of Indigenous People to explore expressions of worship that grow out of their traditions and culture.

Some of the more than 1,000 participants at the nine-day conference in Rapid City, South Dakota, September 5-13, believe they have been asked to give up too much of their culture.

"It was wrong for denominations to teach us to become like them," says planning committee member Lynda Prince. "The only mandate in the Bible says that their duty and our duty is to teach people to become like Jesus Christ." At the age of five, Prince, a Carrier/Sekani of Canada, was taken to a residential school where she was not allowed to speak her native language. "Assimilation taught us to become ashamed of who we are," she says. "Basically, it says God made a mistake when he created you."

Conference participants in native dress shared their cul-

turally unique forms of worship. Some critics question such presentations, calling them syncretistic, blending Christianity with other forms of religion.

In North America, some conservative Indian Christians reject the use of drums and traditional dances in Christian worship. But Richard Twiss, a Lakota Sioux and event co-chair, says, "We're not trying

to take evil things and make them good. We want to take things that God made and see them restored to their original purpose, which is the exaltation and glorification of Almighty God."

Steve Cheramie, pastor of the Mennonite-affiliated Native Christian Fellowship and chair of the Pointe Au Chien tribe of Louisiana, says, "Certain groups said, don't go to the gathering because they are going to have an Indian drum there, and the Indian drum has been used for evil in the past. [But] I know a piano that's been used for evil in the past."

Mark MacDonald, the Episcopal bishop of Alaska, believes that some people have a hard time seeing things from a perspective that differs from their own culture's. "Indians often put out a plate for a deceased relative at a funeral," he explains. "There's a story about a white guy who comes up and says with a laugh, 'When are your relatives going to get up and eat

that food?' The Indian answers, 'About the same time your relatives get up and smell those flowers.'"

The gathering received endorsements from Fuller Theological Seminary, Wesleyan Native American Ministries, World Vision Canada, and Wycliffe Bible Translators. The American Bible Society printed a special edition New Testament with the event's logo and presented one to each registrant. The next gathering is scheduled for Sydney in January 2000.

By Ken Steinke in Rapid City.



INTERNET COMMENTARY

Christian Syndicate Launched

Seeking to place biblical perspectives onto the opinion pages of the America's secular newspapers, the Lansing, Michigan-based Amy Foundation is launching one of the first newspaper syndicates available on the Internet.

Dubbed "Real Answers," the columns will seek to provide spiritual insight on current issues and problems. "Our nation is in a

deepening spiritual and moral crisis," says Foundation president Jim Russell. "The Amy Internet columns will provide clearly defined spiritual and moral direction."

Starting this month, two new columns are being provided weekly at the Amy Foundation Web site (www.amyfound.org). "These value principles have proven to be historically effective in restoring a

character of faith, obedience, and love," Russell says.

The nonprofit Amy Foundation is known in evangelical circles for its Amy Writing Awards, which honor biblically based articles published in the secular print media (CT, June 21, 1993, p. 30). The syndicate so far has about 20 writers, including William Mattox, columnist and member of *USA Today's* board of contributors, and *Indianapolis News* editor Russell Pulliam. Columns will be available free to daily newspapers. □

ALTERNATIVE GIVING

Goats Make Holiday Gift Lists

In search of the perfect Christmas gift for the person who has everything, an increasing number of gift givers are buying water buffaloes instead of Beanie Babies.

Christian aid agencies such as Heifer Project International, World Concern, and World Vision are offering catalogs with unusual, tax-deductible Christmas gifts—such as goats, rabbits, medical care, and school tuition that help poor children and families in developing countries.

Gift prices range from \$10 to \$5,000. For each gift, such as a \$25 goat, a card is sent describing how the donation purchased in the donor's honor will help a family.

Catalogs reflect a new fundraising strategy for non-

profits, which have long relied on heart-wrenching letters featuring photographs of emaciated children.

Heifer Project International (HPI), which has produced an alternative gift catalog for a decade, is printing more than 1 million this year. "It's probably our most important direct-mail piece," says Tom Peterson, HPI's director of communications. Peterson declined to say how much catalog income HPI receives, but indicated it provides a "significant chunk" of the \$11.6 million individual-giving figure listed in the agency's most recent annual report.

The organizations are also



posting their catalogs on the Web for on-line purchasing (www.heifer.org; www.worldconcern.org; www.worldvisiongifts.org).

For aid agencies that "sell" intangible needs such as the hunger and poverty of nameless faces living oceans away, alternative gifts person-

alize the need and allow agencies to meet their donor's need of finding meaningful Christmas gifts.

Agency leaders see the catalogs as much more than direct-mail appeals. World

Concern president

Paul Kennel

says alternative gifts help parents teach their children Christian values and return the focus of the season to one of giving, not just receiving.

Miyon Kautz, coordinator of World Vision's catalog, agrees: "I hope people

will see the value of this, to give a gift that really does help someone, instead of giving a gift that sits in a closet."

By Christine J. Gard



In Brief

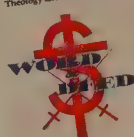
◆ The American Center for Law and Justice (ACLU) is suing New York City and seeking a preliminary injunction on the city's **domestic partners** law, which was implemented on September 5. "By creating a special class of persons for whom matrimonial benefits flow but from whom no responsibilities are required, the City of New York mocks the dignity and inviolability of marriage as the foundational institution of our society," ACLU said.

◆ The **Conservative Congregational Christian Conference** celebrated its fiftieth anniversary in Minneapolis in July. The conference, which has 40,000 members and 242 churches, was founded in 1948 by evangelicals who declined to participate in mergers creating the United Church of Christ.

◆ The **Presbyterian Church in America** (PCA) has surpassed the Christian Reformed Church (CRC) as the largest evangelical Reformed denomination with 283,381 members, compared to CRC's 279,029 members. PCA membership increased 22 percent over the past six years, primarily due to church planting. During the same period, CRC membership declined by 12 percent, due partly to conflicts over the ordination of women and issues such as theistic evolution.

◆ At the denomination's national convention in Springfield, Illinois, in August, **General Baptists** called for a boycott of the Disney Corporation, saying the company "is promoting the political agenda of homosexual activists."

A Journal of Salvation Army
Theology and Ministry



◆ The **Salvation Army** has launched a semi-annual scholarly publication, *Word and Deed: Journal of Salvation Army Theology and Ministry*. Jonathan Raymond and Roger Green are coeditors of the academic journal that will contain editorials, book reviews, and articles. It will be published in Alexandria, Virginia.

◆ **Scott Rodin**, 41, is the new president of **Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary** in Wynnewood, Pennsylvania. He replaces Mar-

fred Brauch, 58, who returned to teaching.

◆ **Wesley R. Willis**, 57, is the new president of **Northwestern College** in Saint Paul, Minnesota. He replaces Donald O. Ericksen, 65, the school's new chancellor.

◆ *Sojourners* magazine, in an organizational restructuring has named **Roy Coffman** as its publisher. Coffman was a senior vice president at Christianity Today, Inc., for 17 years and recently was board chairman of the Evangelical Christian Publishers Outreach. Joe Roos, long-time publisher of *Sojourners*, has taken a post with the Associated Church Press.

◆ **Lonnie J. Allison**, 46, in August became the new director of the Wheaton, Illinois-based **Billy Graham Center** and the center's institute of evangelism. Allison has been global director of evangelism and prayer for the Evangelical Covenant Church since 1989. He also served as secretary of the U.S.A. Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization. Allison replaces acting director Ken Gill, who will remain with the organization.



On the air: Showgirls fawn over shock jock Howard Stern during the first taping of the Saturday night program on CBS.

Howard Stern Takes TV to New Lows

The raunchy antics of radio "shock jock" Howard Stern have netted him both a fanatical national audience and more than \$2 million in federal (FCC) fines. Now, after expanding into film, books, and cable TV, the self-proclaimed "King of All Media" has tackled broadcast TV.

The Howard Stern Radio Show, the host's new CBS venture, airs late (but perhaps not late enough) on Saturdays, and features televised versions of Stern's typically obnoxious radio studio gimmicks—many of which make Jerry Springer look almost civilized.

Produced by Eyemark, a CBS-owned syndication company, the show debuted August 29, two days before the launch of family-friendly PAX TV network (CT, Oct. 5, 1998, p. 15).

Early episodes earned TV's MA rating with a lengthy flatulence contest, a lap-dancing stripper (nudity was digitally obscured), a misanthropic "contest" featuring less-than-picture-perfect women competing for free plastic surgery, Stern groping the breasts of a woman who had a sex-change operation, and a takeoff on

TV's *Dating Game* featuring two mentally disabled people.

Critics howled, calling the episodes "a low point in television history" (*New York Post*) and "the dregs of the dregs" (*Washington Post*). The first week, viewers tuned in by the millions, giving the show a respectable 5.9 rating. In succeeding weeks, however, ratings sank, and increasing numbers of viewers watched *Saturday Night Live* reruns on NBC instead.

Donald Wildmon's American Family Association, long a critic of Stern's radio and cable shows, has tried to persuade stations to drop the show. But it has been personal disgust—not outside pressure—that has inspired some station managers to do so. A station in Lubbock, Texas, dropped it, as did KTVK in Phoenix, whose manager, Larry Landaker, called it "cruel," saying, "At some point you have to ask yourself, *Does this have any value at all?*"

Stern continues his daily radio program and his five nights a week cable show on E! Entertainment Television.

By Steve Rabey.

Bill Would Limit Lethal Drugs

A new bill before Congress could prohibit the use of federally controlled drugs for physician-assisted suicide. But critics say the measure would restrict legitimate use of painkillers for terminally ill patients.

The Lethal Drug Abuse Prevention Act of 1998, introduced by Sen. Don Nickles (R-Okla.) and Rep. Henry Hyde (R-Ill.), declares physicians' use of prescription drugs under the Controlled Substances Act for the purpose of assisting suicide is "not a legitimate medical purpose." It also reaffirms the use of drugs for chronic pain relief.

The bill is a response to Attorney General Janet Reno's ruling in June that physician-assisted suicide falls under state jurisdiction. Her comments support Oregon voters' decision last November to legalize assisted suicide (CT, Dec. 8, 1997, p. 64).

Opponents of the measure claim doses of medicine high enough to control pain could also unintentionally cause death, making doctors reluctant to treat pain for fear of losing their federal registration, says Joseph Bailes, president-elect of the American Society of Clinical Oncology. Critics say the bill could increase requests for assisted suicide from patients with unrelieved pain.

"It's the opposite of the truth," says William Petty, a practicing oncologist in Portland, Oregon. "It not only will help prevent abuse; it will help pain control." Once he stops their pain, Petty says, his patients do not want to die: "A request for assisted suicide is really a cry for help for some other problem." Petty, a member of the Christian Medical and Dental Society, sued

the state of Oregon to try to halt implementation of the Death with Dignity Act.

William Toffler, a family physician in Portland and national director of Physicians for Compassionate Care, says doctors should be concerned about managed care, not regulatory scrutiny. He is not as concerned about prescribing pain medication as he is about securing the medication

from a managed-care system that claims a drug is too expensive. Oregon's managed-care system will fund patients' suicide, Toffler says, but will not pay for some medications to make their pain more manageable.

"What [assisted suicide] is really telling a person is, *I don't care if you live or die,*" Petty says. "That's not the role of a physician." The bill is bottled up in congressional committees and will likely be bumped to the next congressional session.

By Christine J. Gardner.



YES ON 51

Suicidal measure: A publicity brochure targeting last year's Oregon assisted-suicide law.

Lyons Retains Post Despite Fraud Charges, Adultery

Henry J. Lyons, beleaguered president of the National Baptist Convention USA, was forgiven by his board during a September annual session in which he confessed he had an "inappropriate" relationship with a female employee.

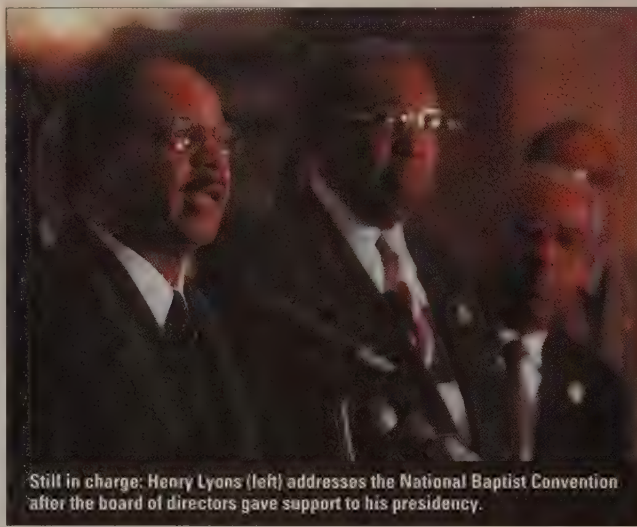
But the unanimous decision by 195 board members to forgive Lyons did not put an end to his problems. He faces trial in Florida state and federal courts on charges he used his position to steal millions of dollars from big corporations. A decline in donations has brought about a financial crisis within the denomination, which claims 8 million members. Critics contend the convention has inflated statistics and really has fewer than 1 million members.

In his annual address, Lyons, 56, said he has made "serious miscalculations in judgment" in his personal and professional lives. "From the bottom of my soul, I am truly sorry. I want you to forgive me. I ask for your mercy," he said. The convention proved merciful. After forgiving Lyons, it passed a resolution forgiving President Clinton for his affair with former White House intern Monica Lewinsky. "We stand firmly behind our President," Lyons said. "We'd like to see the majority Republican Congress get off his back. We'd like to see Mr. Starr get off his back."

BEGINNING OF TROUBLES: Lyons's troubles began in July 1997 when his wife of 26 years, Deborah, set a fire that damaged a \$700,000 waterfront house in Tierra Verde, Florida, near Saint Petersburg. Lyons owns the home with Bernice V. Edwards, a former convention public-relations director once convicted of embezzling \$60,000 from a school for at-risk students. Deborah Lyons told police she started the fire in a fit of anger after learning Lyons and Edwards own the house together. She later pleaded guilty to arson and was placed on five years' probation. The fire prompted a series of news reports about Lyons's personal and financial dealings (CT, Sept. 1, 1997, p. 94). Records

showed he and Edwards also own a \$22,500 time-share condominium in Lake Tahoe, Nevada, and had been negotiating to buy a \$925,000 mansion in Charlotte, North Carolina. Lyons and Edwards also bought a \$36,200 diamond ring from a Saint Petersburg jewelry store.

The ring was purchased with a check written on the Baptist Builder Fund, an account not mentioned in the convention's financial audit. By the time Lyons went to the convention's 1997 annual meeting in Denver, he was under investi-



Still in charge: Henry Lyons (left) addresses the National Baptist Convention after the board of directors gave support to his presidency.

gation by Florida and U.S. government officials. But he survived as president even after dissident members of the convention seized the floor and tried to force him out (CT, Oct. 27, 1997, p. 102). In February, Florida officials charged him with racketeering and grand theft, saying he stole millions of dollars from an insurance company, a funeral company, and numerous other entities that did business with the convention. Edwards was charged as his accomplice. Five months later, federal prosecutors charged Lyons with 54 counts of wire fraud, bank fraud, mail fraud, tax evasion, extortion, money laundering, and conspiracy. Also charged were Edwards and convention meeting planner Brenda Harris. All pleaded innocent and are free pending trial.

RELATIONSHIP QUESTIONED: Questions about Lyons's relationship with Harris were first raised last year. Ac-

cording to news reports, Harris's Nashville neighbors said the two introduced themselves at a 1997 social gathering. Brenda and Henry Harris, an engaged couple who happened to share the last name. Both later denied they were romantically involved. But at last month's convention board meeting in Kansas City, Missouri, they acknowledged the reports were true. Both said they were sorry. Harris also apologized to Deborah Lyons, who was present for the meeting. "Dr. Henry Lyons is an innocent man and will continue to be innocent until he is proven guilty," said E. V. Harris, a board member and consistent supporter of Lyons. "Afro-Baptists are a peculiar people. We aren't just sellers of the gospel; we're users."

Not everyone has been so forgiving.

"At this point, if Dr. Lyons had any love left for himself and the National Baptist Convention, he would step down," Charles Kenyatta, a New York City pastor, said. "To drag millions of people through all this mud is a shame. In the 118 years of our existence, we've never had a president this dumb."

COMING CHALLENGES

Lyons, elected to a five-year term as president in 1995, will face at least five challengers when he runs for reelection next September. (He announced his candidacy in Kansas City.) The candidates are emphasizing honesty, integrity, and

financial accountability—all of which, they say, have been missing under Lyons.

In the aftermath of the scandal, donations are down sharply, leaving the denomination little choice but to cut back on its missionary work and gifts to historically black colleges. Lyons announced the convention was behind \$300,000 on its mortgage on the Baptist World Center in Nashville, with another \$664,000 payment due soon. Still, many members responded generously when Hill asked them to donate to Lyons' legal defense. In one remarkable 20-minute stretch, supporters collected more than \$40,000, much of it coming in checks of \$500 or more. Lyons said he was humbled by the expressions of support. "I have not given all of the sterling, without-flaw leadership that I came to this office to give," he said.

By Mike Wilson in Saint Petersburg

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Spurning Lady Luck

Churches reject funds tainted by gambling.

Though churches in Canada differ dramatically on many theological, social, and political fronts, one battleground is bringing together Left, Right, and center. Across the spectrum, churches are alarmed by the social costs of legal gambling and the growing dependence of government on its cut of gambling revenues. They have been fighting back, and in a few cases, church leaders have turned down their share of gambling receipts.

Late last year, the Toronto-based Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC) released "Gambling: A Bad Bet," calling the habit "an insidious form of evil which takes advantage of the poor and disadvantaged and undermines a healthy and just society." More recently, the United Church of Canada, the country's largest and most liberal Protestant denomination, called for a federal inquiry into the social, economic, and legal impact of gambling.

In Canada, churches can benefit financially from gambling receipts. Provincial governments collect a portion of the winnings from all casinos and video lottery terminals (VLT). Then, part of those funds are distributed to charitable organizations, which apply for grants.

Yet several denominations have publicly refused to accept funds from gambling. The bishop of a Roman Catholic diocese in northern Canada went so far as to ban bingo in his jurisdiction when he realized some people were spending grocery money on gambling. Vancouver's Anglican mayor has staunchly refused to allow casino expansion in the west coast city.

Antigambling efforts are getting results. In other issues, says political scientist Geoffrey Hale of London, Ontario, Christians often feel that dealing with politicians is futile. "It's like Sisyphus rolling the rock up the hill over and over again. A lot of Christians are feeling the boulder is getting heavier and people aren't listening." But with gambling, says Hale, who participated in a successful anticasinio lobby in his city, "There's a

feeling that other people are listening." Indeed, community lobbies, many of them led by Christians, have managed to keep casinos away from 39 out of 44 Ontario communities holding referenda.

The main target of church and community groups is the VLTs, the biggest revenue producer in the industry. In one province alone, oil-rich Alberta, government revenues from VLTs are expected to exceed half a billion dollars this year—up tenfold from five years ago.



Terminal disease? Gambler George Dumas presses his luck with a Rocky Mountain House video lottery terminal before the vote.

PROTESTS ACCELERATE: The Alberta government has been forced to respond to the petitions of communities upset with the unasked-for presence of VLTs. The protest started in the small town of Rocky Mountain House, where pastors, weary of witnessing the destruction gambling causes in families, asked the town council to remove the machines. The council refused, but determined pastors gathered enough names to force a plebiscite on the issue. A record turnout led to the removal of the VLTs from the town in April 1997.

That victory gave other Alberta communities fortitude to fight, according to Christian Reformed pastor Phil Stel, who led the movement in Rocky Mountain House. "It's certainly gone far beyond any of our expectations."

Similar successes came in the province's two largest cities, Calgary and the capital of Edmonton. "We collected more names on our petition than people who voted in the last civic election," says Calgary Baptist pastor Jim Wallace.

On October 19, when cities throughout the province hold elections, 70 per cent of voters will be eligible to decide plebiscites whether to keep or remove VLTs from their communities.

COALITION BUILDING: Those involved in the fight are quick to point out that although churches play a key role, they are not working alone. In Alberta, church leaders have formed an alliance with big business. That alliance works, says Wallace, because many citizens "have become concerned about the continuing erosion of social restrictions."

Church leaders are careful not to use spiritual beliefs as an overriding factor in their antigambling arguments. "We didn't present it as a moral issue," Stel says. "We presented it as a community issue."

Hale says, "In this case, the economic arguments, social arguments, and moral arguments all converge to bring together a fairly broad cross section of people."

THEOLOGICAL ARGUMENTS:

The EFC says there are theological reasons to avoid gambling, and Christians "have often failed to discern the spiritual dynamic behind gambling." In "Gambling: A Bad Bet," the EFC's Social Action Commission outlines several reasons why gambling is wrong: it appeals to greed; it contravenes the Christian duty to care for neighbors; instead of taking from neighbors; it encourages the reckless

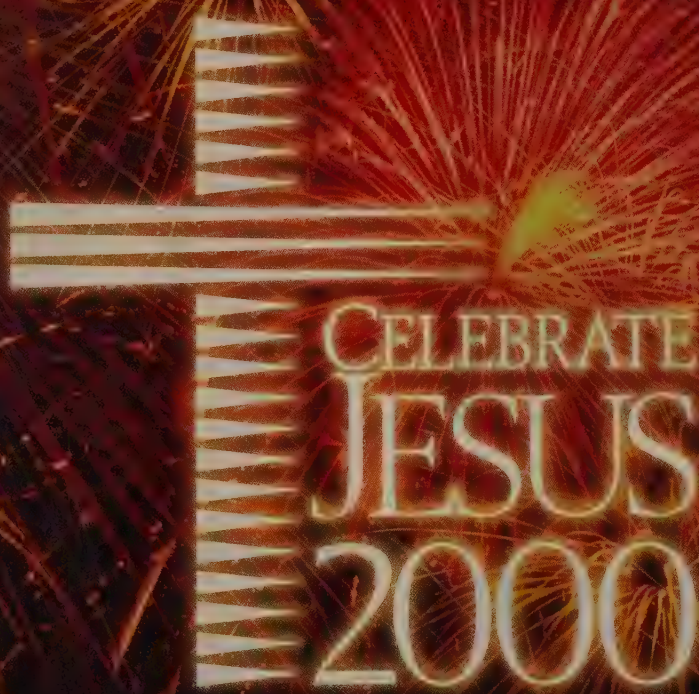
investment of God-given resources; it undermines a healthy philosophy of work, industry, and saving; and it can become habit-forming and addictive.

When governments sponsor gambling, even if the revenues are used to help finance hospitals, education, and charities, they give "an implicit endorsement of greed, materialism, and the denigration of the value of productive work," according to the EFC. The commission urges governments to withdraw from all forms of direct involvement in gambling, regulate and restrict gambling as much as possible, and heavily tax gambling businesses and winnings.

The tussle over government-sponsored gambling has forced the church to do some soul-searching. Several churches and denominations have reversed policies accepting money from gambling. One Ukrainian Catholic church sent back a \$80,000 check it had received from the government to help build a cultural center.

By Debra Fieguth in Winnipeg

Opportunities Like This Only Come By Every 2,000 Years Or So.



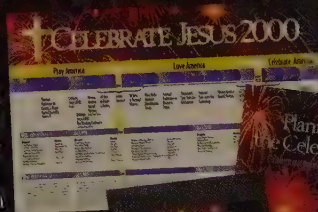
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NORTH KOREA

Famine Toll Exceeds 1 Million

More than a million people have died in North Korea during three years of floods and drought, according to a U.S. congressional delegation that visited the country in August, but international aid is beginning to save lives.

The group reports between 300,000 and 800,000 of North Korea's 23 million people have died each year since 1995, claiming more

than twice as many lives as the Ethiopian famine of the mid-1980s.

"They're going through an acute food shortage right now," says Mark Kirk, one of four congressional aides who visited the Communist nation. The group witnessed severe malnutrition and the use of "alternative" foods such as grass, roots, and bark, but reported that government

and military leaders appeared well fed.

The situation for young children has greatly improved. "The international food assistance to date has saved an enormous number of lives," Kirk says. But the famine, due in part to natural disasters, deforestation, and poor agricultural practices, will have a lasting impact on the nation's health. Al York, World Concern's director of international programs, says, "The stunting I see in children is devastating. It's affecting a whole generation."

Christian organizations have contributed a significant amount of assistance despite lingering concerns over diversion of aid. World Vision has sent nearly \$7.5 million in food, medicines, and clothing since 1995. The aid agency joins Amigos Internacionales, CARE, Catholic Relief Services, and Mercy Corps International to form the Private Voluntary Or-



Famine victim: A malnourished baby lies in a North Korea hospital bed.

REUTERS

In Brief

◆ On November 13, the **Far East Broadcasting Company** will launch the first full-time Christian radio station in the Muslim nation of Indonesia. The station will be programmed locally in Jakarta, reaching more than 8.6 million people with 12 hours daily of Christian music, news, and local programs.

◆ **Gospel to the Unreached Millions** founder K. A. Paul, with support from 1,000 Kenyan churches, held three nights of evangelistic meetings at Nairobi's Uhuru Park, August 28-30. Paul, born in India, led the final night's crowd of 500,000 on a prayer march to the site of the U.S. Embassy bombing. An estimated 400,000 individuals, out of the 800,000 total attendance, made Christian commitments.

◆ Nineteen of 41 nations in Europe are violating the religious rights of minority groups, according to the **International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights** (www.ihf-hr.org). Violations may involve granting special protections to majority or traditional religions, particularly in countries where most of the populace is Orthodox or Muslim. Also, some countries create stiff registration requirements to limit religious practice.

CT



ganization (PVO) consortium which has distributed 75,000 metric tons of grain.

The monitoring of aid distributions has improved, Kirk says. World Concern, which has distributed \$3 million in aid, receives better monitoring by treating hunger as a health issue and distributing food kits through the medical system, York says.

Despite recent flooding, the fall harvest should feed the country through April, but Kirk says economic reforms are needed for longer-term sustainability.

By Christine J. Gardner

NEWS MEDIA

Christian Journalists Form Society

Traveling the globe as chief diplomatic correspondent for *Time* magazine tested David Aikman's faith. "I wanted to have Christian fellowship, but I didn't want to have it with people who didn't like journalists," he says.

Christian journalists sometimes feel out of place in church, where distrust of the news media is commonplace.

"The idea formed in my mind a long time ago to form a fellowship of Christian journalists," Aikman recently told a gathering of 70 journalists in London, where he announced details of his organization. Gegrapha,

Greek for "I have written" (John 19:22), is the name he chose to represent the global fellowship of journalists.

By linking through e-mail, Christian journalists will be able to support one another in prayer and find a sympathetic ear for job-related challenges that fellow believers and fellow journalists both might not understand.

Aikman's plans for Gegrapha include publishing a book of testimonies from Christian journalists, which will make a strong case for the significance of Christian involvement in the profession.

Churches Seek Debt Cancellation

A worldwide coalition of religious leaders is joining a campaign for the cancellation of the international debts of developing nations.

"Debt reduction can bring good to the populations of rich as well as poor countries," says Bill Peters, vice president of Jubilee 2000, which is calling on the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and other international creditors to set aside the foreign debt of developing countries.

The problem is especially acute in Africa, where about \$220 billion to foreign creditors. In Zambia, for example, the government owes \$7.1 billion and spends more on debt service than on education and health services for its people, 70 percent of whom live in poverty.

Zambian Christians recently issued a joint statement calling for debt cancellation, saying the country's total debt is unpayable and hurts mostly the poor. Jubilee 2000 openly connects its goal of debt remission with scriptural mandates for the celebration of jubilee as a universal time to clear unpayable debts.

Under the Jubilee 2000

plan, debts would be forgiven on a sliding scale with 100 percent remission for countries with the poorest economies.

Lutheran, Methodist, Anglican, and Roman Catholic organizations have been signing on to lobby internationally for the effort.

"Jubilee symbolizes a fresh start for the poor and re-establishes justice and equity in the world," says Joan Harper, chair of the Office of Justice and Peace of the Catholic Archdiocese of Los Angeles. Jubilee 2000 reasons that the dozens of international financial institutions that originally loaned the money should now forgive the debts because: the rescheduling of loan payments has failed; debtor countries have learned hard lessons from the debt crisis; and life-saving services for the poor could be restored if debt service was curtailed.

Peters, a retired British diplomat, says, "The concept of jubilee is firmly rooted in Judeo-Christian thought. [It is] a time not only for leveling inequalities, but also for rejoicing and celebrating the start of a new phase with past obstacles to community swept away." [CT]

CHINA

House Church Leaders Call for Freedom

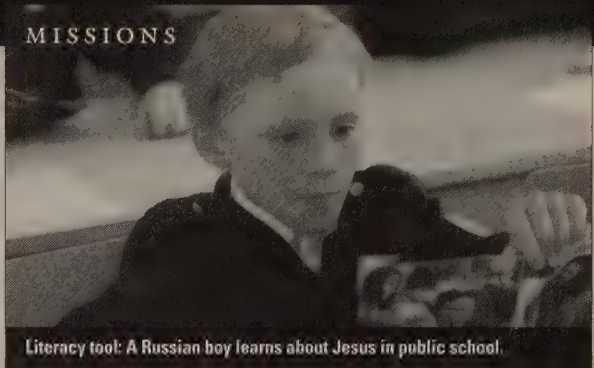
A group of Christian house church leaders, who function without government registration, has issued a public appeal to China's leaders, calling for the release of imprisoned Christians.

The handwritten appeal was released to two journalists in Zhengzhou, a city in China's central Henan Province. According to Religion News Service, the document calls for

the unconditional release of house church Christians in labor camps, for dialogue between government and church leaders in hopes of recognition for house churches, and for a clear-cut definition of religious cults.

"We have been persecuted so long, we just have to fight the last fight," says Zhang Rongliang, a Christian farmer who is spokesperson for the

MISSIONS



Literacy tool: A Russian boy learns about Jesus in public school.

JESUS FILM PROJECT

CoMission Expands to Africa and Asia

After six years of teaching Christian ethics and morality to public-school educators in the former Soviet Union, CoMission is going global with new programs in Africa and East Asia.

Under the new name of CoMission International, the coalition of eight missions agencies is launching literacy training and English as a second language classes at the invitation of local missionaries. "Literacy is a tool to get people reading the Bible," says Rex Johnson, a professor at Talbot School of Theology and a leader of CoMission International's work in Africa. Mozambique, one of the new ministry areas, has a 75 percent illiteracy rate.

Evangelism and discipleship continue to be goals of the partnership, says Alan Nagel, director of global resources for Campus Crusade for Christ

and chair of CoMission International's leadership council. Language and literacy classes help build relationships and provide opportunities for Christian witness. "If that's the open door, great—we'll take it," he says.

The coalition has relied on a volunteer corps of lay leaders, many of them second-career adults, to commit to one-year terms of service. Since its inception in 1992, CoMission has deployed more than 5,000 lay missionaries.

CoMission was founded as a five-year partnership between 85 Protestant organizations to teach Christian ethics in public schools in Russia and neighboring countries. During that time, CoMission held 136 weeklong convocations where trained lay leaders presented the *Jesus* film and an ethics curriculum to more than 44,000 educators in 116 cities. [CT]

group. "We have been silent too long."

Shen Cheng-en, associate general secretary of the China Christian Council, says repression of Christians is mostly a local, not a national problem. "I don't think persecution is everywhere. The policy of the central government is to ensure religious freedom."

Nelson Graham, head of East Gates Ministries, which assists in Bible publishing within China, says, "This declaration reveals a great level of political naïveté."

Meanwhile, Compass Direct News Service reports that in July an unnamed senior staff member at one of China's leading seminaries openly vented his criticisms of the Three Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM), the official Protestant ruling church body.

The senior staff member said China's leaders have rehabilitated the TSPM without openly noting how its leaders were actively involved during the 1950s and 1960s in persecuting Christians on a "massive scale." [CT]

White House Scandal Sparks Church Dialogue

President Clinton's admission of moral failure has spurred a national conversation on sin, forgiveness, and repentance and engaged many American pulpits and Sunday-school classes that normally steer clear of politics.

"This has hit a raw nerve deep in the soul of millions of people," says Walt Kallestad, senior pastor of Community of Joy Lutheran Church in Glendale, Arizona.

Kallestad's 4,000 plus-member Evangelical Lutheran Church in America congregation devoted all of its services to the subject on the weekend following Clinton's August 17 confession of an "inappropriate relationship" with former White House intern Monica Lewinsky. Pastors fielded questions from the congregation after the reading of a "letter to Bill Clinton from Jesus."

Parents streamed to an open microphone, asking questions such as: *How do I talk to my children about oral sex?* and *How do I build trust again in leaders?*

"We said: If you have personal questions, you can e-mail, you can fax, you can write, you can call," Kallestad says.

"We wanted to make ourselves available, because it has had an impact on people of all ages."

In Tacoma, Washington, Bill Wolfson, pastor of Bethel Church, an independent

are extremely distressed. "They come to me asking, 'How can I raise my children with a President like this?'"

The inevitable discussion of appropriate consequences for the President's behavior has perplexed some Christians. Says Kent McCulloch, rector of Saint Mary's Episcopal Church in Lakewood, Washington, "They don't quite know how to be citizens and also Christians and whether to forgive or not forgive and what all that means," he says.

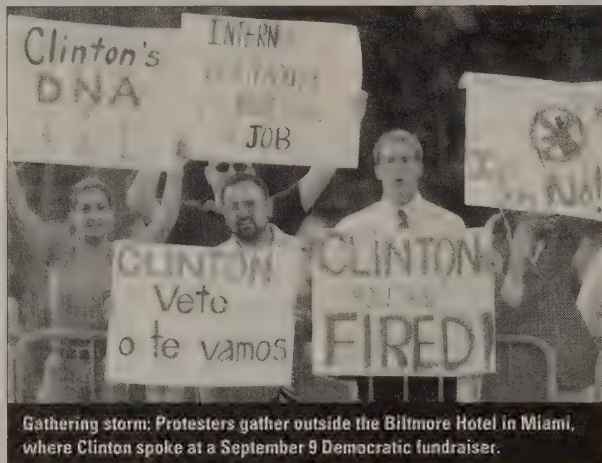
PARTISAN THEOLOGY?

Some liberal church leaders have urged the President to resign, including heads of the Assemblies of God, Church of the Nazarenes, African Methodist Episcopal Church, Reformed Church in America, and President Clinton's own Southern Baptist Convention.

One of the country's most politically savvy pastors, Jerry Dobson, thinks those resignation statements are inappropriate. At Dobson's Calvary Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan, mention of the White House crisis from the pulpit has been limited to pastoral prayer. "We

were not called of God to interpret the Constitution," says Dobson, who serves as Jerry Falwell's close associate in the development of the Moral Majority in the 1980s (CT, Aug. 11, 1997, p. 26). "We were called upon by God to preach Scripture."

Dobson believes that many pastors have be-



Gathering storm: Protesters gather outside the Billmore Hotel in Miami, where Clinton spoke at a September 9 Democratic fundraiser.

charismatic congregation, drew lessons from the White House crisis in a three-part sermon series presented to his multi-ethnic congregation. "I got a lot more questions about Clinton than I ever got during the [Jimmy] Swaggart debacle and during the moral failure of [Jim] Bakker," Wolfson says.

Wolfson says some parents in his church

Pastoral Trio to Hold Clinton 'Accountable'

President Clinton last month asked three pastors to meet weekly with him in the wake of his admission of a sexual relationship with former White House intern Monica Lewinsky.

The three are Tony Campolo of Eastern College in Saint Davids, Pennsylvania; Gordon MacDonald of Grace Chapel in Lexington, Massachusetts; and Philip Wogaman of Foundry United Methodist Church in Washington, D.C.

On September 13, MacDonald, author of *Rebuilding Your Broken World*, told his congregation, "I am in a position to talk the language of repentance and what it takes to find a deeper and more purposeful walk with God in the midst of personal tragedy." In 1987 MacDonald resigned as president of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship after acknowledging that he had had an adulterous relationship with a friend while pastor of Grace Chapel (CT, July 10, 1987, p. 38). He eventually returned to Grace in 1993.

Campolo and Wogaman have at times been spiritual confidants to Clinton. Although Clinton is a Southern Baptist, he often attends

Foundry, near the White House. Campolo says the purpose of the meetings is to counsel the President and "to hold him accountable for his behavior." Campolo says, "We want to provide all the help that we can to spiritually strengthen him against yielding to the temptations that have conquered him in the past."

Clinton's admission of a sexual relationship with Lewinsky has triggered extensive commentary from American religious leaders. Top Southern Baptists have called for Clinton's resignation. Some have demanded that Clinton's home church, Immanuel Baptist in Little Rock, Arkansas, "discipline" the President, but it has no plans to do so. Bill Bright of Campus Crusade for Christ called on Clinton to "truly repent and seek God's face." Jim Wallis of *Sojourn* magazine and Call to Renewal says, "The real issue here is moral accountability. How could his genuine repentance—and ours—be used to teach our nation something about real spiritual values?"



Campolo, to MacDonald

Illinois City Bars Worship at Vineyard-owned Facility

Vineyard Christian Fellowship of Evanston, Illinois, has filed suit against the city of 75,000 people for what it calls punitive use of zoning laws to restrict religious freedom.

At issue is a long-vacant 36,000-square-foot office building bought by Vineyard in May 1997 for \$1.1 million. The purchase ended a 10-year search for a permanent home for the 22-year-old church, one of Evanston's largest and most ethnically diverse congregations. The church asked the city for a zoning variance, which would allow the congregation to use the commercial office building not only for offices, counseling, and community outreach activities, but also for Sunday worship services.

Despite support for the request by the Evanston Zoning Board and Evanston Plan Commission, the City Council denied the variance. Vineyard executive pastor William Hanawalt says the request fell prey to "the politics of taxes." Increasingly, churches around the country are facing opposition to construction or expansion plans because many city officials wish to maximize property tax revenues (CT, April 28, 1997, p. 72).

Evanston is home to five colleges, universities, and seminaries and more than 70 houses of worship, all of which have tax-exempt status. The city has the highest property-tax rate in the state.

Those on the council who opposed the variance say the city has accommodated within its boundaries more than its fair share of nonprofit groups. The church argues that it is an unequal application of zoning laws to allow its space to be used for concerts, theatrical performances, and other "cultural uses," but not to be used by the same number of people for religious gatherings. Such zoning restricts religious speech and religious assembly, guaranteed by the Constitution, the suit says.

LOCAL SOLIDARITY: Earlier this year, the Illinois Department of Revenue made the lost tax revenues a moot point when it granted Vineyard's request for a property-tax exemption on the office building. But the church must still rent Evanston Township High School's auditorium—for \$100,000 a year—for its Sunday services. The city is asking for a state hearing to appeal the church's exemption.



Empty sanctuary: So far, Hanawalt can only kneel by himself in the church facilities.

CHICAGO TRIBUNE/MILBERT ORLANDO BROWN

A surprising amalgam of Evanston nonprofit organizations has come together in support of the Vineyard. In July, 1,200 people demonstrated solidarity with Vineyard at a gathering sponsored by a citizen's coalition of Evanston churches, unions, and community groups.

At the August 24 city council meeting, Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish leaders presented 600 signed postcards to council members, protesting the city's use of taxpayer dollars to fight a church.

Hanawalt sent a letter to every council member saying, "If you'll just let us worship in our building, we'll drop our claim for damages." The Vineyard's suit asks for \$500,000 in compensatory damages to help recoup the protracted legal fees. Hanawalt says, "We would rather spend the Lord's money on ministries to the poor and to our community's youth. But we will not back down in the face of the city's opposition to our right to worship in our own building."

Alderman Art Newman accuses the church of using "strong-arm tactics" to win the zoning fight. Evanston Mayor Lorraine Morton is reticent to speak until the litigation has been resolved. "Let's just say that it is the responsibility of the city council to act in the best interest of all the citizens of Evanston," Morton says. "Clearly, we feel the decision we made met that criteria [sic]."

Christian zoning attorney John W. Mauck of Chicago says the use of zoning laws to restrict churches is a growing national trend. "There are many reasons cities oppose churches, and a lot of them are unspoken because they would be politically incorrect," Mauck says. Municipalities often view churches as only slightly more desirable than landfills.

By Verla Gillmor in Evanston.

come embroiled in "partisan theology," which detracts from their primary purpose. "If you are a supporter of the President and his politics, you're most likely to speak of forgiveness, healing, and let's move on," Dobson says. "And if you're not a supporter of the President and his politics, you're most likely to call for his resignation. I believe that pastors are called upon to be nonpartisan."

Humility and prayer are prevailing in many churches, regardless of whether pastors mention the President's future job status. Rick Ragle, pastor at Hilo (Hawaii) Church of the Nazarene, has not cited the President's situation from the pulpit, but the subject has arisen in small groups and Sunday-school classes, leading to times of prayer.

"That's what we're doing, no matter what our own individual political biases are—our response to leadership needs to be prayer," he says.

DIFFICULT WORK AHEAD: Saint Mary's McCulloch says the President's predicament raises "transcendent issues" that cannot be ignored. He believes Clinton is emblematic of a larger cultural problem that began with the sexual revolution of the 1960s.

In an August 30 sermon that received a prolonged standing ovation, McCulloch said, "For so long ignored, finally the subject of our nation's sexual immorality is unavoidable."

McCulloch told CT, "I think my church felt gratified that morality is being pronounced from the pulpit as important and significant, and they weren't hearing it from anywhere else."

But McCulloch points to a sharp division in his congregation between the views of younger and older generations. "Regardless of whether they're conscientious Christians, for the generation under 35 this is a nonissue—they don't believe there's any connection between [Clinton's] private behavior and his public policy," he says. "Whereas the older have a much more holistic view of character."

Kallestad thinks the church needs to seize the moment by addressing America's moral decline. "There is a fundamental root cause, and to get at that is hard work," he says. "You can't just wave a magic wand to rebuild trust, relationships, and integrity and to restore honor and recover biblical values. A lot of people want to give up and not do the hard work, but that is part of the healing process of our nation."

By Art Moore.

Turning Back the Clock

Non-Orthodox Christians have less religious freedom than a year ago.

One year after Russia enacted a controversial law restricting religious freedom, Protestants and Roman Catholics say the measure has had a chilling effect on religious activity nationwide.

Russia's controversial law on religion, signed a year ago by President Boris Yeltsin (CT, Nov. 17, 1997, p. 66), has produced what attorney Vladimir Ryakhovsky, president of the Christian Legal Center, calls "an atmosphere of intolerance."

The law has initiated a season of religious harassment and discrimination, while official favors are visited on Russia's dominant Orthodox church and other "traditional" religions.

Although abuse most often has occurred in rural areas and Russia's remote East, religious minorities in Moscow have not been spared. Baptist, Pentecostal, Lutheran, Presbyterian, and Catholic believers—both Russian nationals and foreign missionaries—have experienced problems. There have been evictions and restrictions on teaching, publishing, and distributing literature. Church registrations have been revoked. Taxation has been excessive, and attempts to close down churches or other ministries through the courts have been implemented.

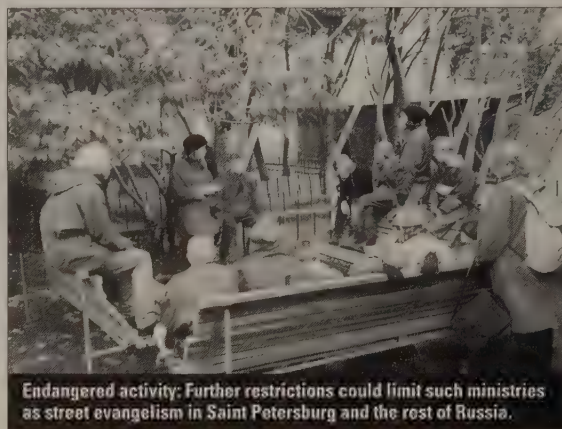
Discrimination has come mainly at the hands of local government officials, federal agents, Orthodox priests and parishioners, local police, Cossacks, Communists, nationalists, and fascists. Religious-rights attorneys in Moscow appealed to the Constitutional Court in July, citing four cases of violations.

Language in the new religion law is considered to be unconstitutional in at least 16 instances. Additionally, the law violates international human-rights standards and agreements signed by the Russian Federation.

VISA LIMITS: In June, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs implemented instructions limiting visas for foreign missionaries to

a three-month maximum. The action, which had an impact only on religious workers, violated both international agreements and Russian law. Foreign religious workers and their families had to make costly trips outside the country to renew visas to comply with the new rule, which also exacted a high cost in morale and in work disruptions.

In August, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs reversed the rule and allowed mis-



Endangered activity: Further restrictions could limit such ministries as street evangelism in Saint Petersburg and the rest of Russia.

sionaries again to receive one-year multiple-entry visas. The change came only after attorneys from the Institute of Religion and Law and the Christian Legal Center intervened.

LEGAL WRANGLING: A case against Pentecostal Word of Life Church in Magadan, in the far eastern part of Russia, illustrates the religious bias problems. For now, it appears that church has triumphed in court.

The district prosecutor tried to take registration and legal rights away from the church, a member of the centralized Russian Associated Evangelical Union of Christians of Evangelical Faith (Pentecostal), first legally registered in 1970, re-registered in 1989, and again in 1990 under Russia's previous religion law.

The prosecutor accused the pastor of using hypnosis to influence people who attended the church, saying the faith was "nontraditional" and only a Russian under hypnotic influence would attend a church

that is not Orthodox or Muslim. Tithing was also viewed as a problem. The prosecutor concluded a "normal" person would not sacrifice 10 percent of his income to support a church.

The 400-member church was accused of destroying families and the mental health of its members. Only one case was presented as evidence in which a nonbelieving husband protested that his converted wife wanted to raise their children according to biblical principles.

In an attempt to prove that attendance at the church destroyed psychological health, the prosecutor singled out one woman in the congregation receiving treatment at a psychiatric hospital. But witnesses testified that she had a history of psychiatric treatment.

Ryakhovsky, the attorney representing the church, refuted the charges, and the

prosecutor claimed he "hadn't been prepared enough" and indefinitely postponed the trial. Ryakhovsky remains confident the case will not resurface.

"We're proving that we can defend religious freedom through the courts," says Anatoly Pchelintsev, director of the Institute of Religion and Law (IRL).

REOCCURRING THREAT

Another situation in Vanino, also in the far east, in Khabarovsk faces an uncertain outcome. American Independent Baptist missionary pastor Arthur Bristol lives under almost daily threat of imprisonment or deportation.

Bristol has tried since July to pastor a small, autonomous church. Officials initially refused to register him and ordered him to leave the country, even though he possessed all required legal paperwork. Bristol came to the United States, obtained another visa, and returned to Vanino in August. Since arriving, Bristol says he has been harassed daily by local officials, who make threats, monitor phone calls, tamper with his e-mail, and force him to undergo prolonged interrogations.

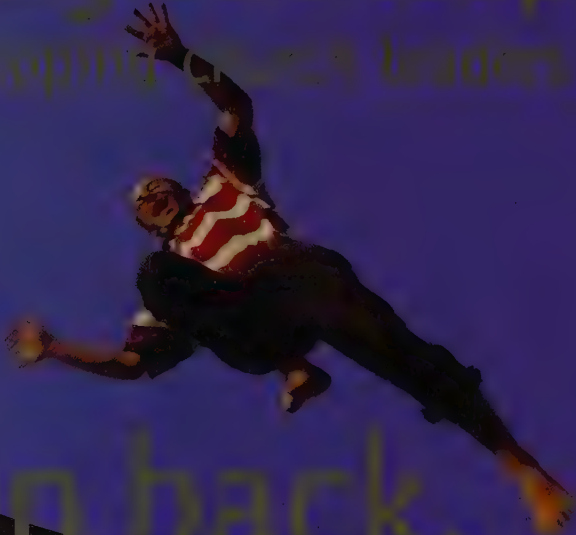
Russian Christian leaders in his church are being threatened by Russian agencies who have advised them to stop attending.

Vladimir Nikulnikov, director of Khabarovsk's ministry of culture and religion since the Soviet era, admits that he would like to rid the region of foreign missionaries. He equates missionaries with foreign spies trying to brainwash children with a goal of overthrowing the country.

By Beverly Nickles in Moscow

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Fighting for Fairness

Does religion in schools favor Catholics?

Protestants in Nicaragua will persist in their efforts to keep Catholic doctrine out of the public schools, even though the country's president has replaced the controversial, devoutly Catholic head of public schools with a bureaucrat some Christians perceive as more moderate.

Throughout Humberto Belli's eight-year tenure as education minister, many Protestant leaders opposed his program to promote Christian values, viewing it as an unconstitutional attempt to force Catholic teaching in public schools (CT, April 28, 1997, p. 78).

Protestant concerns focus on "Education in the Faith," an elective after-hours program that Belli established to teach children basic Christianity. "Parents have the right to have their children receive the religious instruction of their liking . . . as an extracurricular activity," Belli says. Under the program, parents select and pay for a teacher, curriculum, and textbooks. The ministry, in turn, permits free use of classrooms.

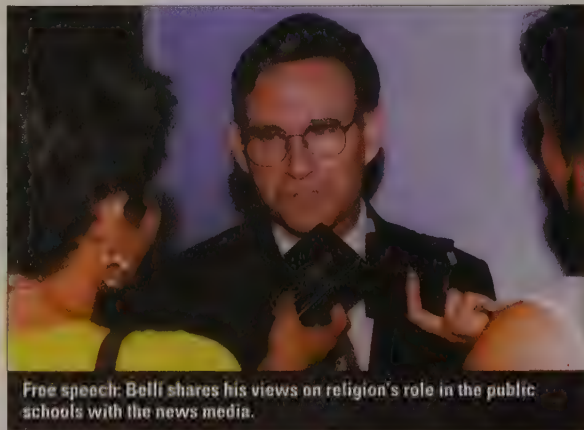
Yet some fear the classes are a step toward returning to the days of mandatory public-school catechism classes, when non-Catholics were legally denied access to public education and health care.

REMOVAL WELCOMED: "Schools shouldn't be teaching religion," says Guillermo Osorno, Christian Way party president and a member of Nicaragua's legislative assembly. He believes faith should be taught in homes and churches. The Assembly of God pastor-turned-politician (CT, March 3, 1997, p. 60) applauds Belli's removal as minister of education. "[The classes] are a violation of the constitution and a violation of human rights," Osorno says.

Osorno refers to the constitution's Article 124, which establishes Nicaragua as a secular state with no official religion. Gustavo Parajón, president of the evangelical relief organization Council of Evangelical Churches Pro-denominational Alliance, believes that religion classes violate the con-

stitution and are a front for forcing students to study Roman Catholicism.

Parajón notes that Belli is a member of the conservative Catholic group Opus Dei, which, in some Latin American countries, has lobbied for legal privileges for Catholic churches and corresponding restrictions on evangelicals. Parajón cites 1996 textbooks published and endorsed by Managua's Catholic hierarchy. He believes that



Free speech: Belli shares his views on religion's role in the public schools with the news media.

the Ministry of Education intended to promote the series, coincidentally titled "Education in the Faith," for the religion classes but backed down in the face of evangelical opposition. One volume warns against "Protestant cults" as racist deceivers who prey on, bribe, and scare ignorant Catholics into converting. "It's very obvious that the Roman Catholic church prepared this series in cahoots with Mr. Belli, a response to the perceived threat of evangelical growth all over Latin America," Parajón says.

Belli, however, maintains that the religious education program does not violate Article 124 because participation is voluntary and after hours, and instructors are not state paid. He emphasizes that the Ministry of Education does not endorse any text for the class, leaving that choice to parents in each school. He denies having had a hand in the series.

In the early 1980s, Belli fled the Sandinista-ruled Nicaragua and lived in exile in the United States. In 1982, he founded the Puebla Institute, a human-rights organization dedicated to defending religious

liberty. On a 1989 visit to his homeland, Belli offered his help in rebuilding the nation's education system, eventually becoming named education minister in 1991.

"As a Christian, I saw the Ministry of Education as a task presented to me by the providence of God," Belli says. However, he inherited a system in such physical decay that many schools were beyond repair and a curriculum steeped in political propaganda. "Education is concerned with transforming young people into mature, value-oriented adults. Part of our effort is . . . the transmission of new values, most of which, of course, would be inspired by our Christian tradition."

Now, as minister of the family, Belli will oversee several social-assistance ministries that benefit the poor, children, women, the elderly, and the handicapped.

RELIGION-FREE SCHOOLS

Some Nicaraguan Protestants worry that Belli's abrupt departure will doom all religiously oriented offerings in public schools. Barb Johnson, codirector of Nicaragua's Youth with a Mission, and her husband, Don, have two teenage children enrolled in a government-financed Catholic "semi-public" school in Diriamba, 25 miles south of Managua. Under Belli's tenure, the Johnsons received written government permission

to minister in public schools with drama and "King's Kids" programs. "I had to see him leave," she says.

Johnson says the Catholic staff at her children's school respect the family's evangelical beliefs. While her children attend Catholic religion classes, they are not forced to attend mass. She believes most evangelicals are not worried about plots to indoctrinate students. "My concern is that the evangelicals are making such a big deal. It's going to turn [public education] into what it is in the States and religion is going to be banned in the schools," Johnson says.

But Belli's replacement, José Antonio Alvarado, former minister of government, has given wary Protestants cause for hope. Christian Way legislator Orlando Mayorga, a Seventh-day Adventist pastor, has served on committees with Alvarado and says he feels comfortable with him as head of Nicaragua's schools. "We have excellent communication with Alvarado," Mayorga says. "He's a person who listens." Alvarado supports the nonsectarian Article 124.

By Deann Alford in Managua, Nicaragua

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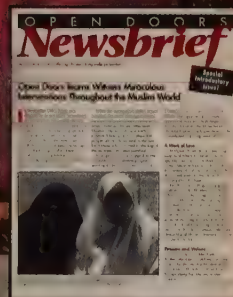
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The President's Small Group

Turning your life around is not a do-it-yourself project.



In mid-September, Gordon MacDonald told his congregation, Grace Chapel in Lexington, Massachusetts, that he, Tony Campolo, and one other minister had been asked by President Clinton to form an "accountability circle." Their task as spiritual advisers is to help the President follow up on his tearful request for forgiveness at the September 11 White House breakfast for religious leaders (see "Clinton Seeks Pastoral Counsel," p. 18).

MacDonald's sermon and Campolo's subsequent press release led to calls to CT from journalists at the *New York Times*, *Time* magazine, three network news organizations, and other media outlets. They had never heard of accountability groups, and they wanted both to learn more about them and to ask what we think of this group of spiritual advisers solicited by and for the President.

Whatever his motivations, we commend the President on taking this step. We also recommend to all our readers that they should get involved in a group that will hold them accountable morally and spiri-

tually, whether or not they are presently in a personal crisis.

Beyond remorse

The President's asking several prominent ministers to walk him through this period of repentance and restitution is a far more important element of what the Old Testament prophets called "turning" than were Clinton's dramatic lip-biting and tearful eyes. But what now? What will this group hope to accomplish with the President?

One reporter asked CT if there were specific steps in an accountability and restoration process. We were happy to summarize for him the seven points from an article written 11 years ago by former CT editor Kenneth S. Kantzer (Nov. 20, 1987, pp. 19-22).

The first step is *remorse*, wrote Kantzer. The second step, *true confession*, is wisely limited to the circle of those who need to know. The third, *accountability*, is "a recognition by the wrongdoer that sin is never a completely isolated act and that we are always accountable to fellow believers." Fourth, *fruits that befit repentance* must follow. Fifth, *restitution*, where possible, involves setting right what has been done wrong.

Kantzer outlined two more points that are especially important for leaders whose wrongdoing compromises their continued ability to lead. The sixth step is *retreat*, withdrawal for a time from public responsibility and visibility. Whether the wrongdoer is a pastor of a church or a college president or the leader of the free world, a significant sabbatical away from the pressures of office is required. Both in politics and the church, it is hard to separate one's personal, spiritual motivations from the calculated effects that statements and deeds will have on one's constituents. Can a sitting President make public acts of contrition without calculating their political effect? Can he now be a truly penitent President without understandably skeptical critics claiming that he is merely "playing the God card"? Will the President's advisers tell him to step down from office for his own spiritual health? Would he do so if they told him to?

The seventh step, wrote Kantzer, is the manifestation of a *genuine call*. If the process of restoration is not simply the restoration to fellowship, but also a

restoration to leadership, there must be a genuine calling by God for the individual again to take up the reins of leadership. This sense of call must be perceived by the penitent and the accountability circle, as well as the community to be led. Not all penitent leaders should be restored to a leadership role. Indeed, Bill Clinton, sufficiently chastened and taking a cue from Jimmy Carter, might render his greatest service as an ex-President.

From Wesley to Promise Keepers

In 1987, when Gordon MacDonald's own affair became public knowledge, pastoral counseling professor David Augsburger wrote in *CT* about the importance of horizontal accountability structures (Nov. 20, 1987, pp. 23-24). "An egalitarian society has led us to discard vertical models of authority. But it has not created alternative models for appropriately distributing authority in community," he wrote.

Renewal movements have often been accompanied by an emphasis on forming such horizontal spiritual relationships. Historically, John Wesley, the father of so much that has come to characterize American evangelicalism, fostered the model for accountability groups. Today, Promise Keepers continues the call to accountability, urging the sweating, shouting, weeping males who attend its events to carry the ethical commitments that have been formed and energized in the emotional intensity of a stadium into the intimacy of small, congregationally based circles.

Wesley lived in an age of burgeoning democracy, and both his Holy Club at Oxford and his Methodist "class meetings" laicized spiritual accountability. It was an idea whose time was ripe, having been germinated in the seedbeds of Pietistic Protestantism and a segment of French Catholicism that had come under the influence of à Kempis's *Imitation of Christ*. For most of the history of the church, spiritual accountability had been a vertical and hierarchical process. Christians who had access to a confessor or spiritual director did as they were instructed by experienced clerics. But the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries saw a new trust in the spiritual wisdom of the people emerge. And the lasting success of Wesley's ministry was due in large part to the spiritual growth cultivated in the peer groups he called class meetings.

Curiously, such horizontal authority structures hold in tension two opposing notions: the democratic sensibility that trusts the good impulses and common sense of common folks; and the biblical insight that we are all depraved, which is to say that every aspect of everything each of us does is in some way tainted by sin. Yet there is spiritual magic at work in this tension: While we are, each of us, expert at ignoring the fault lines in our own souls, those who know us well can spot them with little trouble and should point them out to us.

Given that fact, most of us would just as soon avoid such contact. Yes, some studies show that approximately one-third of American adults are involved in some sort of small group; but precious few of those dig beneath the social level to the sub-

stratum where we learn the truth about ourselves.

In 1987, Augsburger pointed out that "horizontal models of authority that work out patterns of mutual accountability are available. But," he wrote, "they have their price: they require us to limit our individualism, to adjust our narcissistic self-realization, to commit ourselves intentionally to building personal peer networks with integrity, and to make increased commitments to values, core faith positions, authentic repentance, and renewal of relationships."

Those are difficult adjustments to make. But whether we are presidents or peasants, our spiritual health depends on it.

Scandal in the church

One reason accountability groups are so important is the impact that sin has on others. When certain sins are avoided, individuals, families, and communities are spared suffering. Sometimes, however, the people close to a perpetrator of these sins themselves engage in enabling behaviors—denial, coverups, rationalization—which let the guilty party off the hook and allow sin to work its wreckage.

The scandalous behavior of National Baptist Convention USA president Henry Lyons (see story, p. 16) is a case in point. Because Lyons's peers did not carefully monitor his behavior, he was enabled to carry on an extramarital affair and waste allegedly ill-gotten monies on extravagances for himself and his lover.

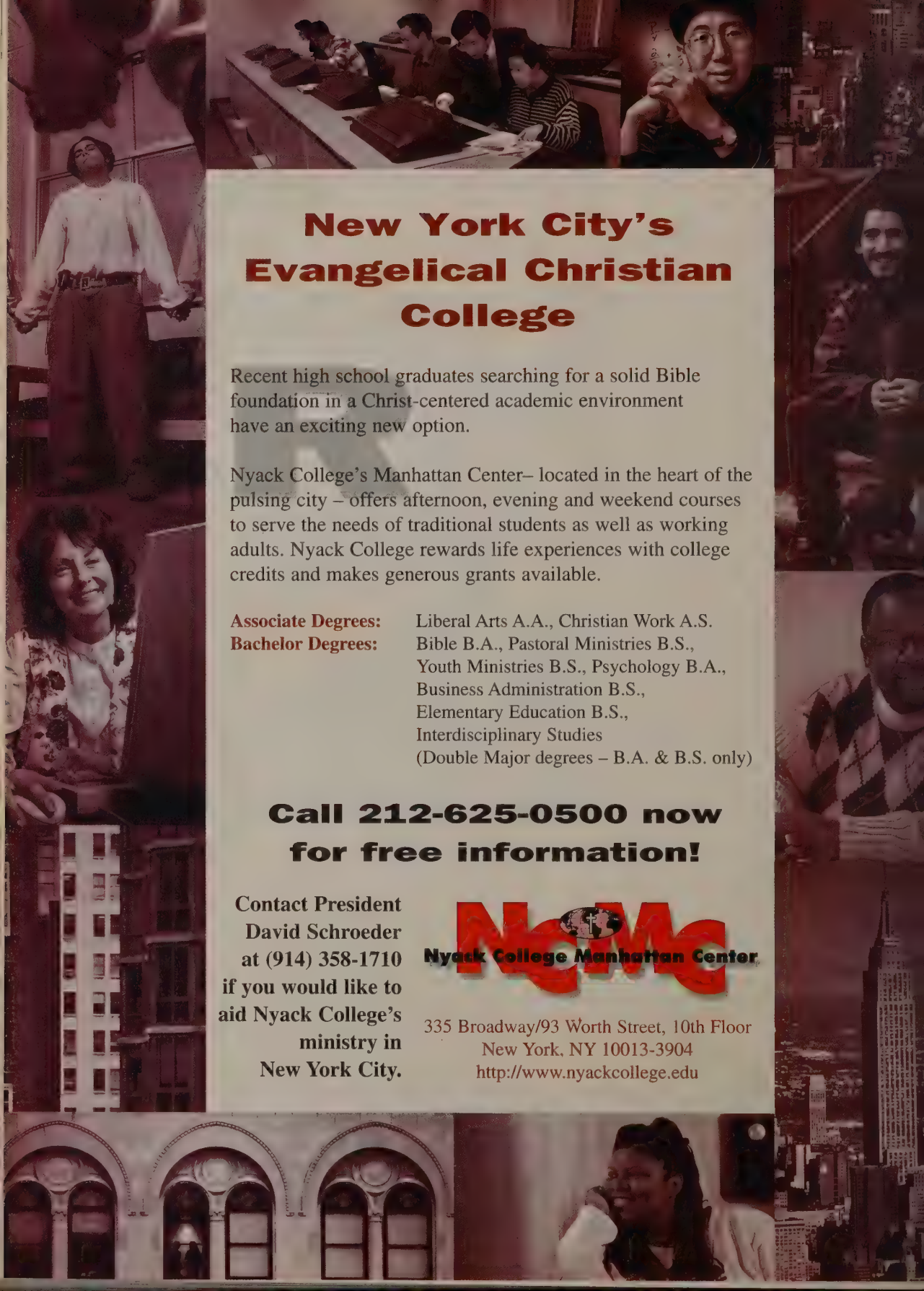
More scandalous, however, has been the unwillingness of his denomination's leadership to hold him accountable. (The members are voting by closing their pocketbooks. And rank-and-file clergy, like Cheryl Townsend Gilkey of Cambridge, Massachusetts, are saying that "an honorable person would have already offered to resign.") Though Lyons has been indicted on charges of racketeering, extortion, money laundering, and other financial crimes and has openly admitted to adultery while in office, church leaders have refused to do what would be best for their church and for Lyons himself—to give him time away from pastoral and denominational responsibilities to let the Lord heal him from his self-inflicted wounds. Protesting that Lyons has not been convicted (yet) of any crime, they are content to leave him in office.

The scandalous behavior of this church leader is bad enough. But when compounded by the inaction of a denomination in denial, it brings shame on the church of Jesus Christ and sings sinners to sleep with a lullaby of cheap grace. Because Lyons heads a church that represents Jesus Christ's body on earth, this scandal is in some ways far worse than the misdeeds of the President.

Sin is serious. Sin in the lives of leaders disgraces and infects their communities. But when leaders take responsibility for their sins, not only by expressing remorse but by engaging in accountability, restitution, and retreat, we must, like the angels in heaven, rejoice.

Can President Clinton now be truly penitent without skeptics claiming he is merely "playing the God card"?

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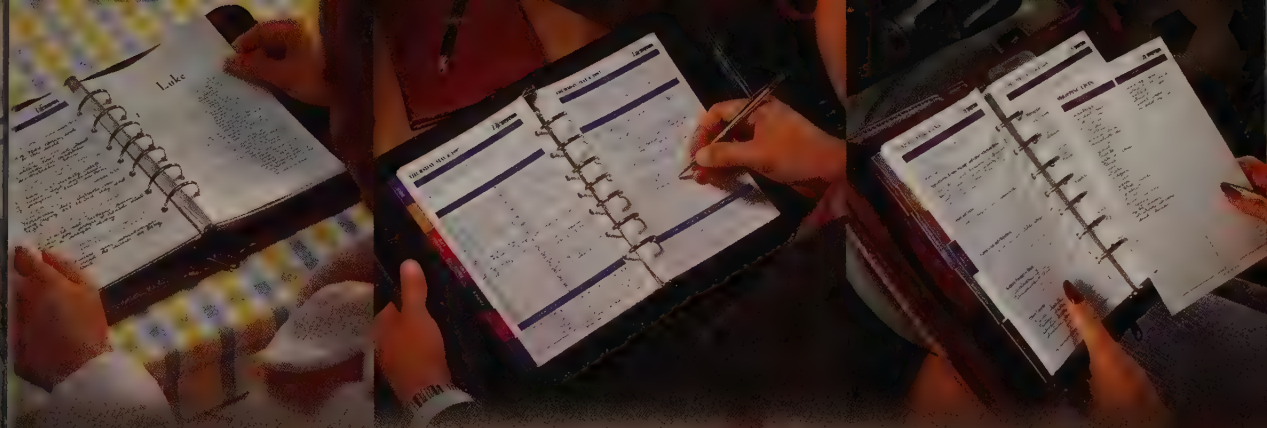
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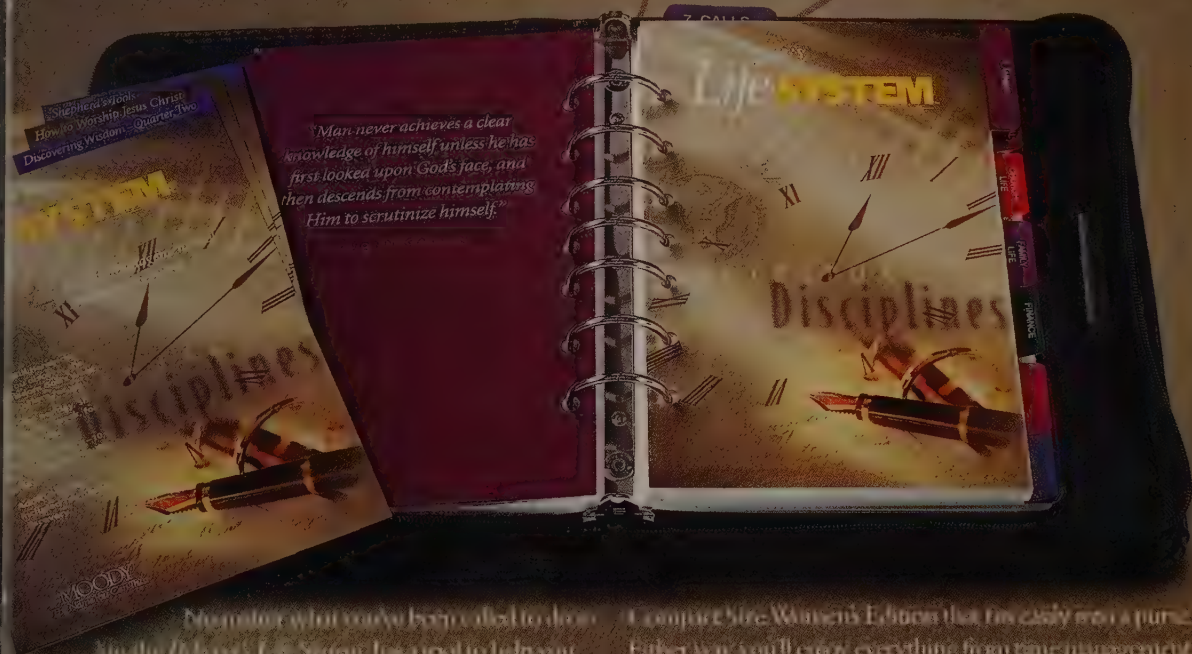
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Several years ago when restorers finished cleaning Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel frescos, the paintings seemed to come alive, sporting vibrant colors that for years had been muted by dust and pollution. Art experts were astounded to see what Michelangelo had originally created.

In this issue of CT, a team of scholars, preachers, and writers has undertaken a similar task with one of the best known of Jesus' parables: the Prodigal Son. Because evangelicals have sometimes been accused of spending more time arguing over the role of Scripture than actually reading Scripture, we have chosen to delve deeply into a single text: Luke 15:11–32. By approaching Jesus' parable from different angles, we hope to rediscover its many brilliant facets.

According to biblical scholar Kenneth Bailey, a seasoned expert on Middle Eastern culture, familiarity with the parable has dulled our perceptions and made us draw the wrong lessons from it (see "The Pursuing Father," p. 34). He knocks loose the cultural accretions that distort the parable's original jarring message. He notes that his Muslim friends object to, and Christians often miss, the profoundly theological and Christological message of the parable.

Even Rembrandt's portrait of the father's embrace of his lost son can seem dull and clichéd—until it is paired with the spiritual insights of the late Henri Nouwen, who allows us to see a masterpiece anew (p. 39).

To remind us of the radical implications of the parable, we interviewed Croatian theologian Miroslav Volf on how he found in the father's embrace of the Prodigal Son a model for loving his Serbian enemies (p. 65).

Other contributors looked at the parable from other provocative points of view: writer Wendy Zoba shares her journey while parenting a prodigal in "The Missing Mother" (p. 76); preacher Barbara Brown Taylor counsels us not to be too quick in our judgments in "The Other Brother Had a Point" (p. 70); and theologian Christopher Hall explores the early church debate over whether apostate Christians could be forgiven as prodigals in "Rejecting the Prodigal" (p. 73).

Our restoration project would not be complete without the interpretative efforts of the contemporary artists whose work accompanies the articles. In unique ways, Carol Bomer, Brent Morris, Bruce Herman, Tanja Butler, Mary McCleary, Ward Smith, Rebecca Ross, and He Qi, too, are expositors of the text. The combined effort, we feel sure, will make plain why this gospel parable is indeed good news to twentieth-century sinners like us.

—The editors

T H I



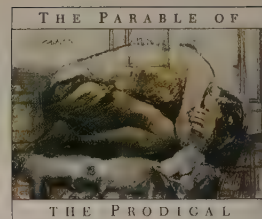
T H

P A R A B L E O F



CAROL HOMER

P R O D I G A L



The Pursuing Father

What we need to know about this often misunderstood Middle Eastern parable.

KENNETH E. BAILEY

I was stunned! It was 1958 in Jerusalem. A British scholar and churchman, Dr. Kenneth Cragg, was lecturing on the Muslim-Christian debates of the Middle Ages. He had just pointed out that the Muslim scholars of the period loved to quote the parable of the Prodigal Son as evidence against Christians. The reason was that, in the story, a son who leaves his father (God), goes into a far country, gets into trouble, decides to return home, is on his arrival welcomed, and his return is celebrated. He needs no incarnation and no atonement, no cross, and no salvation. *There is no mediator between the two of them.* He simply returns home and his father accepts him. Ergo: Jesus is a good Muslim.

After 40 years, the shock of that speech is still with me. In fact, that lecture inaugurated my personal pilgrimage into the mind of Jesus of Nazareth with this famous text as a road map. Was there any response to this centuries-old Muslim challenge?

This story badly needs to be rescued from familiarity and from its traditional cultural captivity. For centuries, we in the West have read the story in the light of our own cultural presuppositions, which have dulled its cutting edge.

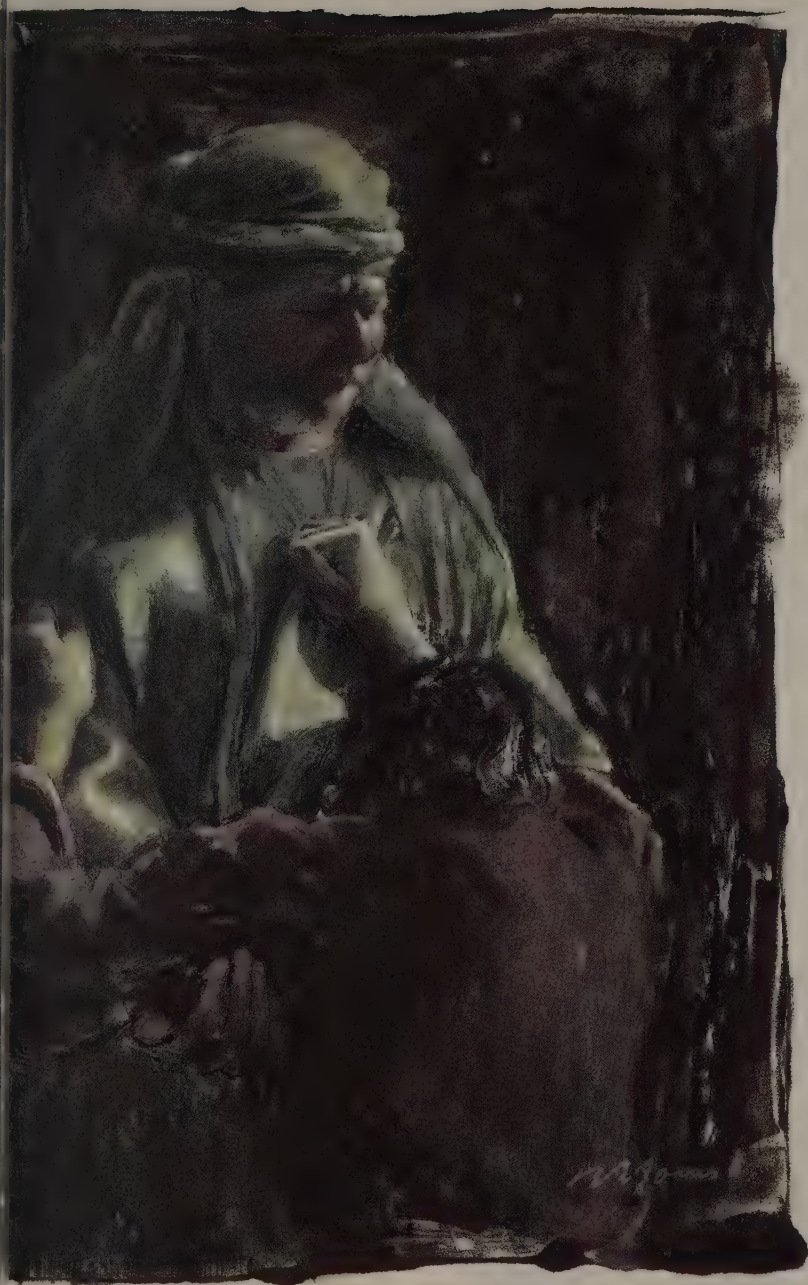
I spent most of my childhood in Egypt, and from 1955 to 1995 our family lived in Egypt, Lebanon, Jerusalem, and Cyprus, where I taught New Testament in seminaries and institutes. For all of my adult life, it has been my privilege to study the New Testament while living and teaching in the Middle East. Indeed, when I began to take seriously the traditional Middle

Eastern culture of which Jesus was a part, the parable of "the father and his two lost sons" began to unfold for me in a new and exciting way. In the light of that culture, available through early Jewish and Eastern Christian sources, answers can be found to the original challenge with which my pilgrimage began. In short—are the Incarnation and the Atonement a part of this crucial parable? Yes, they are. I will try to explain why.

Luke's trilogy

This parable must be seen as the third part of a trilogy in Luke 15. The Pharisees challenge Jesus: "This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them" (quotations taken from the NRSV unless otherwise noted). The Babylonian Talmud makes clear that rabbis did not eat with the *'am-ha'arets* (the people of the land) who did not keep the law in a precise fashion. Luke records, "So he told them [the Pharisees] this parable [singular]." What follows are the *three* parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the two lost sons (the Prodigal Son).

Thus we see that Luke understood them to be three parts of a single parable. A shepherd pays a price to find and restore a lost sheep. The woman does the same for her coin. In these two stories it is clear that Jesus is the good shepherd and he is the good woman. Which raises a question about the third story: Is he also the good father? And does this third story parallel the first two stories by having the father pay a high price to find and restore his son(s)? To answer these questions, which point to the larger issue of atonement and incarnation, at least 14 aspects of the parable need to be res-



cued from their traditional interpretation.

1. The request. The younger son requests his inheritance while his father is still alive and in good health. In traditional Middle Eastern culture, this means, "Father, I am eager for you to die!" If the father is a traditional Middle Eastern father, he will strike the boy across the face and drive him out of the house. Surely anywhere in the world this is an outrageous request. The Prodigal is not simply a young boy who is "off to the big city to

make his fame and fortune." Rather, this young son makes a request that is unthinkable, particularly in Middle Eastern culture. The father is expected to refuse—if he is an oriental patriarch! In fact, he is not, which brings us to the second point.

2. The father's gift. The father grants the Prodigal the freedom to own and to sell his portion of the estate. Five times in the parable the father does not behave like a traditional oriental patriarch. This is the first instance. The in-

heritance is substantial. This is a wealthy family that has a herd of fatted calves and a herd of goats. House servants/slaves appear. The house includes a banquet hall large enough to host a crowd that will eat an entire fatted calf in one evening. Professional musicians and dancers are hired for that banquet. The father is respected in the community, and thus the community responds to his invitation. Transferring the inheritance is a serious matter that should only be dealt with by the father as he approaches death.

Furthermore, the Prodigal "gathered all he had," or as the New English Bible puts it, "turned [it] into cash." This means that he is selling his part of the family farm. As that happens, this horrendous family breakdown becomes public knowledge, and the family is shamed before the entire community. Jewish law of the first century provided for the division of an inheritance (when the father was ready to make such a division), but did not grant the children the right to sell until after the father's death.

In a second departure from the expected norm, the father grants the inheritance and the right to sell, knowing that this right will shame the family before the community. Thus, from the opening lines of the parable, it is clear that Jesus does not use an oriental patriarch as a model for God. In the contemporary West, Jesus is often accused of having done so. Such is not the case. Rather, he has broken all the bounds of Middle Eastern patriarchy in creating this image of father. No human father is an adequate model for God. Knowing this, Jesus elevates the figure of father beyond its human limitations and reshapes it for use as a model for God.

3. The hurried sale. The Prodigal sells quickly ("A few days later"). He is obliged to do so. Anger in the village rises against him because he has shamed his father and his entire extended family by offering a large portion of the family farm for sale with a healthy father still farming it. He has to conclude the sale and get out of town as quickly as possible. As noted, Jewish law did not permit such a sale. The Prodigal does not care.

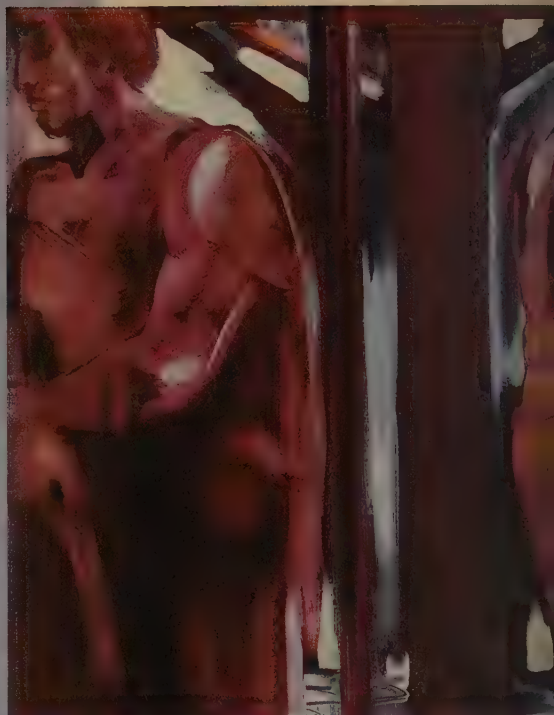
4. The getsatsah ceremony. From the Jerusalem Talmud it is known that the Jews of the time of Jesus had a method of punishing any Jewish boy who lost the family inheritance to Gentiles. It was called the "getsatsah ceremony." Horror at such a

THE PARABLE

There was a man who had two sons. The younger of them said to his father, "Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me." So he divided his property between them. A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. But when he came to himself he said, "How many of my father's hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.'" So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. Then the son said to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son." But the father said to his slaves, "Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!" And they began to celebrate.

Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. He replied, "Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound." Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. But he answered his father, "Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!" Then the father said to him, "Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found."

—LUKE 15:11–32 (NRSV)



loss is also reflected in the Dead Sea Scrolls. Such a violator of community expectations would face the qetsatsah ceremony if he dared to return to his home village. The ceremony was simple. The villagers would bring a large earthenware jar, fill it with burned nuts and burned corn, and break it in front of the guilty individual. While doing this, the community would shout, "So-and-so is cut off from his people." From that point on, the village would have nothing to do with the wayward lad.

From the various references to this ceremony, it appears that the ban was more comprehensive than the Amish "shun." When shunned, an Amish person can at least eat at a separate table. The first-century Jewish shun appears to have been a total ban on any contact with the violator of the village code of honor. As he leaves town, the Prodigal knows he must not lose the money among the Gentiles. He does. In the far country he lives among Gentiles. They own pigs!

5. Expensive living. Many times the Prodigal is accused of "loose living" or "riotous living." The Greek adjective in this phrase, however, does not imply immorality. (Syriac and Arabic translations in the Middle East have for 18 centuries preserved this finely tuned detail.) Jesus gives no hint as to how the Prodigal wasted his money. We are only told that he was a spendthrift. At the end of the story the older son publicly accuses his brother of



spending the money on harlots. But he has just arrived from the field and knows nothing. He clearly wants to exaggerate his brother's failures. This tension in the story disappears when words such as "riotous living" (KJV), "loose living" (RSV), or "disolute living" (NRSV) appear in the text.

6. The search for employment.

When his money is spent, the Prodigal would naturally return home. But he has broken the rules. He knows that the qetsatsah ceremony awaits him if he returns to the village. He is thus desperate to somehow recover the money. For this he needs a paying job. Twice he tries to obtain one. The first attempt is feeding pigs in the far country. The second is the game plan he vocalizes on the eve of his return home. These two plans must be looked at with some care.

The first plan, becoming a pig herder, does not work. The text deliberately affirms, "No one gave him anything." Like Lincoln's Gettysburg address, this parable contains no excess verbiage. Each phrase is carefully crafted to carry precise meaning. As a pig herder, the Prodigal is fed but not paid. The first-century Jewish reader knows the Prodigal must earn back the money he wasted if he is to avoid the qetsatsah ceremony.

Having failed at his first try, he plans one last roll of the dice—he will go home, get job training, and earn his way. To be accepted for that job training, he will

need his father's endorsement. But how will he convince his father to trust him one more time?

7. The self-serving plan. Perhaps the most theologically damaging traditional misunderstanding of this parable is in the popular perception of the phrase, "He came to himself." This has long been interpreted as meaning "he repented." This reading of the text dulls its cutting edge and breaks up the theological unity of the chapter. The good shepherd must traverse the wilderness to find his sheep. He does not return to the village and wait for the sheep to wander home and bleat at the door of the sheepfold. The good woman lights a lamp and searches diligently to find the lost coin. She does not resume her chores expecting the coin to flip itself out of a crack in the floor and land on the kitchen table.

In short, the first two stories are Augustinian. The sheep and the coin must be rescued. But if the Prodigal manages to make his way home by his own efforts, then the third story is Pelagian or at least semi-Pelagian. That is, it teaches that people are not impeded by original sin or depraved wills and can by their own effort, without divine grace, take steps toward salvation.

In the first story, the lost sheep is a symbol of repentance, and repentance is shown there as "acceptance of being found." The second story confirms this

definition. But if the Prodigal truly repents in the far country and struggles home on his own, then Jesus contradicts himself. As traditionally understood, the third story affirms the opposite of the first two. Either Jesus is theologically confused or repentance is an elastic concept that is open to both an Augustinian and a Pelagian interpretation. I find both options unacceptable. Is there an alternative?

By telling the parable of the Good Shepherd, Jesus invokes Psalm 23, which also has a lost sheep and a good shepherd. The key phrase appears in verse 3, which is traditionally translated, "He restores my soul." This statement has come to mean: I was downcast, and the Lord restored my spirits. That understanding is, no doubt, a part of the psalmist's intention. But the

Hebrew reads *yashubib nefshi*, "which literally means, 'He brings me back,' or 'He causes me to repent.'" Clearly, the psalmist is lost, and God, the good shepherd, brings him back to the paths of righteousness.

When the Prodigal's speech is read in this light, a new meaning emerges. The psalmist believed God brought him back (to God) and caused him to repent. The Prodigal is going to solve his own problem—he came to himself. The verb for *return* does not appear! The long, rich history of Arabic versions contains a number of interesting translations of this key phrase. Some read, "He got smart." Others translate, "He took an interest in himself" or "He thought to himself." None of these translators saw the Prodigal in the far country as repentant. Ah—but what of his "confession"?

The prepared confession reads, "I have sinned against heaven and before you," and this is (understandably) usually seen to indicate heartfelt repentance. Jesus' audience, however, is composed of Pharisees who know the Scriptures well. They recognize that confession as a quotation from the pharaoh when he tries to manipulate Moses into lifting the plagues. After the ninth plague, Pharaoh finally agrees to meet Moses, and when Moses appears, Pharaoh gives this same speech. Everyone knows that Pharaoh is not repenting. He is simply trying to bend Moses to his will.

The Prodigal is best understood as attempting the same. Hoping to soften his

Traditional Middle Easterners, wearing lo in public. To do so is deeply humiliating. T

father's heart, the Prodigal plans to offer his solution to the problem of their estrangement: job training. He will work as a paid craftsman and be able to save money. He will not live at home for the present. But after the lost money is recovered, he can discuss reconciliation. Having failed to get a paying job in the far country, he will try to get his father's backing to become gainfully employed near home. He will yet save himself through the law. No grace is necessary. He can manage—or so he thinks! But is the lost money the real problem?

In his soliloquy in the far country, the Prodigal opens his mind and spirit to the listener/reader. Wanting to eat, he says, "I am dying of hunger!" He thinks that if he can only recover the lost money, everything will eventually be solved. In the interim, he will be able to eat, and once the money is returned, the village will accept him back. He does not consider the father's broken heart and the agony of rejected love that his father has endured. While talking to himself in the far country he evidences no shame or remorse. If he is a servant standing before a master, his plan is somehow adequate. If he is a son dealing with a compassionate and loving father, his projected solution is inadequate.

8. The point of turning. The Prodigal steels his nerves for his humiliating entrance into the village. He remembers the qetsatsah ceremony and braces himself to endure its shame. The painful interview with his father will not be any easier. His one hope is that his "humble speech" will touch his father's heart and that he will win his father's backing for the training he needs to become a wage earner. The Prodigal is expected to return with generous gifts for the family. Not only does the Prodigal return home empty-handed, he returns in failure after insulting his family and the village at departure. This painful road back is endured for one reason: he is hungry. The bottom line is, "I am dying of hunger!"

But what of his father? The father knows his son will fail. He waits day after day, staring down the crowded village

street to the road in the distance along which his son disappeared with arrogance and high hopes. The father realizes full well how his son will be welcomed in the village when he returns in failure. Thus, the father also prepares a plan: to reach the boy before the boy reaches the village. The father knows that if he is able to achieve reconciliation with his son *in public*, no one in the village will treat the Prodigal badly. No one will dare suggest that the qetsatsah ceremony must be enacted.

The father sees him "while he was still far off." The "great distance" is more spiritual than it is physical. If the Prodigal thinks he can earn money and with it solve the problem of their relationship, he is yet very far away! The language is borrowed from Isaiah 57:19, where God affirms peace to those who are "far off" and peace to those who are "near." This is precisely what the father sets out to do. Through a great, dramatic action, he will offer peace to the one who is far off and then concentrate on creating peace with the one who is near (the older brother).

And so, for the third time, the father breaks the mold of Middle Eastern patriarchy. He takes the bottom edge of his long robes in his hand and runs to welcome his pig-herding son. He falls on his neck and kisses him before hearing his prepared speech! The father does not demonstrate love in response to his son's confession. Rather, out of his own compassion he empties himself, assumes the form of a servant, and runs to reconcile his estranged son. Traditional Middle Easterners, wearing long robes, do not run in public. To do so is deeply humiliating. This father runs. The boy is totally surprised. Overwhelmed, he can only offer the first part of his prepared speech, which now takes on a new meaning. He declares that he has sinned and that he is unworthy to be called a son. He admits (by omitting the third phrase) that he has no bright ideas for mending their relationship. He is no longer "working" his father for additional advantages. The father does not "interrupt" his younger son. Instead, the Prodigal changes his mind, and in a moment of genuine repentance, accepts to be found.

9. The father acts like a mother.

In the parable, a traditional oriental patriarch would be expected to sit in grand isolation in the house to hear what the wayward boy might have to say for himself. The mother could run down the road and shower the boy with kisses.

We know God is spirit and thus is neither male nor female. But God is also personal, and God is one. A 1,000-year-old, finely tuned sacred tradition is available to Jesus. The prophets called God "Father" and partially described that father in female terms. This language affirmed the personhood and the unity of God for all believers, male and female. In the Old Testament, God is already presented as a father who also acts with the tender compassion of a mother (Deut. 32:18; Ps. 131; Isa. 42:14, 66:13). The Dead Sea Scrolls describe God with the same imagery. More than 200 times Jesus calls God "Father," and in John's gospel, we find that the believer must be "born from above." In 1 John, the believer is "born of God." That is, God "gives birth" in the New Testament even as he does in the Old (Deut. 32:18). In this parable, too, the father appears on the road, demonstrating the tender compassion of a mother.

10. Christology. As the father comes down and out to reconcile his son, he becomes a symbol of God in Christ "Father," a symbol for God, ever so quietly evolves into a symbol for Jesus. The same shift occurs in the story of the Good Shepherd. At three points in the Old Testament, God is a good shepherd who goes after his lost sheep (Ps. 23:3; Jer. 23:1-8; Ezek. 34). Jesus retells that classical story and introduces himself into it as its hero. The Pharisees complain, "This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them." Jesus replies with this story, which in effect says, "Indeed, I do eat with sinners. But it is much worse than you imagine! I not only eat with them, I run down the road, shower them with kisses, and drag them in that I might eat with them!" Jesus is clearly talking about himself. By the end of the story, the father does what Jesus does.

A famous eleventh-century Syriac

...es, do not run
...her runs.

scholar in Baghdad, Abdallah Ibn al-Tayyib, identified the father in his self-giving love on the road as a symbol for Jesus. The great New Testament scholar Joachim Jeremias made the same identification this century. I call this "hermeneutical Christology." That is, Jesus takes a known symbol for God and quietly transforms it into a symbol for himself.

11. The meaning of the banquet.

The banquet in the parable has three interpretations. The first is offered by the father, the second by a little boy in the courtyard of the home, and the third by the older son. The first two are in harmony with each other. The third is in sharp contrast to the first two. Contemporary readers usually only recall the third. All three interpretations must be examined.

Once reconciliation is assured, the father orders a banquet. He says, "Let us eat and celebrate; for [now comes his reason] this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!" The father does not say, "He was lost *and has come home*." Instead, we read, "He was lost *and is found*." So who found him? The father did! Where did he find him? At the edge of the village! Thus, in the father's perceptions, the Prodigal was still lost and dead at the edge of the village. Even as the shepherd was obliged to go forth and pay a high price to find his sheep, and the good woman sought diligently to find her coin, even so the father went down and out in a costly demonstration of unexpected love to find and resurrect his son. The banquet is a celebration of the success of that finding and that resurrection.

Now for the little boy's interpretation. The older son comes in from the field and on hearing the music calls to a *pais*. This Greek word can mean three things. The first is "son," which does not fit this text. The second is "servant," which also does not fit, because all the servants are busy in the house serving the huge banquet. The third option is "young boy." Middle Eastern Syriac and Arabic versions have always chosen this third alternative. As the older son approaches his family home in the center of the village, he naturally meets a

THE END OF THE GREAT REBELLION

Looking again at Rembrandt's portrayal of the return of the younger son, I now see how much more is taking place than a mere compassionate gesture toward a wayward child. The great event I see is the end of the great rebellion. The rebellion of Adam and all his descendants is forgiven, and the original blessing by which Adam received everlasting life is restored. It seems to me now that these hands have always been stretched out—even when there were no shoulders upon which to rest them. God has never pulled back his arms, never withheld his blessing, never stopped considering his son the Beloved One. But the Father couldn't compel his son to stay home. He couldn't force his love on the Beloved. He had to let him go in freedom, even though he knew the pain it would cause both his son and himself. It was love itself that prevented him from keeping his son home at all cost. It was love itself that allowed him to let his son find his own life, even with the risk of losing it.

Here the mystery of my life is unveiled. I am loved so much that I am left free to leave home. The blessing is there from the beginning. I have left it and keep on leaving it. But the Father is always looking for me with outstretched arms to receive me back and whisper again in my ear: "You are my Beloved, on you my favor rests."

— HENRI J. M. NOUWEN IN *THE RETURN OF THE PRODIGAL SON* (DOUBLEDAY, © 1994)



crowd of young boys who are not old enough to recline with the elders at the banquet, but are outside the house dancing in tune to the music and enjoying the occasion in their own boisterous manner. The young lad assumes the role of the chorus in a Greek drama. (We now know that there was a large Greek theater in Sephoris, four miles from Nazareth.) The little boy tells the listener/reader the truth about what is happening in the story. The older son asks him what the party is all about and the lad says (as I would translate it), "Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because (now comes the second interpretation) he (the father) received him (the Prodigal) with peace!" The word I translate here as "peace" is the Greek word *hugaino*. This means "in good health," and from it we have the English word *hygiene*. But in the Greek Old Testament (the Septuagint), this same Greek word appears 14 times, and without exception it translates the Hebrew word *shalom* or *peace*. When a first-century Jew used the word *hugaino*, he or she mentally translated the Hebrew word *shalom*, which includes "good health" but means so very much more.

I am confident that Jesus used the word *shalom* in the story. The point is that the banquet is in celebration of the father's successful efforts at creating reconciliation—*shalom*—and the community has come to participate in that celebration. Rather than a qetsatsah ceremony of rejection, they are participating in the joy of a restoration achieved by the father at great cost. Thus the young boy confirms the father's interpretation. For both, the banquet is a celebration of the success of the father's efforts at reconciling his son.

The language of the young boy, "He received him. . . ." (and plans to eat with him), reminds the listener of the Pharisees' complaint, "This fellow [Jesus] welcomes sinners and eats with them." The young boy's speech confirms that the father has clearly evolved into a symbol for Jesus. Jesus receives sinners and eats with them. In this parable, the father does the same.

We have yet the older son's interpretation to consider, which he offers after the father tries to reconcile this son to himself. He says, "You killed the fatted calf for him!" This claim is the exact opposite of what the little boy has just told the older son. It is also the opposite of the father's own declared purpose for the banquet. Noting that the older son contradicts the two previous interpretations of the banquet, the listener must

choose between them. Is the banquet in honor of the Prodigal or in honor of the father? Is it a celebration of the Prodigal's successful efforts at reaching home (on his own), or is it rather a celebration of the success of the father's costly efforts at creating *shalom*? Will the guests congratulate the Prodigal or the father?

It is my 40-year perception that generally modern readers of the parable do not even discern these contrasts or observe that there is a choice to be made. The banquet foreshadows Holy Communion. Surely we know that Jesus is the hero of that sacred banquet and that sinners are not the center of attention. The older brother's self-righteousness becomes a pair of colored glasses through which he sees the world. All he can understand is that the Prodigal lost the money and that he has been reconciled to their father without having first returned the money. In short, grace has been offered and accepted rather than the requirements of law demanded and fulfilled by the sinner. The older son's interpretation represents the view of many, then and now. But the father's view of the banquet (supported by the young boy's speech) is the mind of Jesus. For many, grace is not only amazing—it is also unbelievable! How could it be true? After all, you get what you pay for, don't you?

12. The older son's anger. If the banquet were a straightforward celebration of the Prodigal's *safe return*, the older son would enter the hall immediately. It would mean that the Prodigal's position in the family has not yet been determined. The older son would be very anxious that his point of view be represented when the family discusses the matter. Of course, they are all (publicly) glad the Prodigal is home and in good health. It would be churlish not to rejoice at his safe arrival. But the young boy tells the older brother that it's all over! Their father has already reconciled the Prodigal son—and has done so without the Prodigal paying for his sins! This is why the older son is angry. He is so angry he takes the radical step of breaking his relationship with his father.

For a son to be present and to refuse participation in such a banquet is an unspeakable public insult to the father. A cultural equivalent might be the case of a son in the West who has a heated public shouting match with his father in the middle of a wedding banquet after a large family wedding. A shouting match is not

unthinkable—but not in public at such a banquet. The older son's rejection of his father's reconciliation with the Prodigal leads that same older son to break his relationship with the father who achieved it.

13. The father's response. For a fourth time, the father goes beyond what a traditional patriarch would do. For the second time in the same day, he is willing to offer a costly demonstration of unexpected love. Only this time it is to a lawkeeper rather than a lawbreaker. Amazing grace holds true for both sons. Culturally, the father is expected to proceed with the banquet and ignore the public insult. He can deal with the older son later. But no! In painful public humiliation, the father goes down and out to find yet one more lost sheep/coin/son.

14. The older son's response. The younger son "accepted" to be found. He was overwhelmed by the costly love freely offered to him. The older son, in contrast, seems unimpressed. Instead, he mercilessly attacks both his father and his brother in public. The father is expected finally to explode and order a thrashing for the public insults. For a fifth time, patriarchy is transcended. This is not a remarkable father. Rather it is a symbol for God. As Henri Nouwen has written regarding this parable, "This is the portrayal of God, whose goodness, love, forgiveness, care, joy and compassion have no limits at all. Jesus presents God's generosity by using all the imagery that his culture provides, while constantly transforming it" (*The Return of the Prodigal*).

If the older son accepts the love now offered to him, he will be obliged to treat the Prodigal with the same loving acceptance with which the father welcomed the pig herder. The older son will need to be "conformed to the image" of that compassionate father who comes to both kinds of sinners in the form of a suffering servant, offering undeserved, costly love. Is he willing? We are not told. By this point the audience is on the stage and must decide for itself. **CT**

Kenneth E. Bailey is an active lecturer on Middle Eastern New Testament studies and professor emeritus of New Testament at the Tantur Ecumenical Institute, Jerusalem. Author of Finding the Lost: Cultural Keys to Luke 15 (Concordia), he lives in New Wilmington, Pennsylvania.

This special section on the Prodigal is continued on page 65.

Update

FALL 1998

Remedies for Biblical Illiteracy

New resources to help open the Bible

Page 4

Virtual Exegesis

Bible software changes
the way we study the Word

Page 18

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Are Notes On
The Greatest Work
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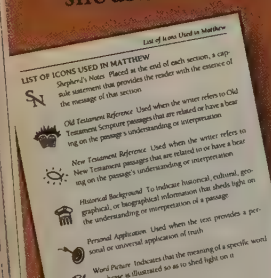
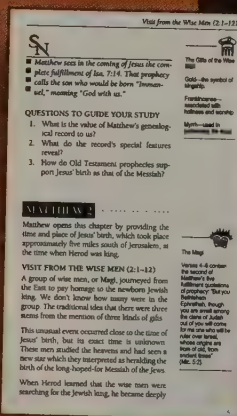
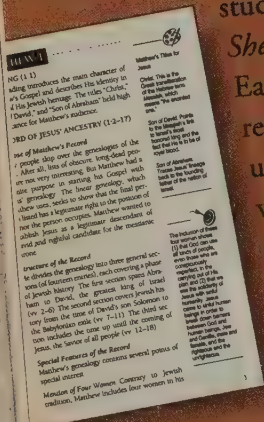
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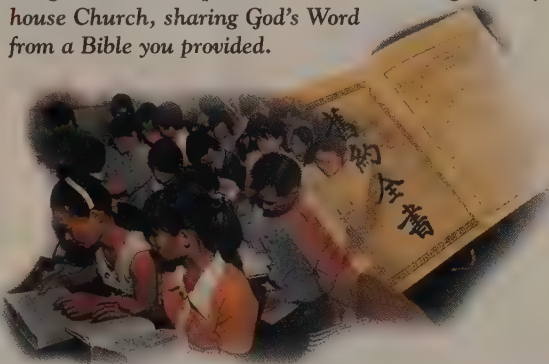
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POC 23920



Remedies for Biblical Illiteracy

Almost every home has one or more Bibles. These new resources will help people to open them.

A recent national survey, conducted by the Barna Research Group and commissioned by Tyndale House Publishers and Zondervan Publishing House, has revealed that interest in spirituality is on the rise. According to the survey, 45 percent of Americans feel their own spirituality is more important today than it was three years ago.

Perhaps it is the approaching millennium that has awakened interest in spiritual matters and in the Scriptures and Bible resources. Perhaps the wide array of Bibles and Bible-related products that has been made available in recent years has contributed to the trend. Whatever the reason, interest in Bible resources today is

sky high and shows no signs of waning.

A recent article in *USA Today* helped document the Bible's amazing popularity. It pointed out that, in the span of a year, Tyndale House Publishers doubled its Bible products and experienced a 41 percent increase in sales. Tyndale now has over 40 products based on its 1996 New Living Translation, and Zondervan boasts 46 products based on the widely used New International Version (NIV). According to the article, Bibles now come "in an explosion of format choices, enabling someone to build a Bible wardrobe for every age and stage of life, if not for every day of the week." Another way to put it is to say that publishers have creat-

ed Bibles and Bible products that attempt to "scratch where Bible readers are itching." Among other things, publishers have developed Bibles that cater to the way people read the Bible. They have divided it, for example, into manageable chunks that enable a person to read the whole Bible in a year. They have designed and developed Bibles targeted for believers of various ages, life situations, and theological interests in order to make Scripture more clear and relevant to readers' lives. And at least to this point, the market has responded enthusiastically.

The booming market for Bible resources is a testimony first and foremost to the amazing depth of Scripture. Upon consid-

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ROMANS 12:14-21

D. The Believer and Unbelievers. 12:14-21

18 If it be possible, as much
as lieth in you, live peace-
ably with all men.

19 Dearlly beloved, avoid
not yourselves, but rather
give place unto wrath: for
it is written, Vengeance is
I will repay, saith the Lord.

20 Therefore if thine enemy
hunger, feed him; if he thirst,
give him drink: for in so
doing thou shalt heap coals
of fire on his head.

21 Be not overcome of
evil, but overcome evil with

DIVISION VIII

THE BELIEVER AND HIS DAILY BEHAVIOR

D. The Believer and Unbelievers, 12:14-21

D. The Believer and Unbelievers, 12:14-21

(12:14-21) Introduction: the believer is expected to conduct himself in the most noble of unbelievers. God expects His follower to control himself and to gain complete victory over sinners who persecute you (v.14). ... of men (v.15).

1. Bless those who persecute you (v.14).
2. Show genuine interest in the experiences of men (v.15).
3. Seek harmony and associate with the lowly (v.16).
4. Live above reproach (v.17).
5. Live at peace with all (v.18).
6. Give no place to revenge (v.19-21).

(12:14) **Persecution:** the believer is charged to do something that could be **well** of him. Therefore how difficult this is when you are verbally or physically persecute him. Picture how difficult this is when you are verbally or physically overlooked, slandered, cursed, abused, injured. You are to bless the person who persecute whether he is your...
 • classmate
 • friend
 • fellow communist
 • employee
 • fellow church member

- next door neighbor
- family member
- fellow worker
- classmate
- employee
- employer
- friend
- fellow comm
- fellow church

What does it mean to bless and to speak well of?
It means to speak well to our persecutors. We do not react against them at all. We do not try to hurt them either verbally or physically. On the contrary, we commendable about them and we commend them for it.

“Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise **being called**, that ye should inherit a blessing” (1 Pt.3:9).
 “Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and, and
 ye, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted,
 God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you” (Eph.4:31-32).

2. It means to *speak well about our persecutors*. When speaking to others mention some commendable trait. We praise some "good thing" about the person.

"But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; for they know not what they do." (Lk. 23:34).

I thought I think of the impact upon persecutors when an attitude of quietness is taken. Every persecutor is not won to Christ, but every persecutor is won to Christ by the Holy Spirit in the persecutor's quiet and calm. This is what God is after.

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Remedies for Biblical Illiteracy

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ering the many riches contained in the Bible, it should come as no surprise that those riches cannot be fully explored in 20 or 30 resources, or even in 200 or 300—or more. This is especially true given the fact that scholars and believers are far from being of one mind when it comes to how the Bible should be translated, interpreted, and applied. Add to this the fact that Bible scholarship continues to make advances, and there is no reason to think that market demand for Bible-related products will be satisfied any time soon.

Bible ignorance

No doubt the Bible resources that have been published in recent years have made lasting contributions to Bible knowledge and to the spiritual growth of countless believers. Yet the availability of Scripture does not automatically guarantee proficiency in biblical knowledge. Surveys conducted by Barna have consistently borne this out.

The typical American home has three Bibles, according to Barna, and 91 percent of all households have at least one. However, Barna's research points out the difference between owning a Bible and actually reading it or knowing what it says. Only 22 percent of respondents to a recent survey said they had read the Bible all the way through. Only 42 percent attributed the Sermon on the Mount to Jesus, and a whopping 80 percent wrongly believed that the Bible somewhere states, "God helps those who help themselves."

The many thorough and wide-ranging resources being turned out by Christian publishers together constitute a major assault on Bible ignorance. Each resource is intended in some way to mine the depths of Scripture while at the same time making the Bible more accessible—that is, easier to understand and to apply. Let us examine some of these resources.

Jewish roots

Several recent releases highlight and explore Christianity's roots in Judaism and Jewish culture. Jewish New Testament Publications, Inc., and Messianic Jewish Resources International tout the *Complete Jewish Bible* as the only English version of

Scripture that is fully Jewish in style and presentation. This unique Bible follows the Hebrew order of the Old Testament, that with which Yeshua (Jesus) was familiar. It does not separate Old and New Testaments, and it offers the original Hebrew names for

Availability of Scripture does not guarantee proficiency in biblical knowledge.



people, places, and concepts, providing readable English transliterations.

In this same vein, Hendrickson Publishers has brought back a book first published in 1909: *Aspects of Rabbinic Theology*, by Solomon Schechter (1847–1915), a leading thinker of Conservative Judaism at the turn of the twentieth century. Though it was written some 90 years ago, the book is considered to be a classic and a definitive treatment of the basic principles and concepts of Judaism, especially as found in the Talmud and Midrash.

Eerdmans has performed a great service to the world of biblical scholarship with the publication of *The Masorah of Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*. This volume will be useful to all Hebrew scholars, but particularly to those who are just beginning to learn Hebrew. It fills a gap in introductory literature on the Masorah (the accumulated Jewish tradition on the correct Hebrew biblical text). The Eerdmans book, which provides an introduction and annotated glossary, was

written by the late Page H. Kelley of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Daniel S. Mynatt of Anderson (S.C.) College, and Timothy G. Crawford of Bluefield (Va.) College.

The content of *What the Bible Says About the Ten Commandments* (Leadership Ministries Worldwide) is clear from the title. This volume, very practical in its approach, explores the contemporary relevance of the Ten Commandments for both individuals and societies.

Finally, in his book *GodStories* (Judson Press), author H. Stephen Shoemaker employs *Haggadah*—the rabbinic way of storytelling—to give new life to familiar Bible stories. Weaving together ancient and modern stories in a way that brings multiple meanings to the surface, Shoemaker has produced a book sure to be appreciated by pastors and other believers, old and new.

Bibles

In recognition of the fact that many who read the Bible are seeking spiritual renewal, Tyndale House Publishers earlier this year released the *Spiritual Renewal Bible*, which, like many contemporary Bibles, is ideal for individuals or small groups. At every step of the way, this Bible's supplementary features guide readers on the path toward personal spiritual renewal. Each book of the Bible begins with a listing and brief discussion of that book's spiritual renewal themes. Text notes throughout highlight the Bible's messages as they relate to spiritual renewal.

In addition, this Bible identifies seven keys to spiritual renewal and provides devotionals throughout that draw attention to those keys. The devotionals are arranged in two reading cycles, one for the Old Testament and one for the New Testament. Each cycle contains seven different devotionals for each of the seven keys. This Bible is a perfect example of a publisher identifying what people want in a Bible and then providing it.

Tyndale has released, or is soon to release, three additional Bibles, each targeted to a specific audience. *The Rock* is a teen study Bible with hundreds of notes and features intended to help

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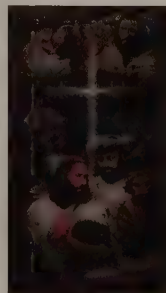
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Remedies for Biblical Illiteracy

young people learn about God and how to make decisions that are morally right. It is the official Bible for respected youth specialist Josh McDowell's "Right from Wrong" campaign. Perhaps at no time in history has the need been greater for teens to discover the moral foundations provided by their Christian faith.

Tyndale's *Slimline Reference Bible* employs an ultra-thin design and easy-to-understand translation (New Living Translation) among its many other attractive features to make it ideal for commuters or travelers. Tyndale is also bringing back *The Book*. In the form of the Living Bible paraphrase, *The Book* sold nearly 3 million copies; its return will use the New Living Translation.

Reference tools

Among the most important Bible-related products to be released each year are reference tools, such as dictionaries and atlases. These resources enable scholars,

pastors, and laypeople alike to do original research and to come up with new ideas and insights regarding the Bible's meaning and relevance. Hendrickson describes its *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* (formerly available in two volumes) as "a Bible library at your fingertips." This resource, edited by Charles F. Pfeiffer, Howard Vos, and John Rea, contains articles written by more than 200 evangelical scholars. It provides extensive background information not only on the names and places mentioned in the Bible, but on important historical and doctrinal themes. This nearly 2,000-page volume retails for only \$34.95, making it affordable for college or seminary students.

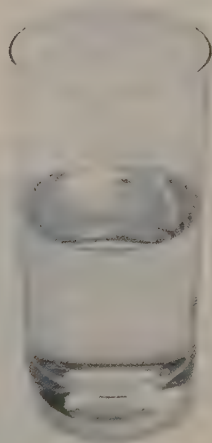
Hendrickson has also released a revised edition of its *Handbook of Biblical Chronology*, by Jack Finegan. As the title suggests, this resource focuses on the various and numerous biblical references to time. Many Bible students avoid this area because it is so confusing.

This resource recognizes that an understanding of how ancient cultures referred to time is important to a complete understanding of the Bible. The volume includes more than 100 tables that catalog the diverse methods of time reckoning in Bible times, ranging from Egyptian civil calendars to early Roman and Julian calendars. The resource will certainly help its readers make more sense of references to time that may have seemed confusing, if not contradictory.

Yet another resource from Hendrickson is based on the accurate presumption that the Bible becomes more meaningful with a fuller understanding of the geography of the Holy Land. *The Concise Bible Atlas* (subtitled *A Geographical Survey of Bible History*) was originally published in 1988 as *Baker's Concise Bible Atlas*. Written by J. Carl Laney and geared to a popular audience, this resource is essentially a geographical and historical survey of the Bible. It provides an invaluable

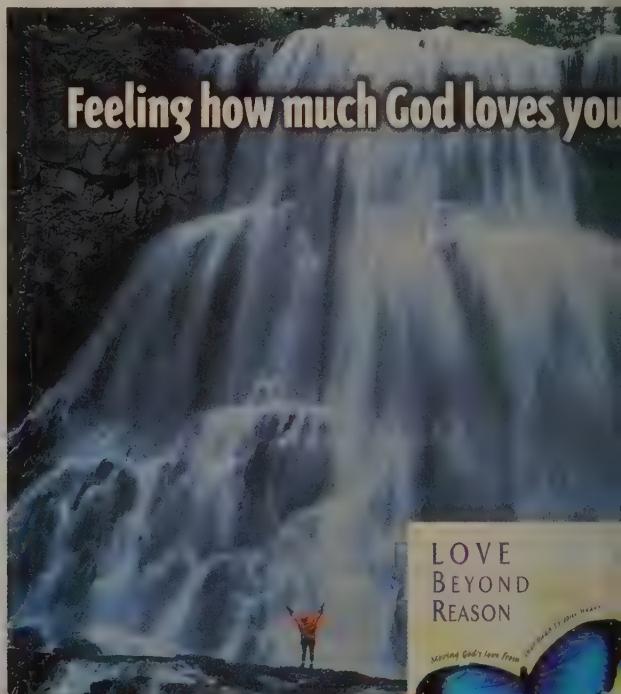
(continued on page 12)

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The New Living Translation is the fastest-growing translation because it always focuses on giving you the clearest and simplest understanding of what a passage means. When translations follow the Greek word structure too closely, it often doesn't read as well in English. Compare this passage from Romans 1:1-5:

King James Version:

Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,² (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,) ³ Concerning his son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; ⁴ And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead: ⁵ By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name:...

New International Version:

Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God—² the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures ³ regarding his Son, who as to His human nature was a descendant of David,⁴ and who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord. ⁵ Through him and for his name's sake, we received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith.

New Living Translation:

This letter is from Paul, Jesus Christ's slave, chosen by God to be an apostle and sent out to preach his Good News.² This Good News was promised long ago by God through his prophets in the holy Scriptures. ³ It is the good news about his son, Jesus, who came as a man, born into King David's royal family line. ⁴ And Jesus Christ our Lord was shown to be the Son of God when God powerfully raised him from the dead by means of the Holy Spirit. ⁵ Through Christ, God has given us the privilege and authority to tell Gentiles everywhere what God has done for them, so that they will believe and obey him, bringing glory to his name.

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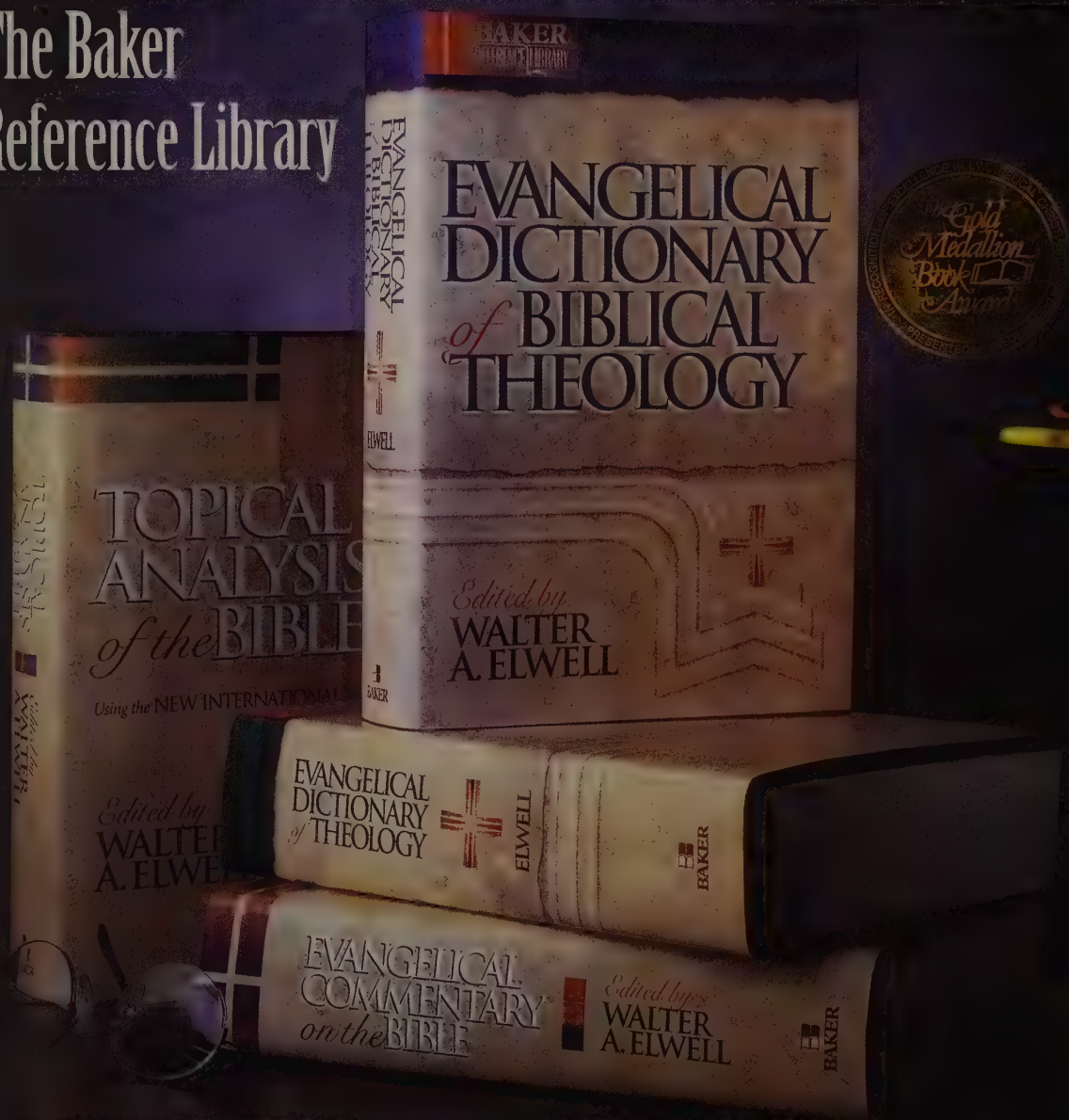
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Remedies for Biblical Illiteracy

(continued from page 8)

overview of 16 historical periods and of major biblical events, all in the context of their respective geographical settings.

In similar fashion, the *Holman Bible Atlas*, by Thomas V. Brisco, focuses on the geography of the biblical world, making use of 140 full-color maps and 140 full-color illustrations. The atlas sheds light on every period of biblical history from the patriarchs through the third century of the Christian era. It pays particular attention to the international powers—Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome—that had major influences on the development of Christianity.

Finally in this category, *The Holman Ultimate Giant Print Bible Dictionary & Concordance* is now available as a companion to Holman's best-selling Super Giant Print reference Bible. With 16-point type and a price tag of just \$16.99, this is a perfect gift for senior adults or others with special visual needs.

Commentaries

Bible commentaries rank among the most important vehicles for combating biblical ignorance. Abingdon Press has released the twelfth volume of *The New Interpreter's Bible*, which encompasses the books from Hebrews through Revelation. This 12-volume commentary replaces the highly respected *Interpreter's Bible*, published by Abingdon in the 1950s.

The sheer length of *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, the latest in the highly regarded *New International Commentary on the Old Testament* series (Eerdmans), testifies to its depth, as Asbury Theological Seminary professor John Oswalt uses nearly 700 pages of commentary to bring 27 chapters from the Old Testament to life.

Duane A. Garrett has written the latest installment (the Old Testament books of Hosea and Joel) to Broadman & Holman's *The New American Commentary*. This commentary series is distinguished by its focus on uncovering what the text actually says.

Meanwhile, Zondervan has released three new volumes in its *NIV Application Commentary Series: Colossians/Phile-*

mon (David Garland), *1 & 2 Thessalonians* (Michael Holmes), and *Acts* (Ajith Fernando). This highly regarded series is designed to bridge the gap between the biblical text and contemporary life.

The books of the Bible

While most Bible reference tools cover the entirety of Scripture, some zero in on a particular section or book of the Bible. Several recently released resources fit this

Commentaries rank among the most important vehicles for combatting biblical ignorance.



category. Some lean toward being more scholarly in their approach, while others are more practical in orientation.

The *Life Lessons* series from Word, featuring the thoughts and insights of popular author Max Lucado, is eminently practical. The most recent releases in this series are *1 & 2 Peter* and *Revelation*. Each is broken down into 12 lessons, all of which contain probing questions designed to explore the meaning and relevance of selected passages. Each lesson contains a short inspirational essay from Lucado as well as ample space for recording thoughts. This series is ideal for those who like to focus their daily devotional times on books of the Bible and want to be active participants in the learning process. (Those who use it should make sure to sharpen their pencils first!)

A similar approach to Bible study lies behind the *Spirit-Filled Bible Discovery Guides* series from Thomas Nelson. Popular charismatic author and pastor Jack W. Hayford serves as executive editor of the series. Recent releases cover the Old Testament books of Ezra & Nehemiah; 1 & 2 Samuel & 1 Chronicles; 1 & 2 Kings & 2 Chronicles; and Joshua & Judges. The lone recent New Testament release covers 2 Corinthians, 1 & 2 Timothy, and Titus. The lessons are highly interactive in addition to being very thorough and detailed. Those who use these books as a daily devotional resource will likely want to break each lesson into several parts, since each will take considerably longer than 15 or 20 minutes to complete. The lessons are ideal for Sunday school or small-group study.

Highly respected scholar Elizabeth Achtemeier has written an extremely valuable book whose title, *Preaching from the Minor Prophets* (Eerdmans), accurately captures the book's content. This is a perfect resource for preachers who do not want to ignore the 12 books of the minor prophets but feel they lack the understanding to preach on them with any authority. In exploring the theological richness of these books, Achtemeier not only provides theological and historical context, but suggests sermon titles and provides homiletical exposition intended to stimulate preachers. This approach is an ingenious way to garner interest in a section of Scripture that many do not find inherently interesting. And it's done in a way to make the resource readily usable, especially to those who occupy the pulpit on Sunday mornings.

New Testament scholar Susan R. Garrett, in *The Temptations of Jesus in Mark's Gospel* (Eerdmans), focuses on key passages of Mark in light of first-century cultural conventions relating to the testing or tempting of the righteous. The result is a fresh perspective on the gospel writer's views on several important topics, including the person and work of Jesus and the nature of Christian discipleship.

This is not the only recent release from Eerdmans that paves new scholarly

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Remedies for Biblical Illiteracy

ground. In *The Missions of Jesus and the Disciples According to the Fourth Gospel*, Andreas J. Köstenberger explores the relationship between the mission of Jesus and the mission of the disciples as presented in the Gospel of John. The author gives special attention to the question of how later generations of disciples are related to Jesus' original followers.

Twenty-five distinguished scholars survey the theology of the early church as presented by the author of Acts in the book *Witness to the Gospel: The Theology of Acts*, also from Eerdmans. The book's 25 essays address the major themes of Acts, including God's plan of salvation, the renewing work of the Holy Spirit, and the relationship between Jews and Gentiles in the church. The volume is edited by I. Howard Marshall of the University of Aberdeen in Scotland and David Peterson of Oak Hill Theological College in London.

In *Exodus: Go Out and Meet God*

(Eerdmans/Handsel), retired South African Anglican bishop Godfrey Ashby explores the relationship between the Exodus event and the gospel of Jesus Christ. He also explores the relevance of Exodus for the struggle for liberation taking place in various parts of the Third World.

Among these kinds of thematic approaches to books of the Bible can be found a more commentarylike type of approach. In *A Commentary on Jeremiah: Exile and Homecoming* (Eerdmans), widely respected Old Testament scholar Walter Brueggemann explores the historical setting and the message of Jeremiah, including the relevance of that message for today. Brueggemann contends that the Old Testament prophet's voice issues an urgent invitation to faith, obedience, justice, and compassion.

Topical studies

Four resources written by Larry Richards and published by Thomas Nelson will

appeal to those readers interested in pursuing a particular biblical topic. *Every Good and Evil Angel in the Bible*, *Every Covenant and Promise in the Bible*, *Every Miracle and Wonder in the Bible*, and *Every Prayer and Petition in the Bible* are all part of Nelson's *Everything in the Bible Series*. These readable volumes are ideal for a pastor's reference library and can also be used as the basis for Sunday-school classes or small-group topical studies.

Leadership Ministries Worldwide provides another subject for a topical study in *The Tabernacle*, the latest in LMW's *Outline Bible Study* series. A study of the tabernacle explores both God's holiness and God's mercy, attributes that are fundamental to God's working in history.

Hendrickson continues its decades-old "All Series" books with a topical study on the Second Coming. *All About the Second Coming* is based primarily on a study of the Book of Revelation. Herbert Lockyer, Jr., edited this volume based largely on his father's notes. Given the millennial fervor that has already begun and is sure to remain, this would be an excellent resource for small-group study.

For younger or newer believers, Thomas Nelson Publishers' *What You Need to Know About Salvation in 12 Lessons* and *What You Need to Know About Defending Your Faith*, both written by Max Anders, are perfect resources. The same could be said of Nelson's entire *What You Need to Know* series, which now consists of 10 titles that explore the basic doctrines and beliefs of the Christian faith. The author's interesting and readable style, as well as frequent reviews of the material covered, make these books ideal overviews. No one could read through this series and not feel that he or she has a solid doctrinal grounding in the Christian faith. Though ideal for newer Christians, the reviews are also helpful for those who have been part of the church for a long time.

Meanwhile, three topical studies from Eerdmans are geared toward the more experienced Bible scholar. Rainer Riesner addresses many of the scholarly ques-

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tions relating to early Pauline chronology and theology in *Paul's Early Period: Chronology, Mission Strategy, Theology*, which was originally published in German. The first volume in the late Henri de Lubac's multivolume study of medieval exegesis is now available in English. Originally published in French, the first English volume is titled *The Four Senses of Scripture*. Finally, Joseph A. Fitzmyer has added eight studies of important Pauline and Lucan topics to his second edition of *To Advance the Gospel*, part of Eerdmans' *Biblical Resource Series*.

Applied spirituality

Virtually all Bibles and Bible-related tools have implications for spiritual growth. Three recently released resources from NavPress appear to uphold spiritual growth as their primary, if not their exclusive, purpose. Spiritual director Jan Johnson, in *Listening to God*, offers 30 Bible studies for meditation and spiritual

formation. The book is broken into six parts, each of which is sure to touch the felt needs and goals of many a reader, as evidenced by the titles: "Finding Intimacy with God," "Making Progress in the Spiritual Life," "Healing Life's Wounds," "Having the Heart of Christ," "Building Relationships," and "Moving Beyond Mediocrity."

A NavPress Spiritual Formation Book, *The River Within*, by Jeff Imbach, seeks to restore readers' passion and joy in Christian living. And in *Help Lord, I'm Sinking*, Carole Mayhall examines lessons she learned in the midst of her sister's illness and ultimate death from lymphatic leukemia.

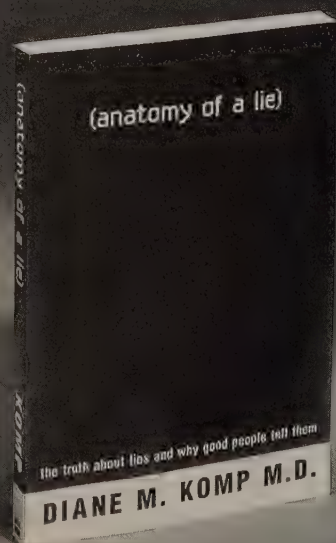
NavPress has also published an issue-oriented book, *Righteous Sinners*, in which author/scholar Ron Julian addresses the Lordship Salvation debate. It is an issue about which Julian has been thinking for over 25 years; and the results are apparent in this very readable theological work. The author addresses

the strengths and potential liabilities in both sides of the debate. His conclusions are difficult to dispute, which may explain why theologian J. I. Packer has endorsed Julian's work as follows: "Biblically exact and pastorally profound, this book is a gem!"

Indeed, many gems can be found among the recent Bible-related releases as we ride this new wave of popularity for history's most popular book by far. And many more are on their way. Publishers have done their part and will continue to do so. It is up to readers not to be content merely to own these rich Bible resources but to read and study them. As that happens, Bible ignorance will be dealt a crushing blow. We can only hope that when George Barna does his next survey of Bible knowledge, he, along with the rest of us, will be pleasantly surprised.

By L. Katherine Robbin, a freelance writer in Philadelphia, PA.

The truth about lies and why good people tell them.

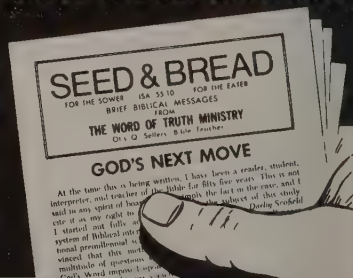


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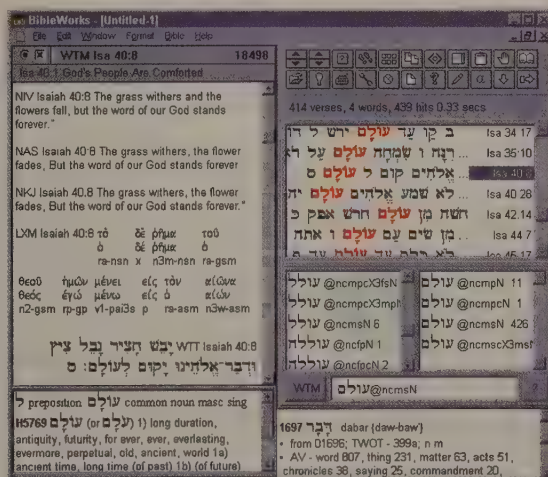
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VIRTUAL EXEGESIS

Bible software is changing the way we study the Word.

If you take the Bible seriously and you have a computer, you should have a good Bible-study software package. We talked to several people who have used Bible software for awhile to learn why they prefer it. While we weren't surprised to find that all of them still read a print Bible daily, most said they can't imagine going back to nonelectronic books for word studies, lesson and sermon preparation, or Bible-based writing. Today products exist for every budget, ministry orientation, and range of study needs.

Academic pioneers

Seminarians at the beginning of their ministries' learning curve find original Bible languages the steepest part of that uphill road, says Wendell Stoltzfus, a seminarian and bookstore employee at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia. "I think people buy the [Bible-study] software here at the seminary for translation [studies when working from the original languages]," he says.

"When you have AGES Software's Early [Church] Fathers collection of 42 volumes [on one CD-ROM], it cuts down on having to pull so many books from the shelf," says Charles Biggs, another Westminster seminarian and bookstore employee. Biggs also speaks well of other publishers' multivolume electronic libraries, especially when used in one research project. "I didn't have the time to read through every book," he explains. So he searched for the specific ideas he needed, and the software pulled up every reference contained in every book on the CD-ROM. "It keeps you from having to go the library," he says.

Beginners should be wary lest their Bible software become a crutch, Biggs cautions. One Westminster professor claims that those who rely on Bible software before they become grounded in

Greek and Hebrew can handicap their growth. Biggs says 15 percent of today's students have laptops, though fewer than 5 percent bring them to language classes. As Biggs suggests, it's more constructive for seminarians to think through their thoughts in class—and save the high-powered tools for study time.

Interlinear Greek and Hebrew texts are what Sr. Elizabeth Picken, theological consultant to the bishop of the Diocese of Saginaw, Michigan, wants in her high-end Bible software. "I think it's much easier to use Bible software than a concordance or a multiple-translation book," she says. "It's easier than thumbing through commentaries. If I want something specific, I can look through numerous volumes in less time."

Pastors on the cutting edge

Tom Cucuzza, pastor of Northland Bible Baptist Church (St. Cloud, Minn.), has used Bible software for about 10 years—ever since he began running Scripture Scanner on an 8088-based PC. Then he read an ad for WORDsearch for DOS, which had Strong's Concordance, and has stayed with the program ever since, relying today on WORDsearch for Windows. Cucuzza sees clear advantages in using Bible software, though it hasn't supplanted his paper sword yet. "I use my computer exclusively for study," he says. "However, I do my devotions in my leatherbound Bible because it's more comfortable." But he would not choose to give up his computer either. "I see the computer as more of a research tool. Obviously it's easier to have 15 books open on my computer than on my desk."

Fr. Brian Cavanaugh of Franciscan University (Steubenville, Ohio) says, "I use Liguori's Bible on Disk for Catholics and find it most useful. It has improved my sermons [to have] the Barclay commentaries and the Hebrew/Greek nuances of a word in English." Br. Daniel

Korn, director of mission effectiveness for Liguori Publications (Liguori, Mo.), has been using Liguori Faithware products for over a year, mainly to write prayer services and pamphlets. "I used to do all that manually," he explains: he would photocopy pages, spread them out on a table, mark the copy using a highlighter, then type the desired worship texts on a computer. "Now I take it and [assemble] it directly, all at my desk, at one time."

Korn still uses his print Bible for preaching because, he says, "it doesn't look good to run off sheets" or read from them. He also uses it for spiritual direction, because "it's much more proper and symbolic to have a book and its readings." On the other hand, he notes, for private study a computer can help a person search Leviticus completely for a certain word or phrase—and one doesn't even have to spell the word completely, thanks to the artificial intelligence of Bible programs' search tools. It's not an either/or question, he suggests, because one can own a print and an electronic Bible and benefit from both. "It helps me with my paper Bible, having perused over all these sources [electronically]."

Men and women with a mission

Sharon Gray, a Wycliffe missionary leading an Old Testament translation project in Mali, West Africa, spoke with us while stateside for training in Dallas. "I primarily use Bible Windows," she says, "when I'm preparing to work with the [native] Dogon translators. My job is to check the exegesis. I search on words that recur throughout the book, which I would never do [otherwise] because to sit down with a concordance would just be too great a job." For her work, Gray says she requires "all sorts of different versions" to check against the actual mean-

Virtual Exegesis

ing of the text. She also needs French translations because she communicates with her collaborators in French. "I work better on a table with books in front of me, but I can see that in the future, if I have a laptop, it's going to be much more convenient," she says.

Missionaries have budgetary and logistical constraints as well. Indeed, the challenges of shipments to and from the Ivory Coast have kept Gray from upgrading her computer and software until later this year. Nor can missionaries always use the latest technology. For one thing, their work is specialized; for another, their computers are typically not the most current model. Gray's supervisor recommended she consider switching to a different program, but she found it complicated. She says, "I guess you get used to one thing, and then you judge everything else by it." In summary, says Gray, her Bible software "makes me lazy on my Greek and Hebrew, because the computer tells me how to

parse my verbs—but it all saves time."

Bob Liichow of Inner-City Christian Discernment Ministry (Grosse Pointe, Mich.) uses a range of programs for his cutting-edge ministry. Logos Bible Software, Bible Windows, WORDsearch, and LESSONmaker, with AGES Software's Master Christian Library and the "very inexpensive" Early Church Fathers from EBS all help him write sermons and books as well as produce daily updates to his Web site (<http://www.discernment.org>). "Computers have been a real blessing," he observed. "There's so much information on the Internet that I think we're going to be culpable before God if we don't teach well and become the most learned and best trained [ministers, and faithful]. There's so much out there."

Not for prayer

Pastors and academics do most of the research-oriented study for which Bible software excels. Yet seeking or possessing a ministerial degree is not required in

order to use a Bible program.

John M. Espey of Perth, Western Australia, says, "I was a user of Online Bible (dos) for many years but could never afford a new version as I am on a war-service pension. It was great while I had it, and it proved very useful while I spent seven years in bed. It made reading my Bible so much easier, as I could not hold the hard-copy version."

Robert Mills is director of publications for PLC Publications (Lenoir, N.C.), home of *The Presbyterian Layman*. He has used QuickVerse and BibleWorks during the last eight years. He says he uses a print Bible for his devotions, and it's always open when writing Sunday-school lessons "just to look up one quick reference or to have a whole passage in front of me, rather than to be flipping back and forth between my word processor and my Bible program."

Depending on what's appropriate for the situation, Mills is comfortable using either a print or electronic Bible. Usually,

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he says, "I'm sitting here with books spread out around me; that's the way I work. But QuickVerse [on a computer] is much quicker than [just] me with a Strong's Concordance."

"I'm a layperson, of course," says Kay Hall, a freelance writer based in Cocoa Beach, Florida. "I don't know Greek or Hebrew, but I've learned inductive Bible study through Precept Ministries of Chattanooga, Tennessee, so I really like being able to access the meaning of the original Greek or Hebrew words with only one or two clicks [of a mouse]." Because it has Strong's numbers plus Greek and Hebrew dictionaries, she uses the Online Bible on her Macintosh "to support the Bible-study classes I take through Precept—they have daily homework—[and for] topical studies, when I have something to look up. The Online Bible has Nave's and Thompson Chain Reference; those are good tools for topical studies."

Personal prayer time is different, though. "It is nice to curl up with the leather-bound [Bible], so I use that for my daily reading," she says. "For prayer, you wouldn't use the computer," says Sr. Elizabeth Picken. "The whole ambiance is more comfortable" with a paper-based Bible, especially because you can take it anywhere.

A new generation

"I think [Bible software is] an immensely valuable resource, because it allows for quicker and more specific research," says John Kohlenberger of Portland, Oregon, who prepared the concordances for the NIV. He's used Bible software for 20 years. However, Kohlenberger says pastors now in their forties are on the cusp of the shift from paper to screen. "If you have something against computers, then I guess you'd prefer a book. You tend to stay with what you've got," he says. Kohlenberger predicts Bible software will catch on faster "as laptop and notebook computers keep getting smaller, and as people use computers more when they're younger."

By Steve Deyo, former editor in chief of ComputerUser magazine and currently president of the Deyo Group Online. He may be reached at steve@deyo.com.

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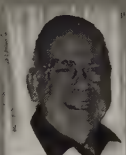
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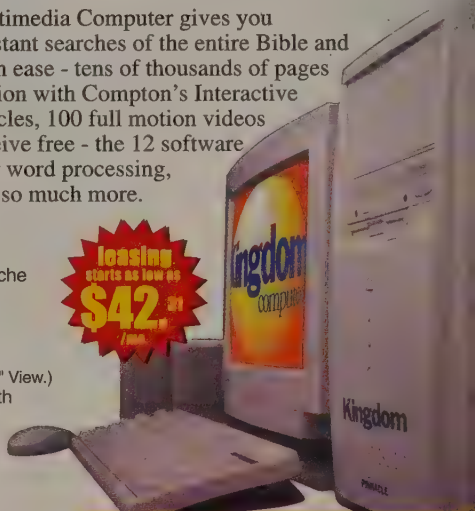
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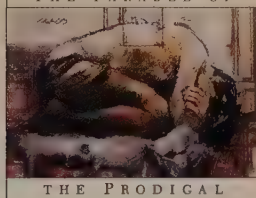
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The Clumsy Embrace



Croatian **Miroslav Volf** wanted to love his Serbian enemies; the Prodigal's father is showing him how.

The title of his most recent book—*Exclusion & Embrace: The Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation* (Abingdon)—sounds like the scholarly work that it is. But for Croatian-born Miroslav Volf, this academic exploration of who we and our enemies are to each other was driven by a personal quest. As a young man in Communist Yugoslavia, Volf saw firsthand the ethnic frictions that turned bloody after the breakup of the country. “An important factor in the war,” he says, “was the drive for pure identities—hence the term ‘ethnic cleansing.’ Persons belonging to the other ethnic group would be swept away like dirt so that one could have a ‘clean’ ethnic house. Since we live in a world that is inhabited by many groups, the desire for pure identities leads inescapably to violence and bloodshed.” He began searching for a resolution to the tension that existed in him between the “natural

**INTERVIEW BY
KEVIN D. MILLER**

instinct to fight for your rights" and the teaching of his Pentecostal parents "that the enemy is there to be loved."

His quest took the form of theological reflection—which soon caught the notice of the academic world. This month, Volf, 42, begins a new position as Henry B. Wright Professor of Theology at Yale Divinity School, following seven years of teaching at Fuller Theological Seminary. He maintains ties to his homeland by serving as visiting professor of systematic theology on the Evangelical Theological Faculty in Osijek, Croatia, his alma mater. After studying at Osijek, Volf attended Fuller Seminary and the University of Tübingen, where he received his doctoral and postdoctoral degrees under Jürgen Moltmann. He talked with CT about the impact the story of the Prodigal has made on his thinking.

You say the story of the Prodigal Son teaches us a "theology of embrace." What do you mean by that?

After the war broke out in the former Yugoslavia, I started thinking about the whole issue of relationship between cultures and between individuals who are part of cultures. How should I relate to my friends and my fellow Christians who are Serb, and who find themselves on the other side of the barricades? Right about that time I was asked to write a paper addressing the upheavals in Eastern Europe from a theological perspective. I asked myself, How am I going to relate to those who have injured me and my country?

I tried to apply liberation theology to the situation, which says we need to fight first for justice and liberation and then we can get reconciliation. It didn't work. Both parties saw themselves as oppressed, and both saw themselves as engaged in the struggle for liberation. So the main categories of liberation theology, oppression and liberation, serve to justify the struggle rather than lead to peace. Then it occurred to me that one of the best portrayals of what lies at the core of Christian faith is this amazing story of the Prodigal, which I read as an expression of what God did for us on the cross. Suddenly those open arms of the father became for me the picture of who God is, how God had acted toward sinful humanity. And not only how God acted toward humanity, but how we ought to act toward those who have sinned against us.

How did that lead you away from a liberation-theology paradigm?

I started thinking about the implications of the Prodigal story for how we relate to one another in situations of conflict, of enmity, of wrongdoing, of suffer-

ing. At the center of Christian faith lies not so much liberation, but the embrace of the wrongdoer. That was where the idea of a "theology of embrace" was born. It is simply the Prodigal's father not giving up his relationship with his son—in spite of the wrongdoing of the younger son. When that son returns, the father runs toward him without having heard a single word from that son. He shows his son grace and acceptance because he was and he is and he remained his son even through the wrongdoing. That is what we see on the cross.

But it doesn't stop there. The God who runs toward us—the wrongdoers—also demands we do the same with those who have wronged us. So there is a social meaning to the cross. Divine grace obligates. In his book *The Real Jesus*, Luke Timothy Johnson argues that the core of the gospel is found at the end of the Gospels in the story of the crucifixion. The significance of the crucifixion is not only what God does for us; consistently throughout the New Testament the crucifixion is portrayed as the pattern that we are to follow. It is a model of social behavior toward the other as well as a statement about what God has done for us.

How does a theology of embrace apply to conflicts in places such as Bosnia and Northern Ireland?

The basic challenge in all these conflicts—indeed, the basic challenge in all human conflicts—is the same one identified in the story of the Prodigal: the relationship between justice and peace, liberation and reconciliation, law and grace. Do you call first for justice, then peace? First liberation, then reconciliation? Or is it the other way around?

When I read the Prodigal story, I saw

that the primacy was given to grace, embrace, reconciliation. Not cheap reconciliation—"nothing that happened between us matters, so let's hug each other and everything's going to be okay." Everything *wouldn't* be okay. But also not the pursuit of what you might call "strict justice." As a way of resolving problems between people, this simply will not work, because strict justice is impossible in the real world in which we live. The stage on which we fight for justice was partly built by unjust means, and the fight for justice itself always and inescapably creates new injustice. If our relationships are governed by the idea of strict justice, they will never be healed.

Instead, I see in this story a dual emphasis. One can distinguish in it the *will to embrace* and the *embrace itself*. The will to embrace the other is absolutely indiscriminate and unconditional. It does not depend on anything that the other person has done, and it applies to every and any individual. The Prodigal's father runs toward his son; he is willing to embrace him no matter what the son will say. The will is there. And yet the full reconciliation takes place after the Prodigal's confession. It takes confession for the Prodigal to be transformed into a son.

The grace we see demonstrated here affirms justice in the act of transcending it. Just as forgiveness always entails blame (try offering forgiveness to somebody who thinks he or she has done no wrong!), similarly, every act of grace entails affirmation of justice precisely in the act of transcending the claims of justice.

But it still takes two to embrace.

Yes. The offer of embrace can be there, but there must also be a willingness on the part of the other party to belong to the relationship and to behave in a way that builds rather than undermines the relationship. Consider the relationships between the father and the Prodigal and the older brother and the Prodigal. It took the willingness of both the father and the younger son before their embrace could take place. But the older son did not will to embrace. Therefore, no embrace followed, at least as far as the story goes.

In your book you talk about the older brother's use of moral categories versus the father's use of relational categories. How are these different?

The older brother's behavior is governed strictly by the rules, by moral rules:

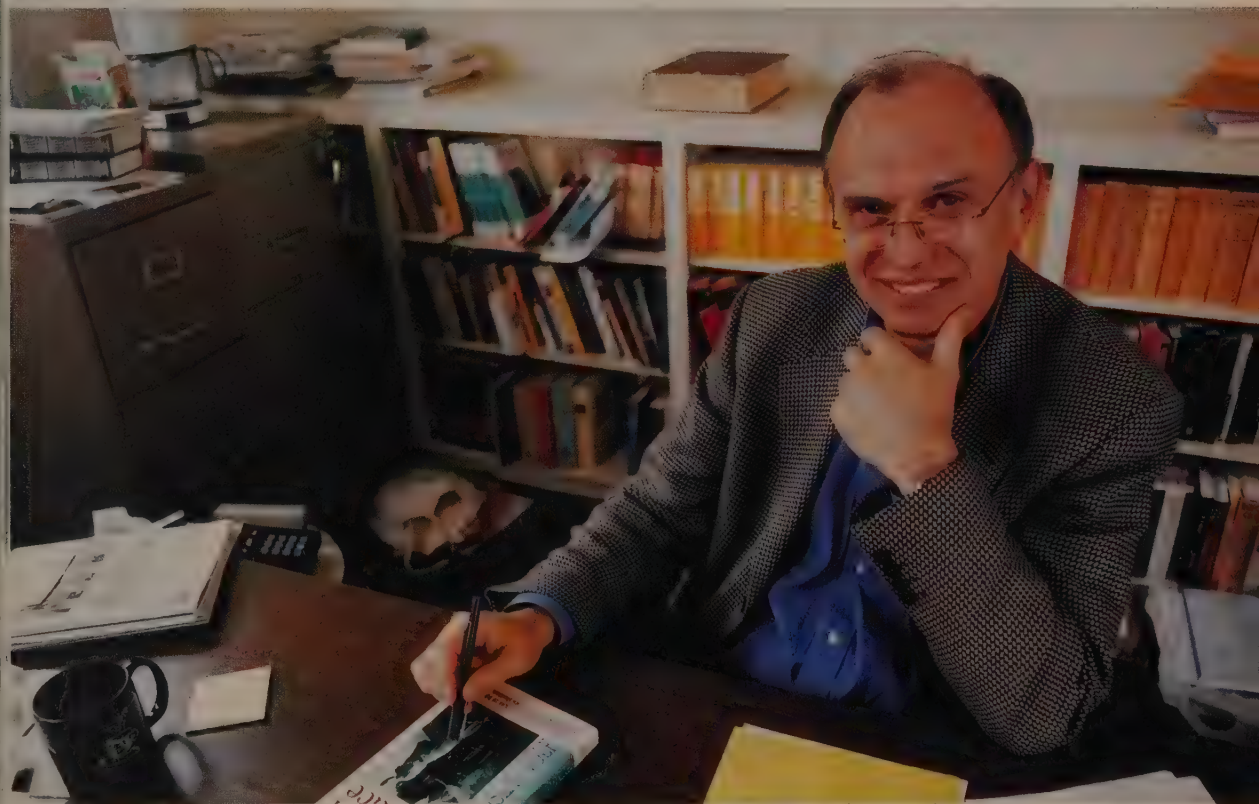
if you do this, then this must happen to you. If you squander the inheritance, you've got to return as a hired hand. He is unwilling to accept his younger brother's return because he is received not as one who had squandered but instead is reinstated as a son. From the perspective of the older brother, not only did the younger brother break the rules by leaving, but also the father broke the rules by accepting the younger. The older son operates on the basis of established rules and organizes all behavior around those rules.

One might expect that the father would, in contrast, simply set aside the

regulate who is in and who is out; the father is governed not by the rules but by his unshakeable love toward both his sons. Augustine puts it something like this: "Love, then do as you please." In other words, love, which is not completely beyond the law but represents its fulfillment, will do the right thing.

If you say that relationship is prior to moral rules, how would you answer people who say, "Well, I've taken on this certain identity that may not be morally fitting of the rules, but relationship is prior to

ship along, so they're good things. But they become bad things when they become the narrow gate through which the relationship must always pass. When this happens, the rules become the basis for the relationship and, in a sense, become a substitute for the relationship. Relationships are too complex, our lives too messy and too wonderful, to be governed by strict rules. This doesn't mean rules should be pushed aside—especially grand rules that specify for us what is right and what is wrong. And yet, I think we have to say that relationship ought to endure even the breach of those rules. I have to hold on to



Miroslav Volf: "I've done the embracing of those who have wronged me deeply. It's clumsy. It's like God's call to Abraham to 'go to a land I will show you.'"

rules. But he does not. He both affirms and transcends them. He affirms them in that clearly the younger son will not get a second inheritance. The son must bear the consequences of his action. And yet the rules are also transcended in that the son is reinstated as a part of the family. The older brother is concerned with rules that

that, so let's just love each other?"

What I'm suggesting is that there is a middle road. It runs between an indiscriminate acceptance of everything and anything (which is typical in modern cultures that emphasize "inclusion") and a life according to inflexible, strict moral rules (which is often used as a bulwark against the culture of inclusion). That middle way is a supple kind of love that attends to who the other is and how the relationship is developing.

Rules help govern and steer a relation-

the other, even when the other is doing wrong.

You've talked about "a theology of embrace" and "strict justice." In your book you also talk about the interplay of "identity of otherness." How does that fit into the story?

I see it in the behavior of the father, but also negatively in the behavior of the older brother. In order to extend grace, you need to make a journey together with the person to whom you are extending



that grace. That's what the father does in never giving up on his son. The father never becomes self-enclosed in his own existence after the son has departed into the far country. Instead, he keeps his erring son, the son who sought to undo himself as a son, in his heart. He suffers the son's departure and therefore is always willing to readjust his identity as the identity of his son shifts.

That's a very significant feature of grace—the sense of being with another person and making a journey with that person. It requires being open and providing space in oneself for the other person even as that person is changing for the better or for the worse. To do this, I must readjust my own identity in the relationship to that other. In good relationships, we are happy to grow as the other person becomes part of us and who we are. When we suffer the changes in fractured relationships, we keep possible the healing of that relationship. It is this

kind of commitment that I see exemplified in God's coming into the sinful world to die for our redemption.

That makes sense, considering how the Old Testament Law was broken, and yet God did not void the covenant with his chosen people.

You have Yahweh saying in Hosea, "How can I hand you over, O Israel?" Why? Because God is bound to Israel with "bonds of love." God's commitment and covenant are irrevocable. That's the eternity of the covenant and, therefore, I would say, the priority of the relationship. All sorts of things can happen within a relationship, but relationship is forever; the commitment to the other is eternal. And because this eternal commitment is there, it leads God—and anyone who is in relationship—to suffering on account of the other who has done wrong. If anything, in the New Testament, this kind of divine commitment

gets intensified and its scope expanded.

A different way of making the same point would be to say that, at its core, the Christian faith is not about justice. It's about justification. There's a world of difference between the two. Now that does not leave justice outside of it, but puts a different spin to it. If Christian faith was about justice, it would also be about enforcement of justice in relationships between people. The whole of the relationship between God and people and people by themselves would be governed by enforcement of justice, so violence would then be an integral part of what Christian faith is about. But it's not about that. It's governed by justification of the ungodly; it's governed by showing the kind of grace to the one who has done wrong, which makes that person and the relationship just again. This is the Christian—the Christlike—way of dealing with the wrong that is presumed to be there.

We need to justify each other even when there's wrong done.

That's exactly what I want to argue. In our human way—a way that is both alike and different from the divine way—we need to seek to make the unjust person just and thereby create just peace between us. To say that we need to justify each other is a different way of saying what the apostle Paul said. He summarizes the whole teaching of Romans by applying it to the relationship between Christians. In 15:7, he instructs, "Accept one another as you have been accepted by Christ." This is in his letter in which justification plays such an important and significant role. His injunction is to make the pattern of divine action toward us a pattern of our actions toward the other.

Does this theology of embrace apply only to the follower of Christ or also to non-Christian institutions like governments?

I think it also applies to governments. But what we don't have yet is extensive exploration of ways in which it does. I think one of the things that we as theologians ought to be doing is dialoguing with political scientists and lawyers to explore what kinds of implications this would have for establishing and meting out justice.

I think a very good example of this kind of possibility is what's happening in South Africa with the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. There was a marvelous piece in the *Christian Century* by Peter Storey, past president of the Methodist church in South Africa, in which he argues that the experiences of the commission there point "beyond conventional retribution into a realm where justice and mercy coalesce, and both victim and perpetrator must know pain if healing is to happen. It is an area more consistent with Calvary than the courtroom. It is the place where the guilty discover the pain of forgiveness." I think we ought to explore what this may mean for our judicial system. I'd like to explore it with colleagues in other disciplines, but I'm not sure that I have ready answers about it yet. What I am pretty sure, though, is that *not* to explore social and political implications of divine grace extended to sinful humanity in Christ would be to betray the love of our faith and to abdicate our social responsibility.

How do you respond to those who say that what you are proposing

is conceptually elegant but of no practical good?

My friend Jürgen Moltmann put that question to me in a slightly different way. I was presenting the paper on the social upheavals in the former Yugoslavia that I referred to earlier, arguing that we need a theology of embrace rather than a theology of liberation. Rather than Croats simply fighting for their liberation and Serbians simply fighting for their liberation, and therefore Christian faith serving to legitimate their fighting, we need something that will unite the two, a theology that reconciles the warring factions. Moltmann, who has been a granddaddy of liberation theology in many ways, in his very pointed and penetrating way asked me, "But can you embrace a *četnik*?" *Četniks* are notorious Serbian fighters. I paused—not because I didn't know what to say, but because it was difficult to say for me. It was at a time when a third of Croatia was occupied and when many of our cities and towns were being destroyed. Many people had been driven off their lands, and Croatia was full of refugees from many other countries. Finally, my response was, "I can't; but as a follower of Jesus Christ I ought to be able to." And in many ways, that question and my answer accompanied me as I was working through these issues. What would it take to embrace a *četnik*? What would it take for me to have the will to embrace? What would it take then for that embrace to actually take place? I think those are some key issues with which we have to struggle.

Have you ever literally embraced a *četnik*?

Actually, I've never met one, but if I did I think I would have the will to embrace him, though I also think that much would need to happen before the embrace—a full embrace, an embrace that is not a charade—could take place. Most of us, though, have our own *četniks*. And yes, I've done the embracing of those whom I felt have wronged me deeply. It's hard. It's clumsy to do. It's like God's call to Abraham to "go to a land that I will show you." You have no idea where that land is, but you open your arms and you embrace, unsure about what's going to happen. It takes tremendous courage to do so. It takes practice to do so. It takes self-giving. It also takes suffering. That's the tragic side of it. And yet, in that tragedy there is incredible promise. 

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The Other Brother
Had a Point





What kind of world would this be if people were rewarded for squandering their families' inheritance?

*M*ost of us grew up calling Jesus' story about a man and his two sons the parable of the Prodigal Son, but it is not. Jesus did not begin his tale by saying, "There once was a man who had a father and an elder brother."

"There was a man who had two sons," he says, letting us know whom the story is really about—a father who loved his two children to distraction and wanted them to love each other too. This is a comforting story until you notice something odd in it: the father does not wait for a confession or a promise of better behavior in the future. Instead, he rushes out to embrace his son and kisses and forgives him before the son can even get a word out of his mouth.

While this image may be excellent news for the prodigals among us, it is also disturbing news, because forgiveness is one of those gifts of God that cuts both ways. We all need it, and when we get it from God or from one another we know what new life is all about. But forgiveness is forgiveness of sin, and sin is wrong, right? In order to be forgiven, someone has to have fallen short of the glory of God, which may be as simple as having failed to be kind to someone, but which may also be as complicated as having killed someone.

**BARBARA
BROWN TAYLOR**

Whatever the crime, very few of us would deny the possibility of forgiveness, but most of us would insist on penance, on the sinner's heartfelt confession and willingness to pay for the wrong that has been done. Then along comes this story of instant forgiveness with no strings attached, and we cannot miss the point: that the extravagant love of God both fulfills and violates our sense of what is right.

Preachers and teachers often insult this parable by turning it into a cartoon in which a sulking, mean-spirited older brother begrudges the love a father shows for a reckless, fun-loving younger brother who has come home. But that is entirely too simple, and Jesus said nothing of the kind.

Instead, he told a darker story, a story about a younger son who was so hungry to see the world that he wished his own father dead—at least symbolically—by asking him to settle his estate early and give both brothers their share. So the father—apparently valuing his child's freedom more than his own



WARD SMITH

security—divided his livelihood and said good-bye to his younger son, who went off and squandered everything, until one day he “came to himself.” That was when he decided to go back home, composing a pretty calculated confession as he went, one designed to get him back with a roof over his head and food in his belly, even if it meant he had to live as a servant and not as a son.

He came home, in other words, to live off his *brother's* inheritance, having spent his own in loose living, and no sooner did his father see him coming down the road than the elder brother's fatted calf was killed and the celebration was on. There were no extra steps between the younger son's return and his welcome-home party, no heart-to-heart with the old man, no extra chores, no go-to-your-room-for-a-week-and-think-about-what-you-have-done, just a clean robe for his back, and a fine ring for his hand, and a pair of new sandals for his feet. The father did not even wait for his elder son to get home from work before beginning the festivities, “for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!” Then the elder brother came home from the fields, heard the music and the dancing—and I am glad that I was not the one who had to tell him what it was all about.

I am an eldest child myself. I know what it is like to break in parents, to step aside as they exercise their new and improved skills on younger siblings, and then to take the rap for the little criminals when they mess up. I remember one Saturday afternoon when I was supposed to be looking after my two sisters and my parents came home early. Within minutes they had hauled me by my elbow to the upstairs bathroom to show me my little sister, clutching a fat black crayon in her fist, putting the finishing touches on the claw-footed porcelain bathtub that had once been white. Did she get spanked? No, she was just a little baby who did not know any better. Did I get spanked? Yes, I was the older sister who should have kept her out of trouble.

Older siblings frequently get the raw end of the deal, as the elder brother apparently does in the parable at hand. My guess is that he was not incensed by his younger brother's return, or even by his father's for-

giveness of him, but by the celebration. Let the penitent come home, by all means, but let him come home to *penance*, not a party. Where is the moral instruction in that kind of welcome? What about facing consequences? What kind of world would this be if we all made a practice of rewarding sinners while the God-fearing folk are still out in the fields?

The church thrives on its ministries to the poor, the broken, the sick, and outcast, but what about those of us who are holding our own? What about those of us who work hard to keep our jobs and stay in our relationships and take care of our health and pay our dues but never seem to get any credit for it, while the homeless and the addicted and the downtrodden get all the atten-

tion? What do you have to do to get a party around here? Do you have to go off and squander your inheritance before you can come home to be embraced, and kissed, and assured that you belong?

“Listen!” the elder son protests. “For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!” God help the elder son. God help him, and God help all of us who understand his rage, who have felt so excluded and whose hurt has run so deep that we have cut ourselves off from the very ones whose love and acceptance we so desperately need.

“This son of *yours*,” the elder brother says, excluding himself from the family—this son of yours who is no kin to me, nor am I kin to you if you are going to choose him over me.

But here is where the loving father earns his title. He does not take a swing at his firstborn, as some of us might have been tempted to do, nor even remind him to honor his father. He knows that he has lost both of his sons. He has lost the younger one to a life of recklessness, but he has lost the older one to a more serious fate, to a life of angry self-righteousness that takes him so far away from his father that he might as well be feeding pigs in a far country. He wants his father to love him as he deserves to be

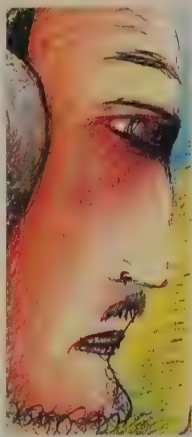
loved, because he has stayed put and followed orders and done the right thing.

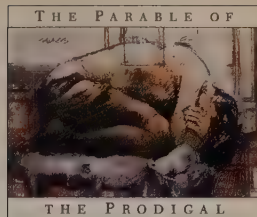
He wants his father to love him for all of that, and his father *does* love him, but not for any of that, any more than he loves the younger brother for what he has done. He does not love either of his sons according to what they *deserve*. He just loves them, more because of who he is than because of who they are, and the elder brother cannot stand it. He cannot stand a love that transcends right and wrong, a love that throws homecoming parties for prodigal sinners and expects the hard-working righteous to rejoice. He cannot stand it, and so he stands outside—outside his father's house and outside his father's love—refusing his invitation to come inside.

But his father turns out to be prodigal too, at least as far as his love is concerned. He never seems to tire of giving it away. “Son,” he says, reclaiming the boy, “you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours.” His love for one child does not preclude his love for the other. The younger one's recklessness cannot deflect it any more than the elder one's righteousness. They are a family; they belong to one another, and a party for one is a party for all. “We had to celebrate and rejoice,” the loving father says to his elder son, “because this brother of yours”—not *my* son, but *your* brother—“was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.”

It is the elder brother's invitation back into relationship not only with the loving father, but also with the wayward brother. It is an invitation to recognize his own lostness and foundness; but the parable does not tell us how it all turned out. The story ends with the elder brother standing outside the house in the yard with his father, listening to the party going on inside. Jesus leaves it that way. I think, because it is up to each one of us to finish the story. It is up to each one of us to decide whether we will stand outside all alone being right, or give up our rights and go inside to take our place at a table full of reckless and righteous saints and scoundrels, brothers and sisters united only by our relationship to one loving father, who refuses to give us the love we deserve but cannot be prevented from giving us the love we need.

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Rejecting the Prodigal

The early church debated whether apostate Christians could be forgiven again.

I have not suffered greatly for my faith. I worship God freely, where and how I choose to do so. My property has never been confiscated because of my convictions. I have never been threatened or harmed because of my faith. The greatest pain I have suffered as a Christian has been self-inflicted—sorrow over sins committed, discouragement over recurring temptations.

These minor sorrows are assuaged by the comfort the parable of the Prodigal Son offers. When I read this story, it is the image of loving, open arms of the waiting Father for his raucous, repentant son that leap off the pages. But this interpretation has something to do with the context in which I read the parable. If I had grown up as a member of a persecuted, endangered church, I might read and interpret it differently.

For the early church, persecution sporadically erupted against the Christian community, inflicting intense abuse and suffering. How, I ask myself, would I have reacted to an order to sacrifice to the emperor, particularly if I knew that simply a pinch of incense sprinkled on the coals of a Roman altar could save my life, family, and property? Or what if I were put on trial, as in the case of the beloved Bishop Cyprian in the middle of the third century:

The proconsul Galerius Maximus ordered Cyprian to be brought before him. . . .

Proconsul: "Are you Thascius Cyprianus?"

Cyprian: "I am."

Proconsul: "Have you allowed yourself to be called 'father' of persons holding sacrilegious [that is, Christian] opinions?"

Cyprian: "I have."

Proconsul: "The most sacred emperors have ordered you to sacrifice [to the emperor as a god]."

Cyprian: "I will not do it."

Proconsul: "Have a care for yourself. . . ."

Cyprian: "Do as you are bid. There is no room for discussion when the issue is so clear."

Proconsul: "You have lived for a long time holding sacrilegious opinions. You have gathered a large number of accomplices around you in your blameworthy conspiracy. You have proved an enemy to the Roman gods and their sacred worship. Nor have the pious and most sacred Emperors Valerian and Gallienus, the Augusti, and Valerian, the noble Caesar, been able to recall you to the observance of their rites. And so since you have been convicted as the instigator and ringleader in most atrocious crimes, you shall be an example to the accomplices in your crime. Your blood shall be shed in accordance with the law."

After saying this, the proconsul read the verdict from his tablet: "We command that Cyprianus be executed by the sword." Bishop Cyprian said, "Thanks be to God."

Cyprian persevered in his faith to the very end and received the martyr's crown.

But what of those who had lapsed in their faith

CHRISTOPHER A. HALL

If we continue to dilute Christ's call to holiness, will the world around us ever take us seriously?

and offered sacrifice to the emperor? Was a second chance, a new beginning, possible for those who had so gravely sinned? Could the ruptured and violated relationships between Christians—between those who had courageously confessed their faith and those who had rejected it—experience restoration? Could those who had lapsed in their faith be forgiven? What does the parable of the Prodigal Son have to say to this situation?

Same story, different perspectives

Some early Christians, many of whom lived under constant stress because of their uncertain status in the Roman world, reacted differently than I do to Jesus' parable.

Tertullian, a gifted theologian writing roughly 150 years after the apostle Paul, argued that the parable of the Prodigal Son must never be applied to Christians. Could a Christian sin in such a rebellious, high-handed manner and still be forgiven? Tertullian said no. To extend forgiveness so broadly would release a torrent of sin within the church. Not only "adulterers and fornicators," but "idolaters, blasphemers, and renegades . . . every class of apostates" would use the parable as an excuse for sin. "Who will worry about losing what can be so easily regained?" Tertullian asked. "Security in sin develops an appetite for it."

Tertullian's rigorous position appealed to some early Christians because it seemed to strengthen the church's resolve against sin, a resistance sorely needed in the Roman Empire. For many years the early church inhabited a wider world that viewed it with great suspicion as an upstart religion bent on undermining Roman society.

Others besides Tertullian agreed that the parable of the Prodigal Son didn't apply to Christians who turned apostate and then wished to return to the fold. The presbyter Novatian, while acknowledging that God had the power to forgive even Christians who lapsed in a time of persecution, insisted that those who had sinned in such a grave manner could not be readmitted to the church's fellowship. For Novatian, the church consisted of only the *katharoi*, the "pure." How could those who had tainted

themselves with the sin of apostasy validly or safely rejoin Christ's spotless body?

Novatian's hardline position, though, was vigorously opposed by other church fathers, almost all of whom were pastors or bishops in the church. Ambrose, a leading bishop in Italy, argued that to deny people—Christians or non-Christians—the possibility of forgiveness, even for the gravest of sins, was to rob them of all hope. The Prodigal Son had found his way home by the path of repentance. Where would his repentance lead him if he could never go home again?

Jerome, a church father well known for his sandpaper personality, observed the context of the parable of the Prodigal Son in Luke's gospel, commenting that if Christ welcomed "publicans and sinners," how could the church refuse them? The very rhythm of the Incarnation demanded that the church be a forgiving, welcoming community: "What clemency can be greater than that the Son of God should be born a son of man, that He should endure the tedium . . . of gestation, await the arrival of birth, be wrapped in swaddling clothes, become subject to His parents, grow through successive ages, and after the insulting words, blows, and scourging become for us accursed on the cross, in order to free us from the curse of the law, being made obedient to the Father, even to death?"

Jerome insists that God the Father's foreknowledge encompassed and envisioned the return of his wayward sons and daughters, a journey home illustrated by Jesus' parable and made possible by the Incarnation. "God with whom all future events are already past and who knows beforehand all that is to be, runs forward to his coming and by His Word, which took flesh by a virgin, anticipates the return of His younger son."

Augustine, a contemporary of Jerome, readily admits the returning son did not deserve his father's love. Has there ever been a repentant sinner that did? Augustine reasoned that the younger son's recognition of his unworthiness demonstrated his once proud heart had become humble, malleable before God's glory and purposes. "This unworthiness, this glory we do not deserve, the younger son acknowledges

when forced to by his need. The younger son, I repeat, acknowledges this unworthiness when wandering far from his father's home . . . he acknowledges God's glory, but only when constrained by want. And because through that glory of God we have been made what we were not worthy to be, he says to his father: 'I am not worthy to be called your son.' Unhappy as he is, he obtains happiness through humility and shows himself worthy by the confession of his unworthiness."

Gregory of Nazianzus, a church father writing in the East in the late fourth century, asked how Christians such as Novatian could withdraw the possibility of confession, repentance, and forgiveness from any person and still retain the gospel. What hope would such harsh judges possess if measured by their own standards? "Do you not accept repentance? . . . Do you not shed a tear of mercy? I hope you may not encounter such a judge as yourself! Do you not revere the kindness of Jesus, who 'bore our weaknesses and carried our diseases,' who 'did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance,' who 'wished for mercy rather than sacrifice,' who pardons sins 'seventy times seven times'?"

What especially irked Gregory about those who refused to welcome home repentant sinners was the selective standard these moral rigorists seemed to apply in their judgments. Novatian, for example, apparently was willing to forgive those who struggled with greed, but he was much more reluctant to forgive those guilty of sexual transgression. Gregory wryly noted that Novatian "harshly condemned sexual immorality, as though he himself was not made of flesh and blood. What do you say to this? Do my arguments persuade you? Come on, stand here on our side, on the side of human beings; let us magnify the Lord together." Gregory reminded his reader of the forgiveness David received after his adultery with Bathsheba and his murder of Uriah; indeed, the forgiveness of "the great Peter, after he succumbed to human weakness at the time of our Savior's passion," demanded that the church mirror that same mercy, compassion, and forgiveness.



Spiritual blindness engendered by pride, Gregory insisted, rather than a concern for holiness, lay behind the rigorist party's unreasonable demands. Had they forgotten that they, too, were mere human beings, apt to succumb to temptation if left to themselves? Gregory openly acknowledged his own weakness apart from Christ: "I confess myself to be a man, a changeable creature of unstable nature. . . . I know that I am myself 'beset by weakness,' and that I shall receive in proportion as I give."

Second chance forgiveness

Let us not be too quick to dismiss the moral rigorists. In ways I echo Tertullian's misgivings about blanket forgiveness. Hasn't such a message encouraged moral laxness and irresponsibility? Tertullian surely thought so. Many Christian leaders share my dismay over the spiritual health of the church today. I want to pronounce God's judgment on the church's shortcomings. I want the church to be a holy, pure, committed, sacrificial, righteous community. I want evil to be judged. I want to see Christ's kingdom established in power and purity. If this means that we must speak harshly to some and exclude those who have violated the community's moral standards, so be it. If we continue

to dilute Christ's call to holiness, faithfulness, and commitment, will the world around us ever take us seriously? The moral rigorist in me says no.

But here is a different thought experiment: Where would I be today if I had applied Tertullian's perspective and moral standard to my own life? As I recall my attraction to the gospel as a college student in the late sixties, I remember two aspects of Christ's message raised my hopes: the possibility of forgiveness and the possibility of genuine moral change. While Tertullian might have offered forgiveness to me as a repentant pagan, his rigorism concerning postbaptismal sin would have discouraged me. Deeply ingrained sinful patterns dominated my life. They would not change overnight. I knew what I was capable of doing. What if I made a serious mistake after my conversion?

Was this hope? If so, it was a slim hope, one filled with doubt and anxiety. I needed a story that would encourage me to genuine confession, repentance, and change, without threatening me with expulsion from the family if I fell into sin and needed to find my way home. I needed a safe, secure context for facing the hard work that lay ahead for me—to face honestly years of self-deception and moral confusion.

Haunted by the elder brother

The attitude and language of the moral rigorists are eerily similar to the attitude and language of the elder brother in the parable—the brother who sees no reason to welcome the younger prodigal home. The elder brother complains to his father that he had been "slaving" for many years. He had "never disobeyed" his father's orders. Surely if any one deserved a fattened calf, it was he. In other words, he was "pure."

The father's response no doubt shocks the older brother. "My son . . . you are always with me, and everything I have is yours." Calves, robes, rings—all belonged to the older son. Why? Because he was a member of the family, just as was the younger prodigal. Obedience and hard work were appropriate within the family structure, even praiseworthy, but the older brother's position as a son was not predicated on his hard work and obedience. The older son had not learned that family language is largely the language of love, forgiveness, and reconciliation, not that of moral obligation. Or, as Gregory reminds the followers of Novatian, calling them to reform their thinking and behavior: "Come on, stand here on our side, on the side of human beings."

The older brother's inheritance was

guaranteed because he was a son, a member of the family. He could neither earn nor deserve it. Of course the fattened calf must be slaughtered and a party thrown for the younger son. He was a member of the family, not a hired hand or slave. Yes, the younger brother and son had made terrible mistakes, wounding his father's heart, but his status as son had never changed. It couldn't. He had thought he could return to the family circle as an outsider, a family slave, but that was impossible. Once a son, always a son, even when lost in a foreign land. All that the father asked and longed for was that the son would come to his senses, change his mind about his behavior, and come home.

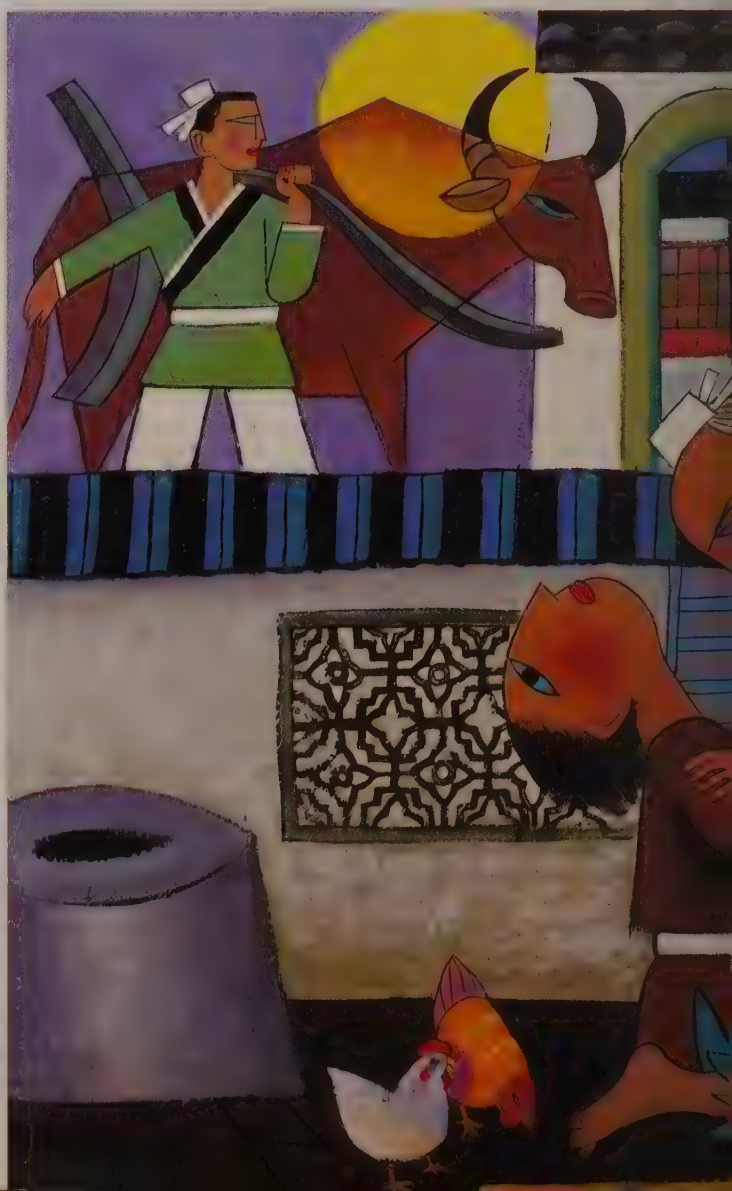
It is this insight that church fathers such as Ambrose, Augustine, Jerome, and Gregory of Nazianzus grasped so well. They never denied the importance of integrity. They knew that unconfessed sin was spiritual poison and could contaminate individuals and the life of the church as a whole. They stressed the importance of church discipline. Still, the fathers clearly understood that moral rigorism and the language of moral obligation left too much unsaid. The family language of the gospel provided a different moral and linguistic context for dealing with sin.

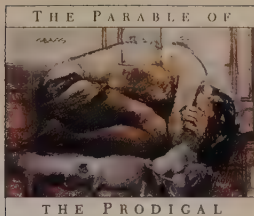
Sons and daughters, the fathers realized, could make terrible mistakes. As Gregory put it, we are all "changeable" creatures "of unstable nature . . . beset by weakness." If so, only the gospel, with its offer of forgiveness and restoration to the family's fellowship, could remedy the brokenness of the human heart. The entire story is one of grace, grace undeserved, unexpected, unearned. In Jerome's words, "grace, which is not a payment due to merit, but has been granted as a gift."

Only in Christ and within Christ's body, the church, can we experience forgiveness and freedom from the past's mistakes. Only within Christ's family can we learn to live as he desires. Only within the Trinity's embrace of love can we learn to face what needs to change. Indeed, as Jesus stressed in his parable, repentance, confession, and forgiveness are always possible—an occasion for celebration in heaven and on earth. **CT**

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The Missing Mot





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When my prodigal son left our world,
it sent me on a sojourn as well.

*J*ournal entry, August 19, 1996:
Where is my son?

This question began what became a steady stream of notations documenting the disorienting passage in my life when one of my children left the world in which my husband and I had reared him—the world of faith. An unexpected aspect of this painful season has been the equally forbidding sojourn his pilgrimage has meant for me.

Before our son was born, my husband and I took “natural” childbirth classes. The pain was supposed to be “managed” by breathing techniques. But by the time I was pushing that boy through my loins (after 36 hours of labor), the classes didn’t mean a thing: *Nothing* could have prepared me for what that felt like. In the

**WENDY
MURRAY ZOBA**

same way, nothing in all the parenting books I had dutifully read prepared me for the stages of pain and grief that having a prodigal child brought to my otherwise well-ordered, biblically packaged, evangelical world.

Early on, when I first began to wonder what was happening in my son, I pictured the saucer-eyed, silky-haired little helper who used to come to me as a four-year-old with pen and paper in hand and ask, “Mom, draw me an Ewok” (the furry creatures from *The Return of the Jedi*). I drew so many of them I could have marketed them.

Our son was the same age when he told us he was afraid of dying. We talked to him about his fear and tried to help him understand that, when we belong to Jesus, we don’t have to be afraid. He wanted that assurance, and my husband,

Bob, on the spot, helped him pray. Our son prayed the words after my husband, asking the Lord to come into his heart and free him from his fears. He prayed loudly, clearly, without mumbling.

When he was 10, he took Communion for the first time. He said he felt like he “was growing in God” when he took it. A year later, he asked his dad (a pastor) to baptize him. He was nervous at first, he said, but afterward he was “excited.”

When confusing things started to happen during his later teens—things that signaled a departure from our unwritten family “covenant” (the details of which do not pertain here)—I brought assumptions to the situation that operated out of the Ewok-era model of who my child was to me. (This is where mothers tend to lose all grounding in reality.) So the first leg of my sojourn as a prodigal’s mother involved general disorientation: I was trying to reconcile who this person *is* in relationship to who he *was*. What went wrong? What had I done to turn my son against me?

I found comfort in the prophet Isaiah, who became the mouthpiece for God’s own laments over his wayward Israel: “This is what the LORD says, ‘The children I raised and cared for have turned against me. Even the animals—the donkey and the ox—know their owner and appreciate his care. But not my people Israel. No matter what I do for them, they still do not understand’ ” (Isa. 1:23 NLT; all Scripture references are from the NLT unless noted otherwise).

I thought that if *God* experienced this kind of heartache, then perhaps my son’s wanderings were not necessarily attributable to my failures alone.

My disorientation evolved into spiritual resolve to do battle for my son's soul—to wage a campaign to rescue him from the Devil. I arose early in the mornings to be alone with God, first to right myself in his presence, and then to storm the gates of heaven on my son's behalf. I fasted. I prayed. I even went so far as to go into his room and face down the myriad freakish posters and photos he had posted on his walls. I defied these people to try and steal my son's soul out from under me.

For all my resolve, I was shocked at my emotional disequilibrium: I was unable to predict or control my own tears, which erupted effusively at unexpected moments. Isaiah spoke to me again, revealing a similar intensity in the Lord's resolution: "Because I love Zion, because my heart yearns for Jerusalem, I cannot remain silent. I will not stop praying for her until her righteousness shines like the dawn, and her salvation blazes like a burning torch" (62:1).

I was soon to discover, however, that the problem with the all-out combat mode is that battle fatigue sets in before results. The more I prayed, fasted, and otherwise pulled out the stops in spiritual warfare, the more I expected measurable effects. When it became painfully evident that results were not part of this picture (at least at this point), the peaks of inspiration eventually were followed by troughs of dejection. This sense of powerlessness framed the third phase of my sojourn: discouragement.

Journal entry, October 1, 1996: *"Surely in vain have I kept my heart pure; in vain have I washed my hands in innocence" (Ps. 73). I am so utterly discouraged. I don't go right to sleep at night so it is hard in the mornings to get up. Almost consistently, I am not rested. I hear the Devil whisper in my ear: "It doesn't do any good. Why not just sleep in and be rested?"*

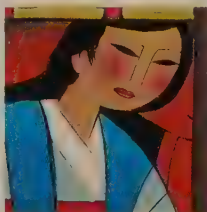
My son's increasingly frequent and unaccounted-for late nights meant that sleeplessness became a way of life. This only exacerbated the many conflicting emotions that assaulted me. My disorientation at times degenerated into hostility; my resolve metamorphosed to dejection. All of these emotions conspired to weigh me down with doubt about God's "intimate acquaintance" with my mistress.

Again, late one night (*always* late at night) I got up and found an old copy of

Augustine's *Confessions*. I saw in the contents the section titled "Grief of his mother Monnica at his heresy and prayers for his conversion."

Thou sentest Thine hand from above, drewest my soul out of that profound darkness, [as] my mother, thy faithful one, weeping to Thee for me . . . discerned the death wherein I lay. And Thou heardest her, O Lord; Thou heardest her and despised not her tears when, streaming down, they watered the ground under her eyes in every place where she prayed; yea, Thou heardest her.

The Lord sent Monica a dream showing her a vision of a



shining youth coming towards her, cheerful and smiling upon her, herself grieving, overwhelmed with grief." Augustine recounted that the dream assured his mother that "where she was, there was I also." She told her son the dream and he contradicted

her interpretation, suggesting that it meant *she* would one day be where *he* was—without faith. "She was not perplexed by the plausibility of my false interpretation," he said. Her assurance "moved me more than the dream itself."

"Now more cheered with hope," he wrote, "yet no whit relaxing in her weeping and mourning, ceased not at all hours of her devotions to bewail my case unto Thee." A bishop comforted Monica, promising he would speak to her son: "Go thy way and God bless thee, for it is not possible that the son of these tears should perish." And in fact, when her son was 32 years old, many years after the dream, he finally stood "where she was" in the Lord.

I had no visions like Monica's to comfort me that night. But reading a former prodigal's own account of his mother's travail enabled me to drop off to sleep hearing the words he recounted repeatedly in his remembrances: *Thou heardest her, O Lord*.

Momentary light

There were moments when the darkness lifted and God momentarily gave me his eyes. These moments were like lighthouses in a heavy fog—I was able to see past the immediacy of the pain and instead capture a glimpse of my son as a searching and wandering soul. Once when my heart had been so quickened I got up (long after

everyone had gone to bed) and drew an Ewok. Scribbling in a frenzied flurry, the pen followed the same strokes and shading it had 14 years earlier, when my son would curl up next to me exulting in the near-perfectly rendered fuzzy arms, wrinkled boots, draping hood, and rusty spear. That night I captured just the right sparkle in the Ewok's eyes and the exact curl in the dark little lips.

I attached a letter to the picture of the Ewok and left it on my son's pillow. I told him that even though he no longer asks me, I would gladly draw him all the Ewoks he could ever want.

But for all the fleeting blessedness of these glimmers of light, they were not sufficient to quell the force of the pain of his course. My "combat fatigue" and discouragement eventually gave way to acquiescence. By his eighteenth year, it had become painfully apparent that the circumstances of our respective existences were incompatible. We arranged for him to study abroad for his first semester of college, giving us all some needed relief and distance from our turmoil. He was ready to go; I was ready to send him.

Journal entry, December 20, 1997: *He leaves in a few weeks. At this stage of our relationship so much has been darkened by confusion and alienation that I don't know how it can be fixed short of both of us being miraculously wiped clean and given a fresh start.*

We said good-bye in mid-January. The drive to the airport was quiet with only sporadic superficial chit-chat. He walked 10 steps ahead of us through the many corridors we had to trek to get to the ticket counter, passing through a corridor where glass tiles formed a wavy wall and a free-lance saxophonist was playing a sloppy version of "Somewhere over the Rainbow."

We stayed with him at the gate for the hour and a half prior to his boarding. Airport CNN was on, and I heard more than I wanted to about Oprah's trip to Amarillo, Texas, to take on the beef industry and Al Gore's antigenetic-discrimination legislation.

Marla Maples appeared on *Larry King Live*, and for a few minutes her blather lulled me into temporarily forgetting what I was there for. She talked about her conversation with Ivana after she and Donald Trump broke up; about how having a child out of wedlock disgraced her Southern Baptist sensibilities; and about how she was "really happy" about her new

movie career (movie career?). Then, with shocking suddenness, the boarding call for our son's flight interrupted her mesmerizing inflections. Everyone started shuffling. "Well, son, are you ready?" his dad asked him.

He was.

He hugged his dad and thanked him for sending him. I honestly didn't think I was going to cry because there really hadn't been a lot of emotion welling up inside me up to that point. But my heart started pounding when he hugged me and thanked me too. I told him I loved him and he said it back. I handed him a note I had written him, and then I started to cry; but I kept it inside.

He passed by the ticket checker and started down the ramp. Then he dropped his tickets and had to interrupt the flow of people to pick them up. (I couldn't pick them up for him.) He gathered them and walked on. Bob belled over the heads of several people, "Good-bye, Son!" Our son turned back and saw me waving. There was no stopping the tears. I didn't even try.

My husband put his arm around me

and we walked back through the corridors. Marla Maples said that you just have to keep putting one foot in front of the other, no matter how hard it seems. ("Life is full of ups and downs.") So we walked, one foot in front of the other, past the saxophonist (playing "Has Anybody Seen My Gal?") and beyond the wavy glass wall. "If you are walking in darkness, without a ray of light, trust in the LORD and rely on your God," Isaiah says (50:10).

A friend of Ruth Graham's once told her: "You have the right to ask the Mighty One to do more for your children than he could if you were with them. Open thy mouth wide." I decided to stop focusing on my son's choices and start focusing on God's trustworthiness.

This ushered in the next stage of my sojourn as a prodigal's mother: release and trust.

When I read Luke 15 and "The Parable of the Two Lost Sons" (as my husband calls it) soon after that moment, I approached it not as a seminary graduate, but as a struggling mother looking for some help. I was struck by the com-

plete omission of any reference to the Prodigal's mother in that parable.

Where is she?

Thinking about it from the vantage of a mother who, at times, has felt as lost as her son, her absence made perfect sense. Prodigals, I would think, by definition, assert their autonomy in a way that most dramatically severs the intimate parental bonds. And in many cases, that intimacy goes back to the heart of their mothers. That severing leaves mothers like me without a role. So we retreat, emotionally disoriented, physically fatigued, spiritually embattled. (Fathers probably do, too, but that's another article.)

I realized that I needed to subsume my role as tormented mother under that of being a trusting daughter—waiting on God in faith. That didn't mean I stopped praying and weeping for my son. But it helped me understand why, perhaps, "the mother" is not a player in this parable.

My guess is that she was there. She was probably where I have found myself throughout all stages of this sojourn: behind a closed door, looking out a window, waiting for her son to come home. **CI**

The truth about lies and why good people tell them.

(anatomy of a lie)

the truth about lies and why good people tell them

DIANE M. KOMP M.D.

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WILD CARD ELECTION



Christian Coalition

JOHN W. KENNEDY

Three months ago, Democratic leaders, buoyed by a humming economy and a popular President, envisioned recapturing the House of Representatives with a swing of 11 seats in the November 3 midterm election.

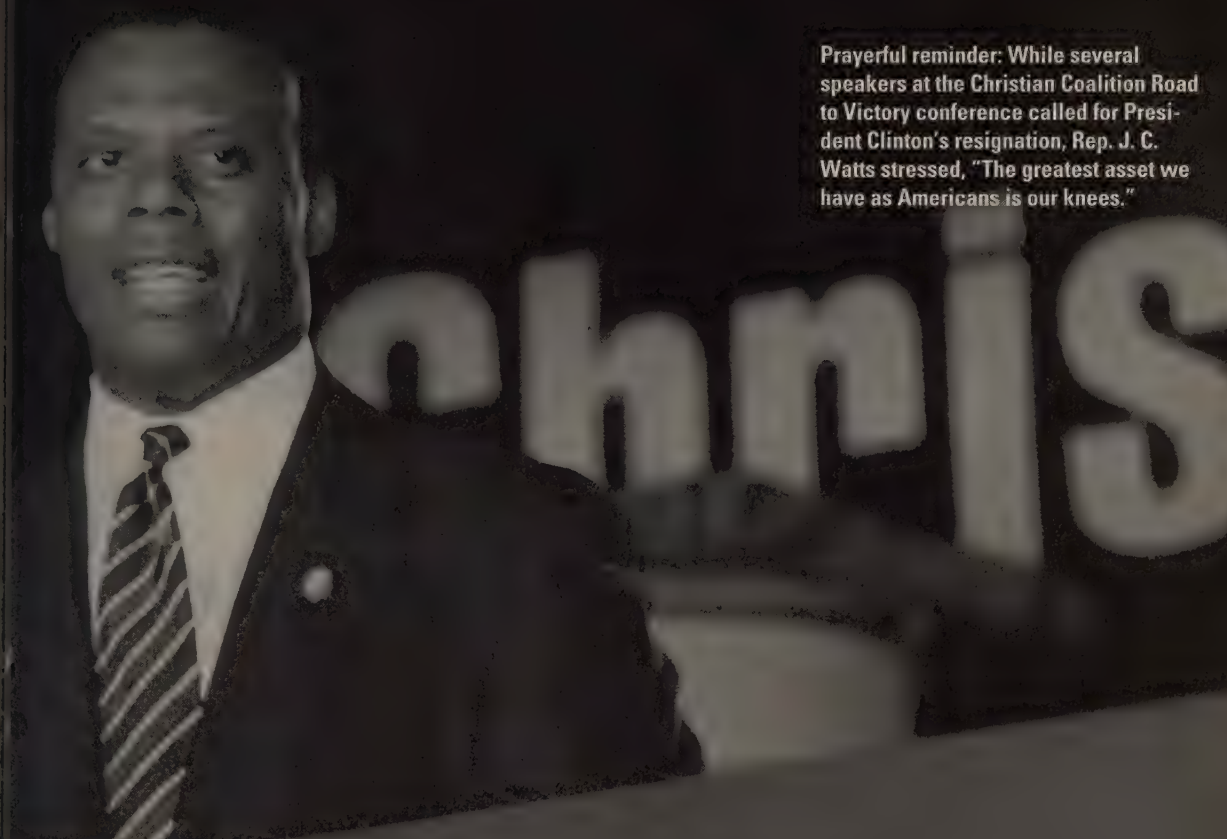
While pre-election polls show Americans continue to approve of the way President Clinton is handling his job—especially

the economy—the release last month of independent counsel Kenneth Starr's report to Congress outlining 11 reasons for impeachment based on the Monica Lewinsky sex scandal has acutely deflated Democratic hopes of gaining in Congress.

Indeed, pollsters are predicting disillusioned voters will stay away in droves. But Alan Secrest, president of Cooper and Secrest, one of the nation's largest Democratic polling firms, says, "The angrier voters are, the more likely they are

to turn out." He predicts those few who do end up at the polls will be voting with raw emotions.

John C. Green, director of the Blum Institute of Applied Politics at the University of Akron, estimates that less than a third of the electorate will vote, making it one of the lowest turnouts ever. Conservative Christians, who tend overwhelmingly to vote Republican, could tip the balance in tight races, resulting in a considerable gain for the GOP in Congress. While polls indicate moral issues are so



Prayerful reminder: While several speakers at the Christian Coalition Road to Victory conference called for President Clinton's resignation, Rep. J. C. Watts stressed, "The greatest asset we have as Americans is our knees."

The Clinton factor and tensions with the GOP test the mettle of religious conservatives.

denly a priority for the electorate, Republicans run the risk of overplaying their hand and causing a voter backlash.

As the Clinton scandal has unfolded, the organizations that form the backbone of the Religious Right are in flux. The Christian Coalition has retooled since wunderkind Ralph Reed left to become a political consultant last year. Focus on the Family's James Dobson, after clashing with top Republicans earlier this year, suffered a mild stroke in June, blunting his public threat to leave the GOP fold unless

Republican leaders refocused on the pro-family agenda. And Family Research Council (FRC) president Gary Bauer, mulling a year 2000 presidential bid, last month began running television commercials in Iowa calling on Clinton to resign.

GRASSROOTS STRENGTH: Despite changing faces and evolving roles at the top of several organizations, some believe the best days of the Religious Right are ahead.

Reed, now an Atlanta-based election consultant, told CHRISTIANITY TODAY, "The strength of the religious conservative movement has never been its leader-

ship, but its grassroots," Reed, 36, says, "The names and the faces of leaders may change, but what never changes is the fact that there are 20 to 30 million committed, devout, conservative people of faith who are deeply concerned about the moral direction of our country."

But has the GOP earned the everlasting loyalty of religious conservatives? Christian conservatives in Congress and state legislatures have few achievements to show to their supporters. The U.S. Senate, state and federal courts, and the White House have in different ways blocked conservative initiatives on taxes, abortion, and religious persecution.

Nevertheless, Randy Tate, the Christian Coalition executive director, suspects that organizational skills will tip the scales in close races. "It isn't going to be TV and radio ads and attack pieces coming through the mail," he says. "It's going to be which organizations are motivated and can turn out their supporters."

The struggle between fiscal and social conservatives rages on within the Republican party. Some GOP operatives try to avoid discussing social issues; yet they realize turnout among grassroots Christian conservatives will be higher than in the nation as a whole. Thus, after 18 months of inactivity, congressional Republicans finally began to act on moral issues over the summer. But the GOP would rather stick to economic issues. A National Republican Congressional Committee "critical issues survey" mailed in July contained questions on government spending, tax hikes, the IRS, government waste, crime, and a balanced budget amendment, but nothing on abortion, homosexuality, school prayer, or the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). Representative J.C. Watts (R-Okla.), the only black Republican in Congress, says such a strategy may backfire. "If you wait until six months before an election to bring up family issues, what's the Christian community going to think?"

After a February blast from Dobson, who vowed to abandon the GOP unless it acted on pro-family initiatives, fresh attention has been focused on the moral agenda, including removal of federal funding for Planned Parenthood, a ban on fetal-tissue research, an end to federally funded condom distribution, and elimination of the NEA.

Dobson, 62, says he is most frustrated with Republicans who pay lip service to family values at election time but have no commitment to winning in the legislative arena.

Bauer has joined Dobson in attempting to hold the GOP's feet to the fire, especially focusing on China policy and religious persecution (CT, June 16, 1997, p. 54). With faxes going daily to 400,000 constituents, the FRC—originally an arm of Focus on the Family—has become a potent force in calling attention to policy issues. Bauer, too, has threatened to bolt the GOP and take his followers with him.

LEGISLATIVE PROGRESS? Despite Dobson and Bauer's misgivings, Tate is pleased with the GOP-controlled Congress.

"This has been a banner year for the Christian Coalition," Tate says. "Our agenda is getting full attention; our issues are on the front burner on Capitol Hill."

Even though little Christian Coalition-supported legislation has been enacted, Tate sees value in getting legislators on the record for voters.

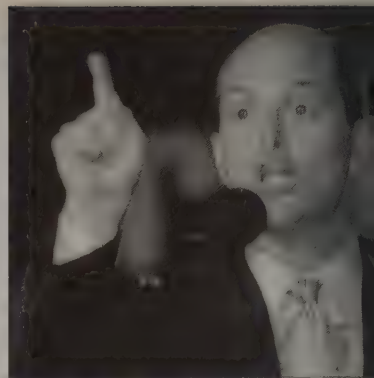
Several abortion-related issues have been addressed, including restrictions on partial birth abortion, a parental consent bill, and limiting funds for abortions overseas. A \$500 tax cut for families has been implemented. Congress also has discussed educational savings accounts, religious freedom, school prayer, and welfare reform.

Tate, now 32, came to Washington as part of the 1994 GOP revolution. But he lost a 1996 election in Washington State and last year replaced Reed at the Christian Coalition (CT, July 14, 1997, p. 60). In spite of a financially rocky start under his watch that included dwindling contributions, layoffs, and downsizing of operations (CT, March 2, 1998, p. 74), the Christian Coalition has rebounded, and Tate finds himself more influential outside of Congress than he was inside.

The Christian Coalition will promote its largest get-out-the-vote program ever, encompassing postcard reminders and an automated phone message from Tate to vote. On Election Day, for the first time, Christian Coalition members will drive voters to the polls. A record number of voting guides—45 million—will be distributed just before the election, primarily at churches. Membership is at 2.1 million, although Christian Coalition spokesperson Molly Clatworthy says there is no formal "membership" and names are not removed. She says the number reflects those who have "volunteered their time and financial support over time."

The lineup of two dozen speakers at the September 18–19 Christian Coalition Road to Victory conference to energize 3,000 faithful members looked like a Religious Right roll call, including National Rifle Association president Charlton Heston, Liberty University founder Jerry Falwell, Empower America codirector William Bennett, Eagle Forum president Phyllis Schlafly, radio show host Oliver North, House Speaker Newt Gingrich, House Majority Leader Dick Armey, Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott, House Majority Whip Tom Delay, Sen. John Ashcroft, and FRC's Bauer. Clatworthy says Texas Democrat Rep. Martin Frost and Colorado Gov. Ray Romer, Democratic National Committee chair, had been invited but declined to speak.

CRITICAL VOICES: Moderate evangelicals point out that the Christian Coalition does not represent all people of



faith, yet alternative groups such as the Interfaith Alliance and Call to Renewal have not come close in mustering such grassroots strength.

Jim Wallis, convener of the Call to Renewal (CT, Oct. 28, 1996, p. 86), says Tate's group continues to misinterpret biblical mandate. "The most important public policy question that emerges from the Bible is how the poor, the vulnerable are being treated," says Wallis, executive director of Sojourners. "Any organization that is calling itself Christian must have poor people and racial reconciliation on the agenda."

C. Welton Gaddy, executive director of the Interfaith Alliance, says, "Many of the Republicans in Congress are growing weary of trying to satisfy the Religious Right, saying, 'Whatever we do, there's always more they want.'" Gaddy, 56, is one of several moderate and liberal religious leaders who has signed "an appeal for healing" urging Americans to forgive Clinton and let him lead.

The Interfaith Alliance, which published voter guides in 1996 but will not this year, criticizes the Christian Coalition for distributing guides at churches. The Interfaith Alliance is urging candidates to sign a "code of civility" pledging they will not use religion as a political tool.

An IRS investigation dating to 1990 on whether the Christian Coalition's voter guides violate a ban on partisan politicking by tax-exempt groups continues. The Federal Election Commission's (FEC) suit against the Christian Coalition alleges the group engaged in partisan politicking for Republicans (CT, Sept. 16, 1996, p. 115). On September 8, the Christian Coalition asked a federal judge to dismiss the FEC suit. Six days later, the FEC filed a motion reiterating its request to fine the Christian Coalition and halt further political fundraising efforts.

THE PRICE OF PURITY: Politically active pro-family groups face a perennial



Changing of the guard: Randy Tate, far left, finds his Christian Coalition platform more influential than his congressional one. Gary Bauer and Ralph Reed, center, as well as James Dobson, right, continue to be key players in the Religious Right.



dilemma: If they wish to rule, they have to compromise in order to gain a majority. But the act of compromise smacks of betrayal to hardliners. Pragmatists say concessions must be made to ensure input into the political process, while purists say morality and political compromise are often at odds.

Pro-family leaders disagree on whether the Republican party should be more inclusive, with some articulating the so-called big tent philosophy. "The Republican party remains the most pro-family party in modern political history," Reed says. "To walk away from that tremendous achievement would do tremendous and irreparable damage to the pro-family movement."

Yet Dobson believes big-tent backers are in control. "They believe they can avoid such controversial issues as abortion, homosexual activism, safe-sex ideology, school choice," Dobson wrote in an April letter to supporters. "They call it a policy of inclusion, by which they mean that moderates and liberals will be favored and conservatives will be taken or granted."

As analyst Green sees it, "If Ralph Reed wanted a place at the table, you could say James Dobson is very concerned about what's being served."

In the 1996 presidential election, Dobson and Bauer threatened to sit out the campaign if the GOP's Bob Dole followed an abortion-tolerance plank in the platform or failed to pick a pro-life running mate. While Dole appeased Christian conservatives on those two counts, his tepid response to other concerns caused many to stay away from the

polls (CT, Oct. 7, 1996, p. 76).

Reed believes Christians who remain at home on November 3 will only help elect candidates with ungodly viewpoints. "While the marriage between the pro-family movement and the Republican party is imperfect, no marriage is perfect, certainly not in politics," Reed says.

Representative Watts, while no stranger to disagreements with GOP leadership, appreciates the constraints they are under. "If you try to measure your success in politics at the end of the day, you're always going to be frustrated," says Watts, who is also a Baptist pastor.

Tate has followed Reed's example as a firm believer in working within the existing system rather than threatening to reinvent it. "It's a recipe for disaster if Christians stay home, because then they have no voice and they become irrelevant," Tate says. "It's a marathon, not a sprint."

The Christian Coalition voter guides divulge which candidates do not toe the line on social issues. Nevertheless, Tate says it is important to forge alliances. Tate says, "We can find common ground with economic conservatives because we're interested in lower taxes and fewer regulations."

However, Rich Tafel, 36-year-old executive director of Log Cabin Republicans, a national organization of homosexual Republicans, may never find a place at the table. Organizers at the Texas state GOP convention in June denied the group a booth, even though they had 50 elected delegates participating.irate Christian protesters shouted at members of the group.

"They purvey hatred in the name of a God and a gospel that is all about love

and compassion and forgiveness and generosity, and a God whose particular mission is to reach out to the outcasts," says Tafel, an ordained American Baptist pastor. The success of the Republican party depends on becoming inclusive, rather than using a strict interpretation of Scripture as a litmus test, Tafel believes. RNC cochair Pat Harrison agrees that Log Cabin Republicans must be welcomed. "You can't be a majority party without a lot of different people," she says.

MORAL ARGUMENTS: Both sides in the homosexual-rights debate are using moral arguments to try to shift public opinion to their side. Homosexual-rights advocates demand fairness and equality, while opponents argue that homosexual behavior is destructive to individuals and families.

Recent efforts to adopt clauses prohibiting sexual orientation in discrimination in housing and employment at the state and local level have been largely successful. On the other hand, Senate Majority Leader Lott in June likened homosexuality to kleptomania and alcoholism. In addition, congressional Republicans for months have blocked the nomination of homosexual Democrat James Hormel as ambassador to Luxembourg.

Perhaps no issue has so stirred the fresh wrath of Christian conservatives as Clinton's executive order in May adding "sexual orientation" as a protected class of federal workers against discrimination. Conservative Christians say the executive order will eventually lead to establishing affirmative action and quotas for homosexual workers. Even so, a House proposal in August to repeal the executive order lost 252 to 176, as 63 Republicans chose not to appear in favor of employment discrimination.

Dobson decried the absence of GOP critics when Clinton signed the order. "The wording guarantees that those who claim to be homosexuals will henceforth be given preferential treatment in hiring, firing, and job-related activities," Dobson wrote in his July newsletter.

Bauer warns of further implications. "If homosexuals become a protected class, then same-sex marriage, homosexual adoption, and gay curriculum in the schools can't be far behind," he told supporters in August.

Concerned Women for America chair Beverly LaHaye says "sexual orientation" is not defined in the order. "Will this allow all perversions of sexual behavior to qualify?" LaHaye asks.

Conservatives say the GOP is playing defense against the homosexual-rights agenda at the national level, pressing for same-sex marriage, adoption rights, and employment protections.

IDENTITY POLITICS: Though they are not courting homosexual voters, some GOP candidates are starting to pitch their pro-family message to African Americans and Latinos for the first time.

Republicans have long ignored black voters, who cast nine out of ten ballots for Democrats in some states. But Florida gubernatorial candidate Jeb Bush found out four years ago that ignoring 20 percent of the state's electorate can result in defeat. This year, in his second campaign, he has been venturing into poor inner-city black neighborhoods with great frequency, and he is expected to win.

Moreover, RNC "freedom riders" around the country have been visiting urban black churches, where they have found advocates in the school choice debate after Clinton vetoed education savings accounts.

"We make a mistake if we don't make parental choice an issue, especially in large urban areas," Watts says. "It's going to be the civil-rights issue of the twenty-first century."

Watts says he has repeatedly told Republican leadership that not all African Americans agree with the old guard leadership typified by Jesse Jackson. Republicans can reach blacks, Watts says, because most have the same priorities as whites: lower taxes, safer streets, well-paying jobs, and better schools. "You can't just do outreach three or four months before an election; you have to have a long-term plan," Watts says. "In politics, people don't care how much you know until they know how much you care."

Hispanics are the fastest-growing group

of entrepreneurs, and African Americans are developing a middle class, factors that contribute to their interest in the Republican party. But so does a belief in traditional values, according to RNC cochair Harrison. "Hispanics and African Americans are leaving the Democratic party because they believe in faith and family," says Harrison, 56. "If you're not communicating to your customers, they go someplace else."

Watts, 41, is cosponsoring the "American Community Renewal Act of 1998" to spur economic development in urban areas. The measure would require state and local government groups to relax zoning, housing, tax, and business regulations in providing incentives for the working poor.

In the same way that Republicans will no longer write off blacks, pollster Secrest says Democrats will not concede the evangelical vote—an estimated one-third of the electorate—to Republicans. "Evangelicals are important because they are so numerous," Secrest says. "Democratic candidates often alienate evangelicals by inadvertently stiff-arming them by labeling them as extremist. Close to half of evangelicals are Democrats or independents." Secrest is advising Democrats to advertise on Christian radio. Bob Doyle, a Democratic consultant with Sutter's Mill Fund Raising and Strategy, has three clients advertising on Christian radio emphasizing their pro-life views. But they also stress personal accountability, trust, and character. "Democrats should not be ceding these issues to Republicans," he says. Doyle advises his clients to visit churches in their districts as part of the strategy to reach people of faith.

ON THE FRINGE: As Democrats and Republicans both tussle over middle-of-the-road voters, several fringe candidates are running this fall, using iconoclastic rhetoric that may appeal to Americans deeply alienated from electoral politics.

Political novice Geoffrey Fieger, a lawyer who has successfully defended assisted-suicide practitioner Jack Kevorkian against three murder charges, is the Democratic nominee for governor in Michigan. Fieger is known for his insolence, calling Republican Gov. John Engler "the product of miscegenation between barnyard animals and human beings" and Jesus "just some goofball that got nailed to the cross."

Margaret Cammermeyer, whose successful efforts to be reinstated in the military has been saluted by Hollywood in the TV movie *Serving in Silence*, is one of four

Democratic lesbians seeking to become the first openly homosexual nonincumbent elected to Congress. Cammermeyer, a 56-year-old decorated Vietnam War veteran, is running in Washington's Second District.

Operation Rescue founder Randall Terry is running for a U.S. congressional seat from New York as a political outsider who has toned down the rhetoric. His speeches and television commercials focus not on the "baby killers" and "sodomites" that Terry passionately crusaded against only four years ago, but on making social security voluntary and abolishing the IRS.

"Everyone already knows my pro-life credentials," says Terry, 39. "The challenge is to show I'm not a one-issue candidate." In speeches to churches in 1994, Terry accused Christian Coalition leader Reed of selling out to the big tent theory of GOP leaders (CT, Sept. 12, 1994, p. 61). Now he welcomes Christian Coalition members into his fold.

Terry, who has been arrested three dozen times, urged supporters to shove a aborted fetus in the face of Bill Clinton during the 1992 presidential campaign. Dobson endorsed Terry, saying "he's been a great friend of the family" and "I wish we had a dozen more like him in Congress." To protect Focus on the Family's nonprofit tax status, Dobson makes his political pronouncements as a "private citizen."

Terry has raised \$800,000, much of it from pro-lifers, and he continues to host a Christian radio talk show. Last month Terry finished second in the September GOP primary with 35 percent of the vote. Nevertheless, he will be on the November ballot as the Right to Life party candidate.

Meanwhile, 27 conservative politicians have hired Reed as a consultant. Reed may no longer be as pivotal as when he led the Christian Coalition, but as head of Century Strategies he could become as influential in a party that now has a majority in both houses of Congress and control of almost three-fourths of the governorships. In this year's primaries, 13 out of 15 of his clients won, and a half-dozen potential presidential contenders have inquired about his services.

"When I founded Century Strategies a year ago, my goal was to elect 100 pro-family, pro-faith, pro-free enterprise candidates at every level of government, but especially statewide and Congress," Reed told CT. "If we can do that over the next ten years, the transformation for the nation will be as dramatic as it was when African Americans and women candidates had their successes."

With reporting by Christine J. Gardner

Israel's Holocaust

A Jewish rabbi asks: Why shouldn't abortion in Israel be compared to the mass murder of Jewish children in Hitler's Europe?

Jacob Neusner

Rabbi Jacob Neusner has been called "the best friend Christianity has in this country" for his advocacy against public funding of anti-Christian art when he served during the 1980s on the national Council of the Arts (see "What the Rabbi Taught Me About Jesus," *CT*, Sept. 13, 1993, p. 27). A religion professor at the University of South Florida, Tampa, and Bard College, New York, he describes himself as "just a happy disciple of the sages of the Torah." Here the Harvard-trained author of 750 books (the *Chronicle of Higher Education* named him one of the most prolific authors in academia) turns his never-timid pen to an issue that hit him close to home—abortion.

My heart is broken. Just now, my wife's brother called from Jerusalem. He reported that his son's estranged wife the day before had aborted the baby they conceived two months earlier, on the very eve of the couple's final separation leading to divorce.

No law stood in the way of this act, no argument from morality. The Torah did not intervene. Lacking all legal rights—the child was not murdered, it was deemed a mere protoplasm to which my nephew had contributed—"it" had merely been "removed." The father was not consulted. Had he been, he would have confirmed that he wanted and would take paternal responsibility to raise the child. The grandparents had no say. They would gladly have welcomed the baby and, if asked, would have undertaken to nurture him or her.

Ah! phone calls from Jerusalem! That was not the first time the phone rang with news of family death in Jerusalem. More than 25 years ago, my brother-in-law called to tell us that my father-in-law had died in Jerusalem. As a tourist, he went swimming in the pool at the King David Hotel and, exhausted after a day of touring, drowned. The only difference was no one pulled him under and held him down. My brother-in-law's voice now, as then, was rich in sadness and pathos.

And why not? This perfectly healthy and normal infant in its mother's womb enjoyed every possibility of life, until the collusion of the mother and her physician took away any chance to live. It was an act of deliberation, with full knowledge of the consequence. I wish I could explain to myself why it is not comparable to an act of murder: deliberate, fully

intentional annihilation of the life of another.

We Jews are experienced in suffering murder, and we preserve the memory of the victims and their murderers. That is why we build museums. That is why I ask, how is mass abortion in the State of Israel such as is practiced by the secular (but not the religious) portion of the Israeli population not comparable to mass murder of Jewish children in German Europe? The well-documented cases of Nazis murdering infants and children—more than a million of them—involved not only the born but the unborn, including forced abortions, the killing of pregnant women and their unborn children, and the like. Is not abortion on demand an act of wanton and deliberate destruction of life? I think it is. Does not the state's provision for abortion on demand, a choice made preferable by the state's omission of aggressive provision for mothers to carry their children to term, compare to the state's sponsorship of mass murder? I think it does. As the numbers mount up, when do considerations of volume enter in and validate calling the annihilation of millions of lives "a Holocaust"? I think they do. Here is a Holocaust today. Every Jewish child born in the State of Israel is a survivor of the Holocaust sustained by Israeli law.

The State of Israel rightly invokes the Holocaust as a primary cause in the creation of the state itself: a refuge and a hope for the victims of the Holocaust. But its liberal abortion laws, the prevalence of abortion as a medium of contraception, the routine character of decisions to abort as a perfectly ordinary medical procedure—these political facts of public policy constitute the counterpart to the race laws and state-organized offices and institutions of mass murder that shame Germany through all eternity.

The difference is, Germany has acknowledged its shame. But for the annual annihilation of tens of thousands of Jewish children, the State of Israel acknowledges nothing. And, here at home, American Jewry's consensus is one-sidedly pro-choice. In desperation I try to tell myself abortion is not a Jewish issue. But the Torah intervenes, teaching that human life comes from God. And, when it hits within a family, it becomes very much a Jewish issue, too, no less than it is a Christian and a Muslim issue.

The abortionists call themselves "pro-choice." Indeed so, and the Torah teaches, "Choose life." 

Every Jewish child born in the State of Israel is a survivor of the Holocaust sustained by Israeli law.

Abraham Kuyper: A Man for This Season

The surprisingly relevant advice of a Dutch statesman for engaging postmodern culture.

Richard J. Mouw

The Dutch statesman Abraham Kuyper founded two newspapers, a university, a political party, and a denomination. Nor was he content to start something and then move on to quite a different project. During his career, which lasted from his ordination in the 1860s until his death in 1920, he regularly wrote articles for his newspapers; he taught theology at the Free University; he led his party both as a member of the Dutch Parliament and, for a few years, as prime minister; and he played an active role in the life (and controversies) of the Dutch Reformed churches.

Kuyper visited the United States in 1898, to deliver the Stone Lectures at Princeton Seminary. To observe the centennial of that visit, Princeton invited Yale philosopher Nicholas Wolterstorff to be this year's Stone Lecturer. Wolterstorff focused his lectures on political thought, describing his views as "in the line of Kuyper." The Princeton event, held this past February, drew an audience of over 300; it also featured two days' worth of seminars (cosponsored with Princeton Seminary by the Free University, Calvin College, and the Center for Public Justice) on Kuyper's thought, with presenters from the United States, Canada, England, the Netherlands, and South Africa.

The influence of Kuyper's thought has long been felt in the Reformed—especially Dutch Calvinist—branch of American evangelicalism, but the Princeton conference displayed a renewed interest in his thought, especially as it applies to contemporary challenges in public discipleship. His views were compared to the Puritan political traditions, the liberal "social gospel" theology, and recent themes in Catholic social thought.

Princeton ethicist Max L. Stackhouse, a principal organizer of the centennial celebration, saw the gathering as an important step in what he described as a "quest for a new public theology that will provide a viable alternative to both liberationism and a laissez faire ideology." Stackhouse, who was once an assistant pastor in a Unitarian congregation, describes himself as a "convert"

to Reformed thought. "It happened when I began reading the Puritans," he says; "I now see the Reformed heritage as at the center of future ecumenical thinking about our Christian responsibilities in the world."

Abraham Kuyper also came to Reformed orthodoxy by way of conversion. Entering the pastorate steeped in the liberal theology that he had been taught at the University of Leiden, he encountered parishioners who exhibited a vibrant evangelical faith. One of them, Pietje Baltus, miller's young daughter, boycotted his worship services because of the content of his preaching. When Kuyper visited her, she refused to shake his hand. Instead of being offended, Kuyper listened carefully. Later he wrote: "I did not set myself against them and I still thank my God that I made the choice I did. Their unwavering persistence has been a blessing for my heart, the rise of the morning star in my life."

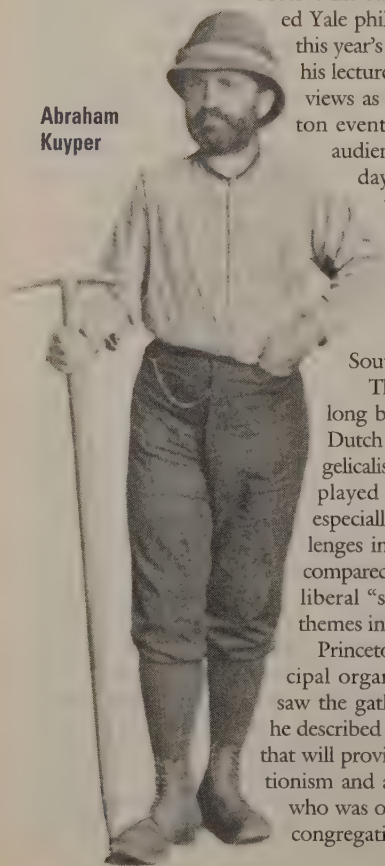
Having embraced evangelical Calvinism, Kuyper ever thereafter placed a strong emphasis on personal piety. In the midst of his busy public career, he wrote hundreds of meditations about the need for the individual believer to turn away from the demands of the active life and retreat into that very private sacred space where the soul is alone with her Maker.

In addition to his celebration of the experience of a Savior's love, he also placed a strong emphasis on the supreme lordship of Jesus Christ over all spheres of creaturely life. Kuyper's followers are fond of quoting the manifesto he issued at the Free University's inaugural convocation: "There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is sovereign over all, does not cry 'Mine!'"

One of Kuyper's most original themes is his idea of "sphere sovereignty." God, he insisted, built into the creation a variety of cultural spheres, such as the family, economics, politics, art, and intellectual inquiry. Each of these spheres has its own proper "business" and needs its own unique pattern of authority. When we confuse spheres, by violating the proper boundaries of church and state, for instance, or reducing the academic life to a business enterprise, we transgress the patterns that God has set.

As a Calvinist, Kuyper also believed in the pervasiveness of God's sovereignty.

Abraham Kuyper



ive reality of sin. In our present fallen-ness, the state has a special obligation to patrol the boundaries that separate the spheres. But governments too are affected by sin. Indeed, the "antithesis" between sin and grace cuts through all the spheres. Nevertheless, the original glory of God's creating purposes has not been completely limned. Not only are Christians called to how forth obedience to God's rule in all areas of life, but the presence of "common grace" in the world guarantees that glimmers of created goodness will shine through even where Christ's lordship is not acknowledged.

Kuyper's perspective on social issues has much in common with the views being put forth today by thinkers who are concerned with the proper shape of "the good society." A number of North American social critics (Peter Berger, Robert Bellah, and Mary Ann Glendon among them) have emphasized in recent years the important role that "mediating structures" play in providing a buffer zone between the individual and the state. Families, churches, and service organizations protect us from the all-encompassing tendencies of the state, on the one hand, and an isolated individualism, on the other.

Like these contemporary thinkers, Kuyper was eager to curb the power of the state. The various cultural spheres do not exist by governmental permission. They are established by God, and no human authority has the right to violate the Creator's intentions. Kuyper would appreciate the emphasis these days on "mediating structures," but he would be nervous about any tendency to spell out their importance in purely pragmatic terms. Families and artists' guilds are useful, in Kuyper's scheme, not merely for their strategic importance in limiting the range of governmental authority, but because they play a positive role in God's designs for helping people to flourish.

Kuyper's contemporary disciples face the challenge of defending his emphasis on the multiplicity of created spheres in a time when the fragmentation of human life is all too obvious. Don't we already compartmentalize our lives too much? Do we really need an elaborate theological justification for doing so? The New Age movement responds to the fragmenting of our lives by inviting us to transcend apparent polarities—public versus private, science versus the mystical—with the promise of new experiences of "connectedness." The radi-

cal postmodernists, on the other hand, encourage us to embrace fragmentation by rejecting "totalizing metanarratives" and resisting "the tyranny of wholes."

Kuyper's perspective suggests a way of avoiding these conflicting prescriptions for our present-day ills. The created "spheres," as he saw things, are not completely disconnected. They are a part of a larger created reality whose unity we can fully grasp only by developing a comprehensive "biblical world-and-life view" (one of his favorite phrases). The diverse arenas of human interaction are ultimately coordinated and linked in their mutual relationship to the transcendent will of the God who reveals his creating and redeeming purposes to us in the Scriptures.

We will not grasp the unity, then, by positing the "inner" connections of things that seem polarized. Only God's authoritative Word can shed the light that is necessary to illumine our post-modern pathways. In the Scriptures we learn that the creation is a cosmos and not a chaos, and that while the structures of creation are presently fallen, God still sustains them by his power and redeems them in Jesus Christ, in whom "all things hold together" (Col. 1:17).

If Kuyper's thought is to contribute

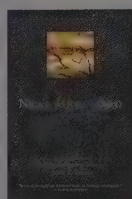
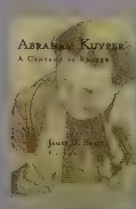
significantly, though, to the contemporary dialogue about public discipleship, it needs updating. He was given to racist comments and often used uncharitable terms in describing other Christian traditions. And he proclaimed the supreme authority of the ascended Christ in a manner that could easily encourage a Christian "takeover" mentality.

The resources for this necessary updating can be found within his own life and witness. In some of his writings he showed a remarkable sensitivity to the plight of the poor and oppressed—and he could even sound like a feminist at times! More important, his devotion to Christ occasionally demonstrated a deep sensitivity to nontriumphalist themes. The noted Kuyper scholar George Puchinger reports that a crucifix hung on the wall above Kuyper's bed. As he lay dying, no longer capable of speech, with his children gathered around him, Kuyper pointed to the image of the Savior on the cross. This is a picture of Kuyper's faith that should loom large in the much-needed effort to explore the contemporary relevance of his public theology. **CT**

Richard J. Mouw is president of Fuller Theological Seminary.

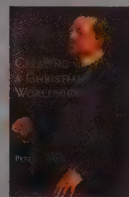
Those who wish to explore Kuyper's thought will find excellent resources in three volumes recently published by Eerdmans.

The first is **Abraham Kuyper: A Centennial Reader** (498 pp.; \$45, paper), edited by James D. Bratt, a beautifully produced book that includes a helpful overview of Kuyper's life and work and a selected



bibliography. This is the best available introduction to Kuyper. **Near unto God: Daily Meditations for Contemporary Christians** (240 pp.; \$14, paper), adapted by James Calvin Schaap, is an abridgement of Kuyper's devotional classic. Schaap, a gifted writer of fiction with a sinewy style, has sought to make Kuyper's meditations accessible to contemporary readers.

Finally, for advanced study, Peter S. Heslam's **Creating a Christian Worldview: Abraham Kuyper's Lectures on Calvinism** (300 pp.; \$28, paper) offers an invigorating in-depth engagement with Kuyper's Stone Lectures, setting Kuyper's thought in its historical context and underscoring its continuing relevance. **CT**



REFLECTIONS

Classic and contemporary excerpts

Talk Less, Listen More

Christian spirituality does not begin with us talking about our experience; it begins with listening to God call us, heal us, forgive us.

—Eugene H. Peterson in
Subversive Spirituality

Where Jesus Isn't Lord

Non-Christians will insist that we should keep our religion out of the way of their politics. But the reason for that is not that Jesus has nothing to do with the public realm; it is that they want nothing to do with Jesus as Lord.

—John Howard Yoder in
The Death Penalty Debate

Divine Chains

As a Christian, I am a prisoner of hope.

—Cornel West, quoted in
The Other Side
(July & Aug. 1998)

Seeing with God's Eyes

Here lies hidden the great call to conversion: to look not with the eyes of my own low self-esteem, but with the eyes of God's love. As long as I keep looking at God as a landowner, as a father who wants to get the most out of me for the least cost, I cannot but become jealous, bitter, and

resentful toward my fellow workers or my brothers and sisters. But if I am able to look at the world with the eyes of God's love and discover that God's vision is not that of a stereotypical landowner or patriarch but rather that of an all-giving and forgiving father who does not measure out his love to his children according to how well they behave, then I quickly see that my only true response can be deep gratitude.

—Henri J. Nouwen in *The Return of the Prodigal Son: A Story of Homecoming*

The Creator Is Preminent

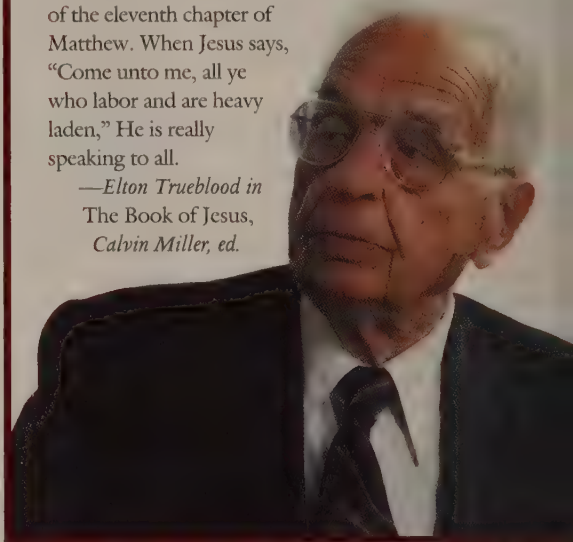
"What is the object of my love?" I asked the earth and it said: "It is not I." I asked all that is in it; they made the same confession. . . . I asked the sea, the deeps, the living creatures that creep, and they responded: "We are not your God, look beyond us." I asked the breezes which blow and the entire air with its inhabitants . . . heaven, sun, moon, and stars; they said: "Nor are we the God whom you seek." And I said to all these things in my external environment: "Tell me of my God who you are not, tell me something about him." And with a great

Our Yoke Sharer

It is not easy to be a human being. Human life carries with it marvelous possibilities of joy, but there are, at the same time, untold ways in which it can go wrong. Even after we have learned all that we can of the literature of tragedy, we have but an imperfect sense of the sorrow and frustrations which occur in countless lives. . . .

The universality of human sorrow and need is one of the reasons for the great attractiveness of the words of Jesus which appear at the end of the eleventh chapter of Matthew. When Jesus says, "Come unto me, all ye who labor and are heavy laden," He is really speaking to all.

—Elton Trueblood in
The Book of Jesus,
Calvin Miller, ed.



voice they cried out: "He made us. . . . We are not God" and "He made us."

—Augustine in
Confessions, Book X

Making the Awesome Adorable

After centuries of technological striving, we finally got to Earth's strange sere sibling Mars—and found rocks named Yogi, Scooby Doo, and Barnacle Bill. Someone high up in NASA must have issued a firm directive: "Keep it cuddly, guys. We don't want Mars to seem like, you know, outer space."

We do it all the time, of course. Watch one of our shlockier televangelists, and you'll be introduced to an affable deity eager to be enlisted as your personal genie. . . . At least the ancient

Hebrews had the good sense to make Yahweh unnameable and unseeable except in the flames of a burning bush—a permanent Mystery. . . .

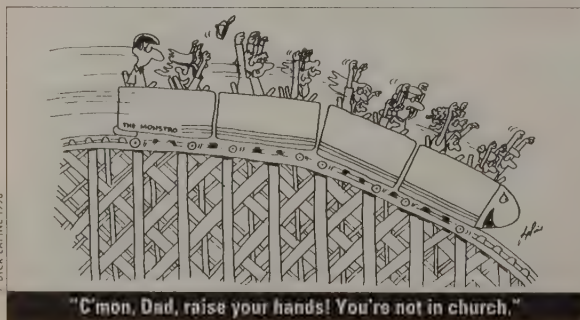
We are insisting, in our pathetic provincialism, that there is nothing out there—either in the mythic past or the distant reaches of space—that can't be labled, depicted and potentially marketed by the late 20th century American entertainment culture.

—Barbara Ehrenreich in
Time (Aug. 25, 1997)

Cosmic View

Congregations are not just places to be reminded of what one ought to do. They are spaces where "ought" is put in cosmic perspective.

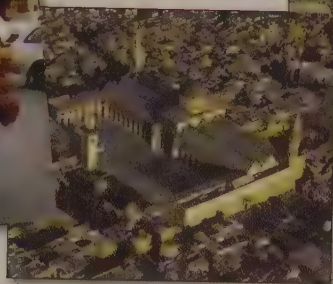
—Nancy Tatom Ammerman in
Congregation and Community



The Reconciliation Walk

"From the beginning of the Reconciliation Walk, the Holy Spirit has stressed to us that we must walk in the true spirit of the Cross. The Crusaders used the Cross as a banner for battle, but we are called to redeem its meaning among Muslims and Jews. We must do more than carry the message, WE MUST BE THE MESSAGE."

Lynn Green



The aim of the Reconciliation Walk is to mark the 900th anniversary of the Crusades by conveying a person-to-person message of apology from western Christians to Muslims, Jews and Orthodox Christians.

The Reconciliation Walk is an effective approach for defusing some of the suspicions in which Muslims, Jews and the Orthodox Church view western Christians.

Its effectiveness will be due to the indispensable value of meeting one another face-to-face and to prayer. You now have an unprecedented opportunity to participate and help defuse the bitter legacy of the Crusades.

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weeks (depending on location); we recommend small teams of between 3-8 people, though you can apply as an individual.

Immediately before you start your reconciliation walk (to Syria or Lebanon), you will need to attend a 2-day orientation on location in Beirut.

All you have to do is contact us at either our US or UK office for application forms. Upon receipt we will then arrange accommodation for your Orientation time and help you with international/internal flights. The location/route you will take and accommodation, after Orientation, along that route will all be

arranged and booked at Orientation. It's as simple as that and you'll soon be on your way.

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October 11th-14th
November 22nd-25th
January 17th-20th
February 21st-24th
March 21st-24th

(arrive Beirut 13th and depart for the rest of your trip on September 16th)
(arrive Beirut 11th and depart for the rest of your trip on October 14th)
(arrive Beirut on 22nd and depart for the rest of your trip on November 25th)
(arrive Beirut on 17th and depart for the rest of your trip on January 20th)
(arrive in Beirut on 21st and depart from the rest of your trip on February 24th)
(arrive in Beirut on 21st and depart from the rest of your trip on March 24th)

Extra

There is also a tour from October 29th-November 9th — Southern Turkey, Syria and Beirut. Visiting fascinating Crusaders sites, with visiting speakers opening up historical and spiritual insights. There will be opportunities to share the Reconciliation message in three countries, with worship and prayer being offered in the many locations which are of current, strategic importance.

Future

There will also be further opportunities to participate between April and the end of the project in July 1999. **WATCH THIS SPACE!**

FOR MORE INFORMATION/APPLICATION FORMS, PLEASE CONTACT:

The Reconciliation Walk, P.O. Box 38369, Colorado Springs, CO 80937
Tel: 719-540-0914 Fax: 719-527-2680 Email: recwalk@aol.com

OR

The Reconciliation Walk (SL), PO Box 61, HARPENDEN, Hertfordshire, AL5 4JJ
Tel/Fax: 01582 766019 Email: Reconciliation@compuserve.com



Veils, Kisses, and Biblical Commands

Q: Most evangelicals don't ask women to wear a head covering when praying or expect slaves to obey masters—because "that was just their culture." Yet many do forbid women to preach—because "this is a spiritual principle not bound by culture." How do I determine which directives are culture-bound and which are not?

—Dave Searcey, San Antonio, Texas

A: Everyone would agree that Paul's request for Timothy to pick up his cloak in Troas was a one-time request not addressed to all Christians always and everywhere. We also agree that biblical guidance to slaves addressed a specific cultural context and does not require us to reinstitute the practice so we can obey it. But we still disagree over women's ordination and even the head covering. Why? Because distinguishing transcultural principles from the cultural setting in which the Bible communicates them is sometimes difficult.

Some students I taught in Nigeria affirmed the practice of the women's head covering as described in 1 Corinthians 11. "The Bible commands it," they noted. But when I asked why none of them had greeted me with a holy kiss that day, they laughed. The temptation is to appeal to "common sense" as to what is time-bound and what is not. But our "common sense" often proves time-bound as well. In a sense, everything in the Bible has a cultural setting; yet *everything* in the Bible also remains God's Word. God inspired the biblical writers to address the issues of their day, and we will hear God's message when we properly apply their message to analogous situations today. This requires several steps. I will apply them here to the question of the head covering.

First, we need to understand what issues the biblical writers were addressing. The text itself helps us reconstruct some of these issues, but we can fill in many other gaps by learning what cultural matters the first readers took for granted (and therefore did not need to hear explained). Various tools, such as the new *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* or the IVP Bible Background Commentaries, can help in reconstructing these backgrounds. We have learned that people covered their heads for various reasons, but women in the Eastern Mediterranean especially covered their hair when they got married. Because many people considered hair the chief element of female beauty, they believed that only a husband should view his wife's hair. Many thus associated

uncovered hair with seduction. More wealthy women, however, paid a lot for their stylish hair fashion and often left their hair uncovered, possibly exacerbating tension between wealthier and poorer women.

Second, we need to examine how the biblical writer deals with the contemporary issue he addresses. Granted that the author addresses a specific issue of his day, what transcultural principles guide his argument? Paul certainly would oppose behavior that could appear seductive; he also warns against bringing dishonor on one's family. Paul also opposed ostentation and class division in the church.

The third (and most difficult) step is determining which situations today are truly analogous to the biblical situations. For example, could the principle Paul uses to support head coverings in Corinth ever require some women *not* to wear head coverings today? What if head coverings themselves become ostentatious objects of attention or attraction (like other adornments in 1 Tim. 2:9)? What if one lives in a culture where wearing such coverings proves more of a stumbling block than not wearing them? For example, in West Philadelphia, we usually associate such coverings with Islam.

The difficulty in finding accurate analogies becomes greater as our cultures move further and further from the biblical cultures. Yet one can trace different cultures even in the Bible: an ideal ancient Israelite woman might sell clothing in the marketplace (Prov. 31); in the Greek culture of Ephesus, however, an ideal matron might provide a better witness at home (1 Tim. 5:14). Is it possible that on some issues more than one practice is acceptable, depending on the culture we are addressing?

Doubtless, interpreters and faith communities will differ on specific cases of what is analogous and what is not, but most will agree on the principles of interpretation outlined above. That we sometimes come to different conclusions using the same method reinforces the need for charity on secondary issues and reliance on the Holy Spirit to guide us into a truth. But it also draws our attention to the central messages that always remain clear in Scripture, such as the saving message of the gospel and basic ethical issues. Much of Scripture simply contextualized these central points for their first readers' cultures, giving us examples for how we should contextualize the central biblical message for our cultures today. **C**

By Craig S. Keener, a visiting professor at Eastern Seminary in Philadelphia and author of The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament. Send your questions for evangelical scholars to CTedit@aol.com.

The temptation is to appeal to "common sense" as to what is time-bound and what is not.

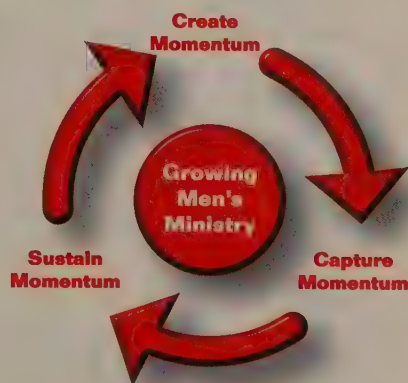
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Moms in the Crossfire

**Moms absorb
insanely
conflicted
messages
about what
they should or
should not do.**

“Work or home? Breast or bottle? Spanking or spoiling?” asks the front cover of the *New York Times Magazine*. “No matter what they choose, they’re made to feel bad.” This “special issue on the joy and guilt of motherhood” is titled in big red letters: “Mothers Can’t Win.”

Is this a special issue from 1987? 1993? 1972? Does it matter? This story has had more lives than Shirley MacLaine. No matter how we fret about the situation, it never gets better, and it never goes away. It’s a bad rash, and we’re stuck with it.

A survey in the *Washington Post* not long ago asked respondents their opinion of “recent changes” in the status and role of women. *What recent changes?* I wondered. The trend of young women once more staying home to raise their kids? The emergence of “sequencing” a woman’s career around the child-rearing years? No, these changes are apparently too recent to be on the *Post*’s radar screen. By “recent changes,” the survey meant the entry of women into the professional workplace.

So why does a change heralded in the sixties still feel “recent”? *Because it isn’t working.* The fatal flaw in the feminists’ plan to reject traditional roles was lumping childrearing in with housework. Most women would gladly kiss a dustpan goodbye, but kissing Junior goodbye as he shrieked in the daycare worker’s arms proved more difficult. Women in the workplace isn’t the problem. Moms in the workplace is.

“No matter what they choose, they’re made to feel bad.” By whom? The government, the experts, their husbands, their in-laws? Nope; the prime culprit is themselves. It’s an inside job.

The more moms absorb insanely conflicted messages about what they should or should not do, the less able they are to tune in to their instinctive knowledge of how to handle a particular child at a particular moment.

Their confidence is shot. In a state like this, any decision (“Breast or bottle? Spanking or spoiling?”) dies the death of a thousand reversals.

Whatever they end up doing, they fear, is probably wrong.

Now comes the coup de grâce, in the form of (wouldn’t you know it) a controversial new book proposing that it doesn’t matter *what* parents do. Parents are irrelevant, says Judith Rich Harris in *The Nurture Assumption*. Half of a child’s makeup is genetic, and the other half, she says, comes mostly from peers. Why do the children of immigrants speak

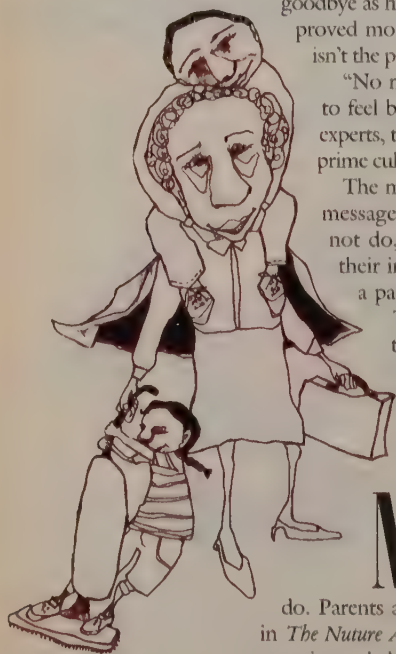
English without their parents’ accents? Why do twins raised separately show so few signs of their home parents’ influence? Social scientists presume they need to scrutinize parents more closely, but Harris claims the influence simply isn’t there. For all their guilt and fretting, moms don’t affect their children much. The child shapes himself in response to outside influences, and moms merely react. That, and do laundry.

This is liberating news, according to Harris. “A lot of people who should be contributing children to our society, who could be contributing very useful and fine children, are reluctant to do it, or are waiting very long to have children, because they feel that it requires such a huge commitment,” she told the *New Yorker*. “If they knew that it was O.K. to have a child and let it be reared by a nanny or put in a day-care center, or even to send it to a boarding school, maybe they’d believe that it would be O.K. to have a kid. You can have a kid without having to devote your entire life—your entire emotional expenditure—to this child for the next twenty years.”

Harris’s attempt to coax elite people into having children recalls the turn-of-the-century eugenics slogan, “More from the fit, less from the unfit.” But her promise that they can do so because kids don’t require much of an investment recalls similar promises about used cars. Moms usually find that they make a massive emotional investment in their children whether they expected to or not, and it lasts far more than twenty years. Knowing that outside forces can shape their children does not make moms carefree; it’s one more reason they worry.

What is missing in all this theorizing is respect for the depth of the mother-child relationship. In Scripture, mothers from Rebekah to Mary knew their children, and they gave instructions confident of how the child would react. That’s the secret weapon moms *know*. They know because they stand in a stream of mother knowledge that rolls back for millennia. They know because they stand in a community of experienced mothers of all ages, whom they respect rather than denigrate as “mere housewives.” They know because they know their kids, with the kind of knowledge gained only by quantity time. Some problems are easy and some are hard, and some you just have to wait and pray for resolution. The common theme is constant love, even when it suffers.

Harris says, “Don’t worry, be happy,” and the *New York Times* says, “Worry.” A third alternative to trust your instincts, know your children, and love ’em for all you’re worth. Parental love, after all, is the model God chose to describe how he loves us. That is a good time to go with the higher authority. **C**



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BOOKS

Stumped by Repentance

A dying Nazi asked concentration-camp inmate Simon Wiesenthal for forgiveness—and so he asks us, What would you have said?

The Sunflower: On the Possibilities and Limits of Forgiveness, by Simon Wiesenthal, with a symposium edited by Harry James Cargas and Bonny V. Fetterman. Revised and expanded edition (Schocken, 271 pp.; \$24, hardcover, \$13, paper). Reviewed by L. Gregory Jones, dean of the Divinity School at Duke University and author of *Embodying Forgiveness* (Eerdmans).

The story is gripping, moving, yet harrowing: a dying Nazi confesses his complicity in mass murder to a Jew imprisoned in a concentration camp, and even asks the Jew for forgiveness. How should the Jew respond? How could he be expected to respond?

This might make for an ingenious piece of fiction; alas, it is a true story that happened to none other than Simon Wiesenthal, the remarkable man most noted for his work tracking down Nazi war criminals. He is also noted for *The Sunflower*, his account of an encounter in 1944 with Karl, a Nazi, and Karl's deathbed confession.

The Sunflower begins with Wiesenthal, an educated

Jew, as an inmate in a concentration camp in Poland. He is part of a work detail that is sent from the camp to do cleanup work in a makeshift hospital for wounded German soldiers, a building that had once been the school that Wiesenthal attended. Along the way, Wiesenthal notices a cemetery for deceased Germans; he notices that each grave has a sunflower on it. For Wiesenthal, the sunflower signifies many contrasts between the fate of the Nazi dead on the one hand, and his anticipated fate and those of Jews like him on the other: individual graves, decorated with sunflowers, versus mass graves, unmarked and unmarkable. Continual connections to the living world versus a loss of all such connection.

Upon arriving at the hospital, Wiesenthal is ordered by a nurse—indeed, a nun—to follow her into the building. He is taken down the hallways, and then brought into a room where he encounters a dying Nazi, a 21-year-old SS man named Karl. Karl's body is wrapped in bandages, covering even his eyes and head, and he is barely able to speak. Yet before he dies he wants to confess a crime that has been "torturing" his memory, and more specifically, he wants to confess to a Jew. He wants to confess his shame at having become a Nazi.

Even more, he wants to confess a particular episode in which he killed a family trying to flee the building, crammed with hundreds of Jews, in which the Nazis had set fire. He cannot get the family's faces out of his mind; he covers his blind eyes as he retells the episode to Wiesenthal. After receiving his mortal wounds, he tells Wiesenthal, a later battle in which he could not bring himself to shoot another group of Jews. As the faces of the family he had killed earlier filled his consciousness, a shell exploded by his side, causing his blindness, and, eventually, his death.

As Wiesenthal listens to Karl's story, he is simultaneously attracted to the authenticity of the confession and repelled by the horrifying tale Karl is telling. Wiesenthal's thoughts continually return to the sunflowers, signifying the different worlds of dying Nazis and Jews. As Karl confesses, Wiesenthal does not leave, but neither does he speak. Wiesenthal has no doubts that Karl's confession reflects "true repentance"; Karl indicates that he wants to die "in peace

Begging for forgiveness:
The dying Nazi wanted
to confess his crime to a
Jew and die "in peace."
Wiesenthal walked
away in silence.



and that he has "longed to talk about [his crime] to a Jew and beg forgiveness from him." Wiesenthal is moved by Karl's repentance, yet he concludes that the contrast between the dying Nazi and the doomed Jew is too great; "between them there seemed to rest a sunflower. At last I made up my mind and without a word I left the room."

Yet Wiesenthal is troubled, indeed haunted, by questions about what he did or failed to do. When he returns to the camp, he asks his fellow inmates what they would have done. After the war ends, he takes the time to go to see Karl's mother, wanting to find out from her more about Karl's character. The mother's words confirm Wiesenthal's judgment about the truthfulness of Karl's confession and the sincerity of his repentance. Yet Wiesenthal is also troubled by the lack of remorse shown by most of the Nazis who were brought to trial after the war. And so, at the end of the tale, Wiesenthal continues to wonder: "Ought I to have forgiven him?"

He notes that there are many kinds of silence, and he wonders whether his own silence perhaps was more eloquent than words might have been. He also indicates that "only the sufferer is qualified to make the decision" concerning forgiveness. Even so, while his own eloquent telling of the tale seems to suggest the impossibility of forgiveness and the significance of silence, he continues to wrestle with the question of forgiveness, struggling to find a way to tell the story that might offer hope that his future, and our future, might not be bound by the destructiveness of the past.

Finally, then, Wiesenthal addresses a question to the reader of his tale: "You, who have just read this sad and tragic episode in my life, can mentally change places with me and ask yourself the crucial question, 'What would I have done?'"

What would you say in response? What could you say? After the original version of the book was published in 1969, Wiesenthal invited 32 people to reflect on the question "What would I have done?" Those reflections were included in a "Symposium" that composed the second half of a 1976 edition of the book. The symposium included novelists, theologians, lawyers, judges, and other intellectuals; Protestants, Catholics, and Jews as well as agnostics and atheists. There were some

well-recognized names: Abraham Heschel, Primo Levi, Herbert Marcuse, Jacques Maritain, Martin Marty, Cynthia Ozick. There also were some provocative and moving contributions from less well-known writers, including Milton Konvitz and John Oesterreicher.

These reflections provided readers additional engagements with Wiesenthal's story: deeper reflections, challenging questions, and pointed objections to anyone's settled positions. Some said Wiesenthal should have forgiven Karl, and others thought he never should have; some interpreted his silence as a gesture toward forgiveness, and others thought it was a pointed refusal; some worried about the dangers of "cheap grace," while others worried about the effects of a refusal to forgive.

In 1997, a new edition of *The Sunflower* was published, complete with a revised and expanded list of contributors to the symposium, and this edition is now available in paperback. Some of the additions are particularly significant, most notably a reflection from Albert Speer, a member of Hitler's inner circle whose memoir *Inside the Third Reich* reflects a sense of repentance for his Nazi past. Other additions are less significant for the content of the reflections than for the writer's stature in popular religious awareness: examples include Matthew Fox and Harold Kushner. Most notable, however, is the decision by the editors of the new edition to include reflections from people involved in other, more recent contexts of massive suffering and injustice: Sven Alkalaj, the ambassador of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the United States; the Dalai Lama; Dith Pran, the journalist whose wartime life and suffering at the hands of the Khmer Rouge was portrayed in the film *The Killing Fields*; and Harry Wu, imprisoned by the Chinese Communist government for 19 years in a labor camp.

The new edition reveals both the phenomenal, enduring power of the story itself and shifts in cultural and theological hopes and fears about the possibilities and limits of forgiveness in relation to massive evils and injustice.

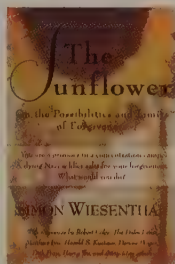
What does this new edition tell us about how people's thinking about the legacies of the Holocaust, and about forgiveness, has changed over the past few decades?

In part, there is a deeper despair, and even cynicism, about the possibilities of forgiveness given the recurring realities of horrifying evils around the world. After all, humanity has not seemed to learn any lessons from the Holocaust's horrors. One needs only to mention the killing fields of Cambodia, shallow graves in Bosnia, brutal killings in Rwanda, or the cycles of violence and vengeance in the Middle East to wonder whether there is any hope for an end to unbearable, unspeakable human cruelty.

Some people simply give voice to that despair, indicating that we cannot afford even to think of forgiveness in the midst of such injustice. Yet this leads others to develop, or reinforce, a principled opposition to the appropriateness of forgiveness. World events of the last three decades seem only to have solidified judgments that forgiveness trivializes human suffering and gives license to unprincipled brutality and injustice.

Unsurprisingly, Christian contributors to the symposium, both in the 1976 edition and in this new one, seem more willing than others to speak of forgiveness. To be sure, there are risks here. After all, it was the Jews who were the victims of the Holocaust, and in many cases, the perpetrators (like Karl) or collaborators were people who had at least been raised as nominal Christians. To speak of forgiveness could be an offer of "cheap grace" that is deeply problematic for anyone, and especially for victims, to hear. Martin Marty's contribution, found in both editions, is appropriately cautious about Christians offering either cheap grace or cheap advice to Jews and other victims of massive suffering. Even so, he offers important reflections, grounded in Christian worship of the God of Jesus Christ, on how signs of grace and forgiveness may offer hope for a future not bound by the destructiveness of the past.

Marty's reflections may be offensive to Jews and others who have endured horrifying suffering. But they offer an important and, to my Christian mind, truthful gesture. It is perhaps a sign of the editors' own despair that the most profoundly hopeful and moving Jewish reflection in the first edition, by Milton Konvitz, was excised from this new edition. Konvitz was appropriately worried about forgiveness, but his proposed words



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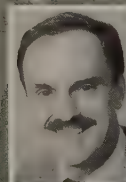
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Compassion for Karl are remarkably poignant:

It seems to me, though I say this with diffidence and hesitation, that in this encounter the spirit of the Jewish tradition called upon the narrator to say to Karl: "I cannot speak for your victims. I cannot speak for the Jewish people. I cannot speak for God. But I am a man. I am a Jew. I am commanded, in my personal relations, to act with compassion. I have been taught that if I expect the Compassionate One to have compassion on me, I must act with compassion toward others. I can share with you, in this hour of your deep suffering, what I myself have been taught by my teachers: 'Better is one hour of repentance in this world than the whole life of the world to come' (Avot, IV, 17). 'Great is repentance, for it renders asunder the decree imposed upon a man' (Babylonian Talmud, Rosh Hashana, 17b). It is not

in my power to render to you the help that could come only from your victims, or from the whole of the people of Israel, or from God. But insofar as you reach out to me, and insofar as I can separate myself from my fellow Jews, for whom I cannot speak, my broken heart pleads for your broken heart: Go in peace."

Perhaps our culture's, and even our world's, cynicism needs the challenge of hope found in Marty's and Konvitz's reflections. We know all too well the horrors of the Holocaust, of Bosnia, of the Killing Fields, of apartheid in South Africa. But do we know as well the possibilities of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa? What might Tutu, or Mandela, or many white South Africans, say at this point about the possibilities of forgiveness in the wake of systematic injustice?

We cannot avoid the challenges, and

we dare not trivialize suffering with cheap grace. At the same time, we ought not become numb to the possibilities being offered by the Spirit of God who, we are told in 2 Corinthians, is making all things new. Alas, particularly with the absence of Konvitz's reflection, the new edition of *The Sunflower* seems to encourage numbness rather than hope.

Can we tell stories, and offer judgments, of compassion and forgiveness that shine personally without failing politically? Can we respond to hellish injustices in ways that offer hope for a new and renewed future? Some of us have staked our lives on following One whose life, death, and resurrection commits us to the conviction that we can. But we need a deeper engagement with the words of Micah 6 and Luke 24 to do so. Perhaps the next edition of *The Sunflower's* Symposium can move our reflection in a more profound, and a more hopeful, direction. **CI**

This Present Biopolitical Darkness

in a society strongly marked by "rights" rather than social obligation, everything becomes negotiable.

Bioethics and Population, by Michel Schooyans; translated by J. H. Miller (Catholic Central Union of America, 112 pp.; \$10, paper); **Power over Life**, by Michel Schooyans; translated by J. H. Miller (Catholic Central Union of America, 75 pp.; \$8, paper). Reviewed by J. Daryl Charles, assistant professor of religion and philosophy Taylor University and author of *Virtue amidst Vice: The Catalog of Virtues in 1 Peter 1* (Sheffield Academic Press).

Reading these two volumes is akin to reading Solzhenitsyn—except with a bioethical twist. The author, a professor emeritus of political and moral philosophy at the Catholic University of Louvain and member of the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences, observes in both works how utterly undemocratic are the considerable achievements in the fields of human reproduction and biomedical science. The ambiguous relationship that exists between science and political power—what the author calls "biopolitics"—does not, in his view, bode well for Western democracy. This relationship, which has already left its hideous mark on

the present century, raises questions of momentous import as we approach the third millennium.

In his assessment of surging biomedical and biotechnological developments, the author is unsparing in his critique of the tendency to subordinate truth to personal freedom. This subordination can be seen in the triumph of committees of ethics, where procedure, not universally binding moral principles, dictates. Without reference to a transcendent good to be preserved, or an evil to be avoided, there remains no common morality that binds together the tissue of the human community. All the significant social movements since the nineteenth century have shared a common feature: they have contested the abuses of power committed against society's weakest members. But in a society strongly marked by "rights" rather than social obligation, *everything* becomes negotiable—from abortion and fetal-tissue research to mechanical procreation, from eugenics to euthanasia.

Schooyans's vision of the future might be deemed Orwellian to the extent that he understands the critical role language

plays in preserving or distorting ethical/bioethical discourse. When language is forced to function in an environment of artificiality, it becomes the handmaiden of demagoguery. As Schooyans reminds us, it is the obligation of the Christian community, once this linguistic-moral slide has begun to occur, to discern, denounce, and resist such corruption.

Twentieth-century history demonstrates that a society's drift toward soft or hard totalitarianism is established at times by force, at other times by ruse. In the latter case, the transformation is gradual, frequently facilitated by procedural law. Evil may be consummated when law is invoked to remove protection for the defenseless en masse. At that point it is too late to ponder—and argue—whether or not a democracy has become a "regime." Ever reflecting on the past, Schooyans has little tolerance for wishful thinking in considering the future: that laws are presently voted on by parliaments and congressional bodies in the Western world does not alter the fact that "biopolitical" monstrosities of the past can repeat themselves or be transmogrified into new evils.

In viewing biopolitical developments as a seamless garment rather than as isolated issues, the author in the end leaves unanswered the most unsettling of questions: Has the church been penetrated by ultra-individualism to the extent that she is ultimately *unable* to address, much less resist, the biopolitical realities that confront her at the threshold of the third millennium? **CI**

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What's a Heaven For?

My pastor decided to pull a vacation surprise on his four children. "We're going to Junction City, Kansas," Peter told them. "It's where my dad used to pastor a church, and we can have lots of fun there." Meanwhile he made secret plans to spend one afternoon in Junction City, then drive on to enjoy the glories of Disney World.

Ever trusting, his children bragged to skeptical friends, "We're going to *Kansas* for vacation. It's great!" All during the long drive from Denver to Junction City, Peter kept up morale by describing the wonders awaiting them: playgrounds, a swimming pool, an ice cream stand, maybe even a bowling alley.

After touring Granddad's old church, the kids were ready to check into a motel and go swimming when their dad dropped the bombshell. "You know something, it's kind of boring here in Kansas. Why don't we just drive to DISNEY WORLD!" Mom reached in a bag and pulled out four custom-made Mickey Mouse hats.

Peter expected his kids to jump up and down in delight. Instead, they complained: "Ah, who wants to get back in the van?" "What about the swimming pool? You promised!" "I thought we were going to go bowling!"

The great surprise had backfired. For the next few hours Peter sat behind the steering wheel and smoldered as his children expanded on all the advantages of Junction City over Disney World.

Never one to miss a homiletical opportunity, Peter turned this fiasco into a fine sermon illustration, quoting C. S. Lewis: "We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea." In a letter to his friend Malcolm, Lewis added that "the hills and valleys of Heaven will be to those you now experience not as a copy is to an original, nor as a substitute to the genuine article, but as the flower to the root, or the diamond to the coal."

Yes, Peter said, our desires are too small. We stamp our feet and insist on a merry-go-round in Junction City when Disney World's Space Mountain lies just down the road.

This year is the one-hundredth anniversary of C. S. Lewis's birth, and among his many accomplishments was restoring heaven to a place of intellectual respectability. Before him, heaven was an embarrassment, a holdover of primitive wish-fulfillment, and Christians who took heaven seriously were accused of a "pie in the sky" mentality. Lewis

himself admits to the nagging "fear that I was bribed—that I was lured into Christianity by the hope of everlasting life." Yet he went on to stress the moral necessity of heaven and to paint a wonderfully imaginative portrait of it in *The Great Divorce*.

Historically, every age before the modern assumption of an afterlife—a good thing, since much of what we know about ancient civilizations comes from what they stashed in their tombs—disagreeing only on the particulars of how best to prepare. "I am the tadpole of an archangel," wrote Victor Hugo. Nowadays, we get much advice on becoming the best possible tadpoles, but little on how to prepare for metamorphosis.

Philosopher and theologian Dallas Willard tells the story of a woman who refused to talk about life beyond death because, she said, she didn't want her children to be disappointed if it turned out no afterlife existed. As Willard points out, if no afterlife exists, no one will have any consciousness with which to feel disappointment! On the other hand, if there is an afterlife, whoever enters that next life unprepared will experience far more than mere disappointment.

I have a theory that heaven will offer faithful Christians whatever they sacrificed on earth for Jesus' sake. My mountain-climbing friend who intentionally lives in a slum area of Chicago will have Yosemite Valleys all to himself. A missionary doctor in the parched land of Sudan will have her own private rain forest to explore. (Could this be why the New Testament commends poverty while portraying heaven in such sumptuous terms?)

Joy Davidman, wife of C. S. Lewis, came to agree with Saint Paul that if we are wrong about resurrection, "Then we Christians are of all men the most miserable." Because then, you see, the only real good would be the good things of this world—which Christians must often give up."

Lewis and Davidman spent only four years together before Joy died of cancer. I have no doubt that Lewis's own views of heaven were both tested and strengthened as he watched his wife's agonizing battle. The longing she had answered in him, I hoped, was but a foretaste of a time when all longings would be fulfilled. The pain that wracked her body, he fervently believed, was like the pain of childbirth, a last loud announcement of new laboring. Lewis saw belief in heaven not as wishful thinking, but as thoughtful wishing.

The Spanish philosopher Miguel de Unamuno once tried out his theory of belief in God, but not heaven, on a rather simple-minded peasant. The peasant thought a minute and then replied, "So what's this God for?"

**Lewis saw
belief in heaven
not as wishful
thinking, but
as thoughtful
wishing.**

SPECIAL ISSUE: Reports from Evangelicals Worldwide

CHRISTIANITY TODAY

NOVEMBER 16, 1998

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Now That We're

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**"I decided I needed to attend seminary
when I realized I was in the ministry."**



Linda is the Pastoral Assistant
at her church; the Senior Pastor
is Dr. Mike Armistead.
The Smith Family (from back):
Tanner, Cameron, Linda,
Morgan, Tom... and the dogs.



Linda McMillan Smith got the bad news while she was studying for a Master's Degree in Counseling at a state university.

"I was in an ethics class, and my professor said you should never share your religious faith with clients," remembers Linda.

She was incredulous: "I just found God—the key to everything—and I can't *share* it?"

Linda was so distraught that a classmate told her, "Take Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) at a teaching hospital and become a chaplain."

She enrolled and soon found herself working with AIDS and heart patients.

Recalls Linda, "It was the biggest growing experience of my life."

But there was no time for rest. She followed CPE with hospice training,

along with greater involvement in her local church. A friend, seeing Linda respond to the call to ministry, first said the word *seminary*.



"I came to Gordon-Conwell in Charlotte because—with classes on weekends—I can pursue a degree without giving up my family, my job, or my ministry."

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At Gordon-Conwell, Linda's first class was Hebrew—the language—and she loved it. She is now on track to finish her M.Div. in the Fall of 1999.

"For me, getting involved in ministry has been the missing link in my life. It has made my faith come alive."

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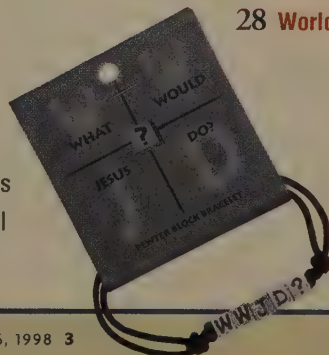
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No message is more important.

relationship is everything.

RECENTLY, ONE OF OUR STUDENTS, JOHN-PAUL LOTZ, was struck and pinned in his car while entering the freeway. Several surgeries and many days in the hospital followed. Knowing that he was hundreds of miles from home, the Beeson Divinity School family responded with an outpouring of love and support. Reflecting on this, John-Paul, who was born in Switzerland and studied in Germany, summed up his experience in three German words, "*Beziehung macht alles*," "relationship is everything."

I CAN THINK OF NO MESSAGE MORE IMPORTANT for theological education today—"relationship is everything." The mission of Beeson is to prepare persons whom God has called to be ministers of the Gospel for service in the Church of Jesus Christ. This requires a serious engagement with the primary documents of the Christian faith, a deep understanding of our historical and theological foundations, as well as the ability to read the culture and boldly proclaim God's Word. But books, classrooms, and computers do not by themselves a theological community make! This

requires regular worship of the Triune God and cultivation of spiritual disciplines for faculty, students, and staff alike.

NO ONE CAN BE A MINISTER OF the Gospel alone. All too often the culture of theological education reinforces patterns of isolation and competition. Our job is to nurture relationships so that every student may grow toward full maturity in Christ. Focus on relationality does not mean capitulating to the therapeutic culture with its "touchy-feely" techniques. It does mean taking time to listen, pray together, read God's Word, and celebrate His presence in worship. When this happens, the chapel will become as important as the library, the prayer closet as prized as the computer lab.



John-Paul Lotz



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Michael G. Maudlin,
Managing Editor

A Hidden Mission

INSIDE CT

Few evangelical organizations I hear about in my role with this magazine surprise me since most fit into ready-made categories—prison ministry, humanitarian relief, crusade evangelism, and so on.

So when I learned about Overseas Council last year, a 25-year-old ministry whose mission and scope was unlike any I had encountered before, I wondered how I had missed it all these years. Under the leadership of John C. Bennett, president of its American division (based in Indianapolis), this organization has set out to help local churches establish “flagship” graduate-level theological schools or training programs in 17 strategic regions in the Two Thirds World. These indigenous programs provide the caliber of theological and pastoral training for local churches that historically has been available to non-Western Christians only by traveling at great expense to Western institutions.

A big part of the council’s role is raising funds by establishing partnerships with individuals and organizations in Western countries. The funds they generate (the goal is \$46 million by decade’s end) not only help local churches with the capital they need for buildings and faculty, but also allow needy students to meet tuition expenses. This year alone the council will provide over \$1 million in student scholarships.

Two of the contributors in this issue of CT—

Antonio Barro in Brazil and David Kasali in Kenya—are the direct recipients of the council’s good work. The schools they serve as presidents, the Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology and the South American Theological Seminary, are able to run in part because of the partnership program.

Overseas Council’s current newsletter gives updates from schools in over two dozen countries. The very names and locations of some of these institutions seem miraculous—Jordan Evangelical Theological Seminary; Russian-American Christian University (Russia); Myanmar Evangelical Graduate School of Theology; Nusantara Bible Seminary (Indonesia); Evangelical Theological Seminary (Croatia); New Pines Seminary (Cuba).

The existence of these schools reinforces what church historian Mark Hutchinson notes in this issue (p. 46): evangelicalism’s centers of influence are no longer confined to Western institutions; and our evangelical movement needs exactly the kind of partnerships Overseas Council is creating if we are to thrive into the next millennium.

In the spirit of the council’s mission, we present this special issue devoted to letting evangelical leaders report—in their own words—on the state of the movement in their corners of the world. We think you will be impressed with the truth that God’s plan for his church is both global and local—and fascinating and diverse and surprising. **CT**

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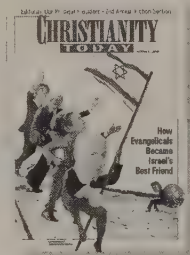
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"Tough Love" Toward Israel?

Thank you for the careful, thought-provoking articles reviewing evangelical attitudes toward Israel [Oct. 5]. Timothy Weber's cover article was instructive. Calvin Shenk's sidebar was pastoral, and the article on Brother Andrew was challenging! You mentioned an organization linking evangelical churches with Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza; your readers might be interested to know that there is another program matching families and churches in North America with Palestinian families whose homes are threatened with demolition by the Israeli government. Christian Peacemaker Teams (Chicago) coordinates this program in cooperation with several Israeli groups (including Rabbis for Human Rights) who together form the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions.

For those who want what is best for Israel, it is important to see that as distinct from supporting whatever the current government of Israel does; we must

not lazily assume there is one Israeli point of view. The Bible shows us a God who loves all, and who consistently sides with the oppressed. Maybe it is time for us to practice "tough love" toward Israel. *Rich H. Meyer*
Millersburg, Ind.



Weber cites Richard Cizik's belief that "most evangelicals simply have not thought through the issue of Jewish settlements in Palestinian territories." This troubling indictment grabbed my attention more dramatically than Weber's history of the dispensationalists' prophetic excesses. In our rush to help Jesus take his place upon David's throne, have we forgotten the gospel of peace?

David R. Darval
Fresno, Calif.

Christian Friends of Israeli Communities (CFIC) appreciates being labeled "one of the most innovative humanitarian organizations supporting Israel," but we protest three inaccuracies in Weber's cover story:

(1) I am misquoted as saying "God sending Jesus back to Israel to set up kingdom." The quote was that God sending "Messiah" back. (2) You said "By the end of the war the Jews were now well armed and ready to force the issue of statehood," and "by November [1949] the better-trained Israeli troops had prevailed." Jews who escaped Auschwitz (and other camps) to emigrate to their promised homeland were interned to concentration camps in Cyprus. Jews already in the Holy Land were harshly regulated, forbidden to own weapons, and not allowed military training. Instead, the Brits trained Palestinians, turning military bases and weapons over to them when they departed May 14, 1948, leaving the Jews defenseless. Pentagon generals gave Israel three weeks at the outside to succumb to the combined onslaught of British-trained Petro-provisioned armies of the seven surrounding Arab states. (3) It is an insult to be told one must be a dispensationalist to support the re-establishment of Israel.

I believe the way to get blessed is to find out what God is doing and coop-

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with that process. CFIC is trying to do that.

*Theodore Temple Beckett, Intl. Chairman
Christian Friends of Israeli Communities
Colorado Springs, Colo.*

Tim Weber's essay on the untold story of Israel and evangelicalism was eye-opening and convicting. He accurately described how some far-fetched evangelical eschatologies have directly affected the way Christians view the modern secular State of Israel today. Friends who are Palestinian Christians tell me they feel abandoned and wounded by our refusal to embrace them and recognize their suffering. And they are perplexed that we view everything through an "end time" lens, even Israel's failure to be faithful to its own covenant with God.

I was speaking with a British worker from an evangelical relief organization based in Jerusalem who summed up this perspective poignantly: "Genesis 12:2 says that those who bless Israel, God will bless. America is doomed if it does not love Israel everything it wants." And what about our Arab brothers and sisters in Christ,

I asked, who sometimes suffer in Israel? "They are simply in the way of God's plan for the ages."

*Prof. Gary M. Burge
Wheaton College
Wheaton, Ill.*

Weber performed a valuable service in tracing the impact of dispensationalism



"In the pastorate you don't really get to experience joy, but you get opportunities to pretend you do."

on evangelical attitudes toward Israel. However, the article cries out for the telling of another story—one which, so far as I know, has never been told in a mainstream Christian publication. This is the story of Arab attitudes toward Israel as expressed in the popular press, in books and pamphlets, and in other cultural forums. Like the story Timothy Weber tells, it involves a complex mixture of religious and political agendas, of scholarly (or pseudo-scholarly) and populist discourse. Many readers of CT, I believe, would be shocked not only by the virulence and the intransigence of these views but by their wide acceptance within the Arab world. The telling of this story would not provide a warrant for Israel to violate with impunity the human rights of Palestinians, or of anyone else, but it would provide a tonic dose of reality therapy.

*John Wilson, Editor
BOOKS & CULTURE
Carol Stream, Ill.*

Weber's assertion that dispensationalism has been the leading force behind evangelical support for Jews and Israel is a shock



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to the millions of evangelicals who don't believe its unbiblical tenets (e.g., that the church is a mere parenthesis in history).

It isn't doctrine or theological systems that make us love the Jew and Israel, but Jesus Christ himself. Furthermore, where would the church be without the Jew?

The beliefs of dispensationalists wax and wane. But Jesus Christ and his love for the Jew and for Israel remain forever!

Warren Angel

Congregational Christian Churches
Oceanside, Calif.

The forced admixture of faith and political ideology always results in a compromised faith. Evangelicals who support Israel should do so for political reasons alone. Otherwise, there is an inevitable, subtle diminishing of Jesus' claim to be the Messiah. Dispensationists who continue to rewrite the scripts for fanciful end-time scenarios should be reminded of the words of the Christ himself: "My kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36).

Timothy D. Pyles
Carrollton, Tex.

☐ Is it a bad thing that God is moving across denominational lines to give the church a heart and love for Israel? Should we believe the replacement view and just forget about them since God [has their eyes] anyway? Yes, we are part of the grassroots "fringe" movement. I prefer to, and either support or directly participate in nearly all the ministries you mentioned. But isn't it just possible that God can still work outside the carefully patrolled confines of "the system"? I fear that "the system" is so concerned that there be no "strange fire" on the altar that there is for the most part no fire on the altar.

Norm and Annie Schaeffer
Cable, W. Va.

The Benefit of the Doubt

Your October 5 editorial ["The Prodigal President"] sets up a false contrast between sinner Clinton and sinner (Prodigal) Starr. "There is a huge difference between being found and being cornered." In our Lord's and wondrous parable of the prodigal, the Father is overwhelmingly gracious, grace-filled Father. We aren't told whether the Son was repentant. From the Father's standpoint, the Son is "found." But from the Son's standpoint, the trigger-motive is hunger (Luke 15:17, NIV, "starving to death"), repentance. He "came to his senses" (see the reverse) in realizing that his diet would improve if he returned home.

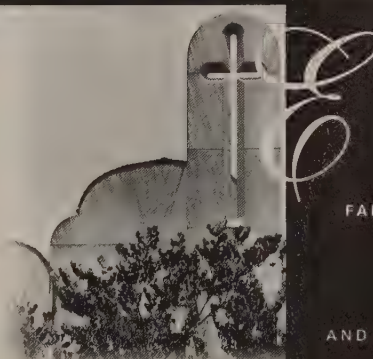
Clinton was cornered by Starr, the Prodigal Son was cornered by hunger. Each carefully crafted his cover speech. Neither is the other's moral superior. Starr and the Father are very different. The former kept demanding that the prodigal make full confession and grovel. The latter broke into the canned speech before the groveling.

You are right that "only God knows" whether Clinton's repentance is genuine. Grace, the graciousness of the American people, should assume it is. Let's give him at least the benefit of the doubt.

Willis E. Smith
Craigville, Mo.

☐ Thank you for the powerful editorial on why Clinton's apology misfired. I appreciate the courage and insight of the editorial. It is sad that Mr. Clinton appears to desire the power and prestige of being President more than he desires the grace and forgiveness of God. Seems to me there was another "Rich Young Ruler" who had a similar problem.

Rev. Gary Preston
Boulder, Colo.



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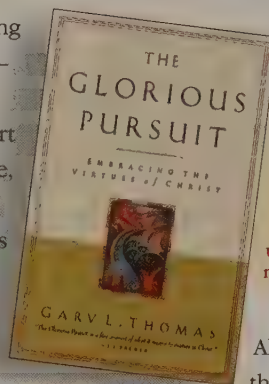
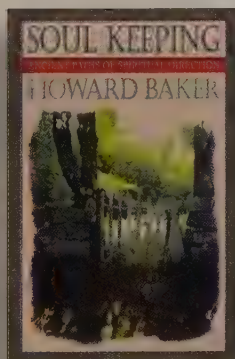
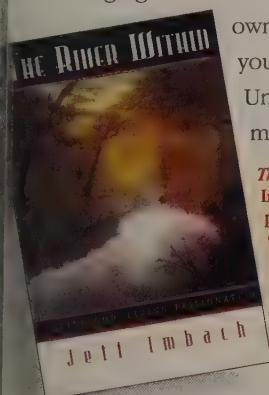
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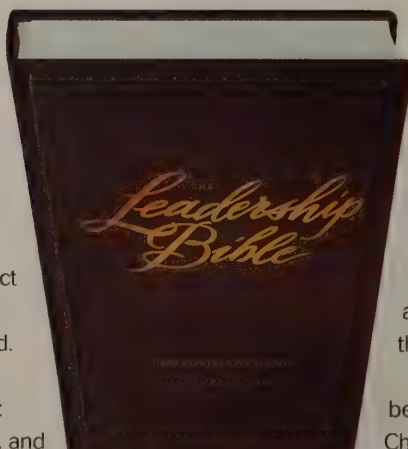
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Although I didn't vote for President Clinton, it grieved me to see CT's editors take such a hard line against him. A publication for and by evangelical Christians should take the lead in forgiveness, regardless of the kind of confession or apology offered. Jesus did not come to condemn, so why do we think our role is to judge? A song we used to sing had the words, "They shall know we are Christians by our love." Does President Clinton now we are Christians by our love?

*Patty Gorton
San Diego, Calif.*

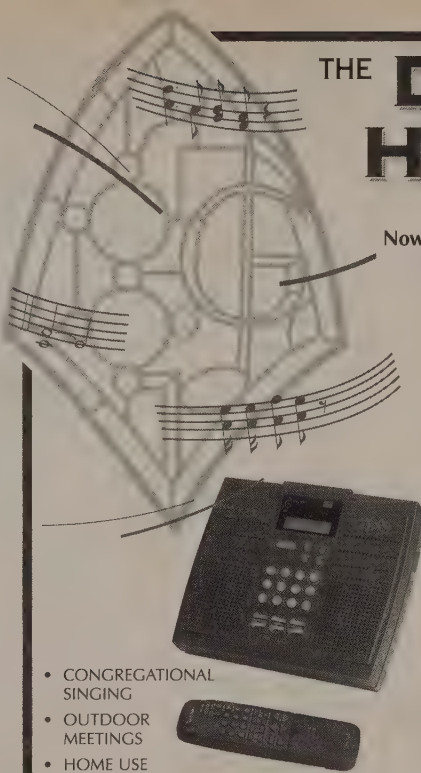
The President never confessed anything at the prayer breakfast or anywhere else, but he admitted to something only after getting cornered. What did he say he was sorry for? Was it even necessary for him to do it? No, it wasn't necessary for him to make this pious admission, and that is one big reason why I am so suspicious of his motives. He invoked the church in an age when we supposedly live in a separation of church and state. When it is convenient for him and many with a liberal ideology to invoke religious ideas, they do. When it's not, they stifle and inhibit religious ideas at will. All bets are off now until Bill Clinton stands for Jesus Christ and bans abortion.

*David Hale
Rockford, Ill.*

Apologies or Repentance?

In his opinion piece, "Me? Apologize or Slavery?" [Oct. 5], Gordon Marino wrote that "many white students . . . are being asked to feel guilty and repent for racist institutions and actions in which they themselves had no hand." Marino then explains that we must apologize and repent for the privileges we enjoy today, benefits gained through centuries of suffering by African-American slaves. Good as far as it goes. But Marino fails to understand why guilt remains even when apologies are made. His piece fails to grapple with the deep meaning of repentance. Apologies are easy, repentance is not. Apology without repentance fails to address the problem of guilt.

The real problem is our desire to have our cake and eat it too. Is it any wonder that superficial apologies without restitution (restoration fourfold) only deepen our sense of guilt? We are as unrepentant for the American Holocaust, the atrocities committed against Native Peoples of North America, as we are for the institution of slavery. Apologies are cheap (though not unim-



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portant) while Christian discipleship is costly. When will the church begin to talk about sacrifice, equity, and redistribution, if not restitution?

*Bruce D. Martin
Eastern Mennonite University
Harrisonburg, Va.*

Why single out black slavery or, for that matter, why stop with American history? Following his own logic, Professor Marino owes me an apology because his Roman forebears enslaved my British kin.

*Ben Brozovich
Tacoma, Wash.*

I am a peace-loving person and really don't have a quarrel with anyone, no matter the color of their skin. But what about the racism I have experienced through verbal abuse and sometimes under threat of physical abuse simply because I made eye contact with an African American in the hallway of my school? What always fails to be mentioned in articles and news reports on racism is that (believe it or not) racism goes both ways in America. How much repenting, sorrow, anguish, and even apologizing will it actually take for blacks and whites to be reconciled? Has anyone ever heard of a biblical concept called for-

givenness? If I am a racist and responsible for horrible abuses that happened years ago, then I ask for forgiveness from every black person in America; but please accept my forgiveness by embracing it and putting the transgression behind us just as Jesus has forgiven all of our sins and doesn't keep throwing them in our face after we have asked for forgiveness.

*Neal Korfha
Glendale, W.*

Casting blame over such a vast gap of time, space, and logic reveals a graceless scorekeeping spirit. *Repentance* is our mutual criterion for group identity; it runs far deeper than race. We need to condemn slavery and move forward on mutual terms.

*Joel Mark Sollid
New Haven, Conn.*

A Fresh Look at Hell

Sincere thanks for a fresh look at the issue "Is Hell Forever?" [Directions, Oct. 5]. Every evangelical should be disturbed by the millions continuing to reject Christianity because of its medieval and unbiblical portrayal of Satan and his angels as the eternal tormentors of souls in hell. For the lost souls, Christ plainly declares "Fear him [God, not Satan] who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."

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Jesus died to establish his right to justly destroy Satan and his angels—as he did Adam and Gomorrah!

The struggle does not end with Satan eternally torturing billions in hell, and Jesus left to reign over billions less in heaven. It is through God's lake of fire—the second death—that he silences the protesting wails of the lost. Then eternal harmony will extend across God's vast spotted universe.

Norman L. Meager
Sonora, Calif.

For thoughtful believers who recognize that the Bible clearly teaches the fact of hell, the crucial question has to do with duration. Where the duration of after-death punishment is expressed, the Greek word used is *aionion*, usually translated as eternal. However, the word literally refers to an age or ages to come, and an age has an end as well as a beginning and a middle. Thus, the "accursed" will go away in *aionion* punishment and the righteous to *aionion* life. Those deserving retribution will pay the penalty of *aionion* destruction/ruin away from the Lord's presence (2 Thess. 1:9). The only mention of postmortem punishment beyond *aionion* reserved for the Devil, the Beast, and the False Prophet. The Greek term for never-ending duration is used solely with

reference to the bliss of Christians, when Christ comes and takes them to be ever with him.

Ruth Pera Dodson
Fairfax, Va.

Corrections

- A letter from Prof. Donald G. Bloesch in the October 5 issue erroneously contains an unintended letter *s* in the following sentence: "I oppose a gender egalitarianism that erases real differences between men and women but hold [not holds] to the full equality of both sexes under God and to women in ministry."

- The Web site address in the Arts article regarding the Christian Performing Artists' Fellowship [Oct. 5] should read www.ChristianPerformingArt.org

- The correct e-mail address for Shari Plunket in Conversations [Oct. 5] is sp1rsRt@dnai.com

CT regrets the errors.

Brief letters are welcome. They may be edited for space and clarity and must include the writer's name and address if intended for publication. Due to the volume of mail, we cannot respond personally to individual letters. Write to Eutychus, CHRISTIANITY TODAY, 465 Gundersen Drive, Carol Stream, IL 60188; fax: 630/260-0114. E-mail: ctedit@aol.com (✉).

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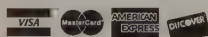


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WWJD UPDATE

Would Jesus Wear Leaded Necklace?

What would Jesus do? Probably not wear a lead WWJD cube necklace from a Pacific Jim jewelry manufacturer.

But a two-year-old Knoxville, Tennessee, boy who died of contracted lead poisoning, prompting the Tennessee Department of Health to issue a warning about the necklaces. On September 30, Kmart pulled WWJD \$2.99-\$3.99 necklaces, pendants, and crosses from 2,000 stores. Wal-Mart removed its \$2.97 costume jewelry from 700 stores.

Diane Denton, spokesperson for the Tennessee health department, says the boy had worn the necklace only a dozen times over a two-month period—while in church. But by putting the necklace in his mouth, Denton says, the lead content in his blood rose to four times higher than safe levels.

Denton says the problem stems only from Korean, Chinese, and Taiwanese necklaces. The department notified

the Consumer Product Safety Commission, which could order a recall. The grades of pewter most frequently used by the overseas manufacturers contain 65 to 80 percent lead.

Family Christian Stores, the largest Christian chain with 270 shops, does not sell the imports. "We've contacted each vendor and verified that all the products meet U.S. government standards," senior gift buyer Michael Hupp told CT.

Family teamed with Bob Siemon Designs of Santa Ana, California, to make the original WWJD cube jewelry. Siemon's products use 92 percent pewter, enough to be considered lead-free. "Quality isn't an accident," Siemon says.

His firm, which includes 325 employees in an 80,000-square-foot plant, has pro-

duced 4 million WWJD pieces of jewelry in the past year. The necklaces retail for \$3.50 and are available in 6,000 Christian stores.

Siemon began making jewelry in 1970 as a 19-year-old

message on jewelry that did not fall apart like the cheap products that characterized the industry at the time.

The WWJD phenomenon (CT, Nov. 17, 1997, p. 75) seemed to be an answer to prayer. Siemon tried to copyright the slogan but legally could not. Nevertheless, he carved out cubes to make a unique necklace.

In Asia, a manufacturer copied and modified his design and began selling the products to U.S. mass merchandisers. "They took a wonderful concept and plagiarized it," Siemon told CT. "They did the opposite of what Jesus would do."

Even though his company's sales have fallen markedly because of the lead

scare, Siemon is

glad the markets have been closed to copycats.

By John W. Kennedy.



Lead-free: In addition to jewelry, Siemon also makes WWJD key rings, coffee mugs, and even a New Testament.

college art student. As a newly born-again Christian, he vowed to reach the world with a

form ceremonies "directly and unapologetically, following the example of integrity set by Jimmy Creech." Other clergy will permit laity to use church yards for the ceremonies and will "stand in honor as non-ministers read certain words within a ritual."

In response to the letter, Bishop George Bashore of Pittsburgh, president of the church's Council of Bishops, says the council must uphold the denomination's Book of Discipline. If charges are brought against

any clergy in his area, they will be processed immediately. "I can't do otherwise," he says.

The letter calls on bishops to "receive the forgiveness of

Christ" for "sins of omission." Instead of silence, the signers ask the bishops to teach the church how to address "misunderstandings about the nature of scriptural authority" so that members can learn

how "a noncondemning acceptance of homosexuality is a legitimate position within our Wesleyan tradition." [CT]



UNITED METHODISTS

Letter Urges Same-Sex Union Support

An open letter signed by 363 United Methodist clergy and laity calls for the church's bishops to "move beyond silence and inaction" and allow same-sex marriages.

"Our church is adrift, buffeted by forces that seek to steer our course away from the prophetic, just, and compassionate course of Christ," states the letter, released October 11.

In August, the denomination's Judicial Council ruled that a Social Principle pro-

hibiting homosexual marriages has the force of church law (CT, Oct. 5, 1998, p. 18). The decision came after Jimmy Creech, former pastor of First United Methodist Church in Omaha, Nebraska, performed a ceremony for two women (CT, June 15, 1998, p. 15). The 325 members who left Creech's church to protest his stance are forming a new congregation.

Despite church law, the letter states some clergy will per-

TELEVISION

Parents Group Targets Advertisers

A growing organization is convinced that consumer disgust directed toward advertisers will help improve the content of network television.

With entertainment personalities Steve Allen and Shirley Jones as honorary co-chairs, the Los Angeles-based Parents Television Council (PTC) has undertaken a national advertising campaign proclaiming "TV is leading children down a moral sewer."

Lately, the PTC has criticized Jif and Crest for adver-

tising on the raunchy *Howard Stern Radio Show* (CT, Oct. 26, 1998, p. 15). Rather than sponsoring advertising boycotts as the American Family Association does (CT, Aug. 19, 1991, p. 14), the PTC, through ads, informs the public of the graphic contents of the shows.

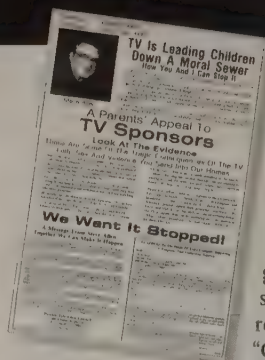
"We try to get the attention of advertisers that have a responsibility to be family-friendly," says Mark Honig, 33, PTC executive director.

PTC's membership has grown to 20,000 since going

national in 1995.

It is a project of the Media Research Center. Each year, PTC issues a summary of how religion is portrayed on the tube plus a family guide to programs (www.parentstv.org). Honig praises wholesome shows such as *7th Heaven* on WB, *Touched by an Angel* on CBS, and *Christy* reruns on the new PAX TV (CT, Oct. 5, 1998, p. 15).

While the controversial ratings system implemented by the networks last year is



partly a result of pressure from groups such as PTC, Honig does not see the guidelines as a solution to the real problem. "Garbage labeled is still garbage,"

he says. "There's no incentive to create better quality programs without cheap sex humor, vulgar language, and senseless violence." One of PTC's chief goals is to have networks voluntarily reinstate the "family hour," abandoned in the early 1980s.

CANADA

Plunging Dollar Imperils Ministries

Canadian mission agencies and organizations working overseas in relief and development are struggling to keep paying their bills with dollars that are worth a lot less than they used to be.

The Canadian dollar—known as the "loonie" for the waterfowl on the back of the brass-colored coin—fell in value to 63 cents U.S. in late summer before rallying to 66 cents.

The problem for Canadian organizations is that virtually all transactions overseas are paid in U.S. funds. That means money for salaries, rents, equipment purchases, supplies, and even monetary aid must be converted into U.S. currency. Agencies are faced with tough choices—cut back on overseas programs or ask donors for more money.

"The first thing we do is look at things that don't affect programs overseas," says Philip Maher, World Vision Canada's information officer. That might mean waiting until next year before buying

new equipment for the Canadian office. Although WVC had budgeted for a devalued loonie this year, the dollar dropped lower than predicted.

Other organizations, such as Canadian Baptist Ministries, are preparing to ask supporters for increased donations. "We're reluctant to cut back on programs," says Blair Clark, CBM's director of resource development. "We're going after donors and asking them to dig deeper."

Asking for more money is not easy when supporters are already giving sacrificially, says Ken Reeve of Far East Broadcasting Associates of Canada. "Many of them are giving as much as they can." Despite the dollar doldrums, most Canadian agencies see little need for panic. "It's hurting us, but we won't call it a crisis to our donors," says Paul Carrick of Cause Canada, which does development work in Africa and Latin America. "It isn't the same as if a hurricane or typhoon wiped out a community."

By Debra Fieguth in Winnipeg.



Celebrating full communion: The 90-minute service melded elements of each of the four denominations participating.

Four Bodies Achieve 'Full Communion'

With a solemn, yet joyful worship service October 4, members of four Protestant traditions celebrated their entry into full communion, promising to live "day by day" into deeper commitment to one another.

More than 2,000 people jammed into the Gothic-style Rockefeller Chapel at the University of Chicago for the worship service bringing the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Reformed Church in America, and the United Church of Christ one step closer together in the quest for Christian unity.

The denominations had previously approved the bold "full communion" venture that will enable each to share ministers, sacraments, and members. It also allows them to operate joint ministries while still retaining denominational identities.

The service opened with a four-way processional leading to a central baptismal font—the symbol of the basic sacrament of membership in each of the bodies. A common recitation of the Nicene Creed and a Renewal of Baptismal Vows emphasized common beliefs each tradition holds.

Religion News Service

FOSLS' Preserve Spurgeon Relics

As a teenager, Bill Lancaster began admiring Charles Haddon Spurgeon because he found the nineteenth-century English Baptist pastor's theology concise and lucid.

Now, at age 58, when he is not working as vice president of sales for Associated Grocers in Grandview, Missouri, Lancaster spends much of his time diligently restoring the books of the "Prince of Preachers," who lived from 1834 to 1892.

As president of FOSLS—Friends of the Spurgeon Library—Lancaster leads a corps of volunteers from around the United States. They work cautiously, knowing one false move could destroy the delicate material. They are archaeologists of sorts, preserving and repairing volumes from Spurgeon's private library.

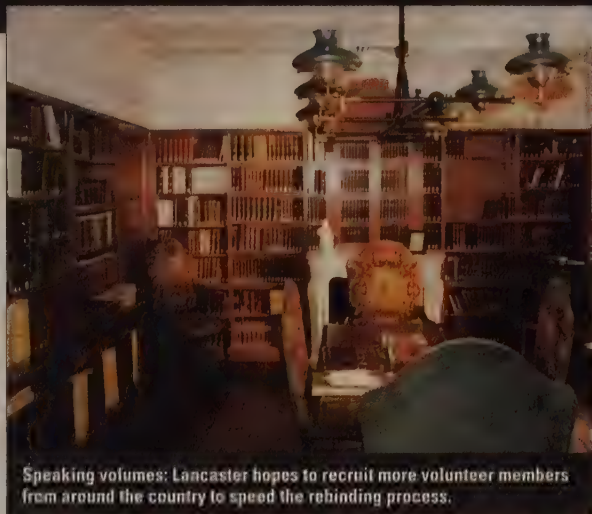
"I believe the Spurgeon library represents a clear expression of the ministry of the

gospel of Christ," Lancaster says. "It would be a shame to see this collection deteriorate; so we dedicate our time to making the books useful again—for students, scholars, and the general public."

Jerry Cain, vice president of William Jewell College in Liberty, Missouri, where the collection is housed, says volunteers repair about 50 volumes per year. Wearing cloth gloves, they pore over their subject, risking disease at every turn. "Many of the books are infected with a fungus that spreads to nearby books and to those handling the books," Cain says.

Housed on the lower level of the college's library, the Spurgeon collection contains 6,618 volumes. It includes many of Spurgeon's own works, as well as those of other noted Christian writers.

The library also contains collections of hymns by Isaac



Speaking volumes: Lancaster hopes to recruit more volunteer members from around the country to speed the rebinding process.

WILLIAM JEWELL COLLEGE

Watts, John Rippon, and Samuel, John, and Charles Wesley. Editions of the Bible include the *Englishman's Greek New Testament*, which provides the Greek text and interlinear literal translation, and *The Prefaces to the Early Editions of Martin Luther's Bible*, which illustrate the Reformer's principle of "justification through faith." William Jewell College secured the collection in 1906.

As preservationists gingerly thumb through the books,

they search for Spurgeon's personal notes. "Any margin notes or underlined text give us insight into what Spurgeon found interesting," Cain says.

Some of the books date from the late 1400s; most are in desperate need of repair. Despite the daunting task before them, volunteers believe it must be done. "We're all busy people, but it's important to come together to achieve a common goal," Lancaster says. [CT]

In Brief

◆ The normally liberal American Civil Liberties Union and the Democrat-leaning AFL-CIO filed a friends-of-the-court brief September 29 in defense of the Christian Coalition, which is urging the dismissal of a 1996 **Federal Election Commission (FEC)** lawsuit (CT, Oct. 26, 1998, p. 82). The FEC suit contends that the Christian Coalition violated campaign laws by promoting the campaigns of Republican candidates. But the brief says the suit is a threat to free speech: "Citizens and labor organizations of every stripe will be severely restrained in their ability to speak out on policy issues of concern to their members and to the public."

◆ The **Southern Baptist Convention (SBC)** has started to gather information to see if there is enough interest to change the name of the nation's largest Protestant denomination. The SBC Executive Committee has two motions to consider from June's annual convention in Salt Lake City: to conduct a feasibility study on renaming the denomination or recommend a specific new name, the Baptist Convention of North America. Proponents of a switch say the Southern designation of the denomination's name hinders growth. Those who want to retain the status quo say a change would be too costly and could cause the denomination to lose its identity.



Gessner

◆ Meanwhile, the 1,350-member **First Baptist Church of Raleigh**, North Carolina, voted September 23 to end its 153-year relationship with the SBC. The 264-to-23 vote came three months after the denomination issued a statement that "a wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband" (CT, July 13, 1998, p. 21). Members said the vote was in large part a rejection of what they called "authoritarian trend." First Baptist helped create the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, and over the years many leaders at the SBC-affiliated Wake Forest and Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary have come from the church, which established 38 other Baptist congregations in the region.

◆ The **Greek Orthodox Church of America** sued Greek Orthodox American Leaders (GOAL) in September for using an "apparently misappropriated mailing list of the archdiocese." The litigation is in response to an eight-page mailing on "the crisis in the church" sent by GOAL in July to 122,000 households (CT, Sept. 7, 1998, p. 28). Spokesperson Dean Popp says "GOAL denies all wrongdoing" and plans "a vigorous defense."

◆ **Lee Gessner** is the new publisher of the Nashville-based Word Publishing, succeeding Charles "Kip" Jordon, who died in October 1997. Gessner has been at Word, a division of Thomas Nelson, since 1989. [CT]

Moon Struck

Church founder's ex-daughter-in-law pens grim tome about life on the inside.

Sun Myung Moon could take the Unification Church with him to his grave, says his former daughter-in-law. In her new book *In the Shadow of the Moons* (Little, Brown & Co.), Nansook Hong charges her 35-year-old ex-husband Hyo Jin with physical abuse, adultery, cocaine addiction, alcoholism, and neglect of their children. She accuses Sun Myung Moon of complicity in his son's behavior and charges that the 78-year-old founder of the New York-based Unification Church engaged in adultery himself, leading to an illegitimate child.

"Since his family is not anywhere near the ideal family, what does that say about Reverend Moon?" Hong asks. She fled the Moon "compound" in Irvington, New York, in 1995. Now living near Boston and divorced since last December, she has become the center of a recent media blitz about the Unification Church. Her book's damning profile of life at the top of the Moon empire has been defended by prominent ex-members Donna Collins and Un Jin Moon, Hyo Jin's sister. Collins's parents led the Canadian church, but she left six years ago at age 22. "Moon did not deliver on his promise of a utopia, either for his own family or the membership."

Unification leaders Tyler Hendricks and Chris Corcoran say the Hong book will not damage the faith of members. Corcoran, a public-relations spokesperson, says Hong's "full frontal attack" is "extreme." Hendricks, president of the U.S. church, says the book is "ideologically motivated" because of Hong's contacts with anticultists.

Both leaders acknowledge Hyo Jin's failures, although Corcoran says the son has a "brilliant philosophical and theological mind." Hendricks and Corcoran suggest Hong may have been partly to blame for the failed relationship. "Maybe she never figured out how to unlock his heart," Corcoran says.

Herbert Rosedale, president of the American Family Foundation, which monitors questionable religions, says, "That's the kind of nonsense that is used against every battered woman." He calls Hong "one of the most truthful people I

have ever met" and believes the book will create havoc for Unificationists struggling to reconcile "the difference between their idealism and the actual way Reverend Moon lives." Moon preaches extremely rigid and demand-



ing standards on tithing, church work, and especially sexual purity. In a 1975 sermon, Moon said "adultery is not forgivable at all."

PROVIDENTIAL ADULTERY? On the serious allegation about Moon's adultery, Hong claims that Moon and his wife, Hak Ja Han, told her of the affair and defended it as a "providential" act. Hong says the illegitimate child was raised by prominent Korean members who live in Virginia. Collins, daughter of the founders of the Unification Church in Britain, confirmed Hong's allegation. Corcoran calls the accusation of adultery "just a rumor" and says Moon "would not violate his own teaching." Hendricks adds that Moon is "absolutely sincere, righteous, and trustworthy. We exercise good faith and give him the benefit of the doubt."

However, two longtime Unificationists, who requested anonymity, told CT that rumors of the affair have circulated for years in the church and its verification would force many Unificationists to

adopt a more realistic understanding of Moon's humanity.

In a phone interview from London, sociologist Eileen Barker, an expert on the Unification Church, says there is no reason to doubt Hong's account. She suggests the movement created the "providential explanation" only after rumors of the affair circulated among older Korean members.

Frank Flinn, adjunct professor of Religious Studies at Washington University in Saint Louis, contends that Moon "is not a model for his own sermons." He says that Moon's extramarital affair fits in with the earlier pattern of the 1950



where Moon "had spiritual, emotional and sexual relationships with more than one woman" in his quest for a new bride. Flinn, one of the earliest academics to study Unificationists, adds, "Moon should go back and read the temptation account in the Gospel of Matthew and pay attention to them."

Corcoran refers to Moon and his wife as "God's champions." He says Moon mu-



Nansook Hong

be viewed through the eyes of faith and be seen as a fully "biblical figure" who is "complicated" but "blameless." Corcoran says "nothing is going to defeat this man" and claims that the latest round of criticism has not hurt the church.

DAMAGE CONTROL: Hendricks notes that recent mass wedding ceremonies conducted by Moon in Washington and New York brought together hundreds of churches and representatives from many major religions. In addition, Moon has a long record of courting church leaders, including evangelicals, in an effort to achieve acceptance (CT, Feb. 9, 1998, p. 32). Moon's son Hyun Jin has recently been appointed vice president of the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification International, a move that clearly balances the negative image presented by his older brother Hyo Jin.

In a more direct assault on *In the Shadow of the Moons*, Unification leaders provided CT with documentation for the claim that some material in Hong's book is plagiarized from an earlier book by British scholar George Chryssides. The charge is directed toward Eileen McNamara, a *Boston Globe* reporter who ghostwrote the book. McNamara has denied the allegation.

THE MEDIUM IS THE MESSAGE? Meanwhile, Unificationists are directing their focus to two spirit mediums who are reportedly giving messages from Hak Ja Han's deceased mother and from Sang Hun Lee, a Unification scholar who died last year. Lee even provides a letter purportedly from Jesus to the "True Parents" (Sun Myung Moon and Hak Ja Han) in which the Son of God thanks them for this new bride in heaven and also expresses regret that Christians are still not trusting in Moon.

Hong has changed her beliefs since leaving the Moon family. "I believe in God and I also believe that Jesus is the Messiah," she told CT.

Barker predicts that Hong's book will have its major impact on members who are wavering in their faith and with academics who will now be more skeptical about participation in Moon's various programs. "Most Unificationists have been aware for quite a long time that their church is not that special." Whether that loss of idealism extends to the Korean "messiah" himself will determine the future of the movement.

By James A. Beverley in New York.

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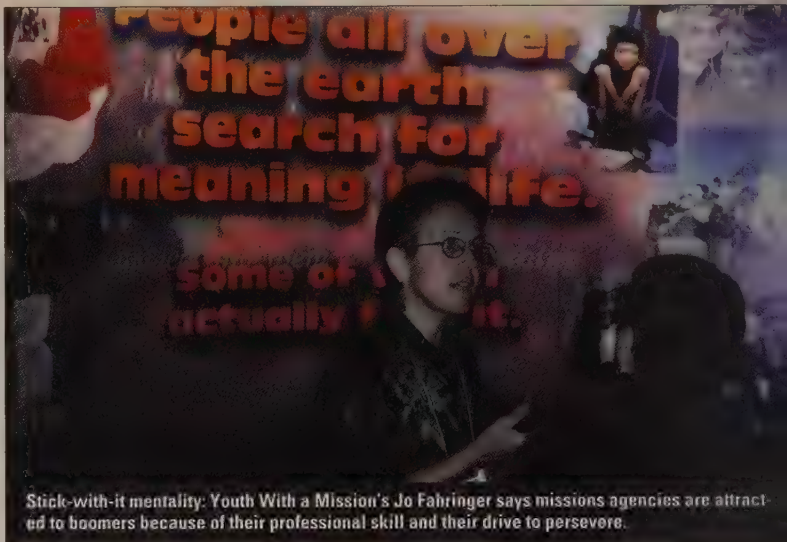
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Stick-with-it mentality: Youth With a Mission's Jo Fahringer says missions agencies are attracted to boomers because of their professional skill and their drive to persevere.

Baby Boomers for Hire

Sell-out audience crowds first-time missions recruitment event.

Those considering a second career in missions may need to take a number. An overflow crowd packed the first missions conference of the Finishers Project, a movement aimed at sending baby boomers, now entering their fifties, out as missionaries (CT, Oct. 5, 1998, p. 72).

At some sessions of the October 1-3 Chicago gathering, nearly as many attendees sat on the floor, in the doorways, and out into the halls as were seated in the chairs. After conference planners realized they could not accommodate more than the 660 already registered for the Chicago conference, including 100 exhibitors, they turned away 300 people and 20 missions agencies.

The conference was so successful that the Navigators, an international discipleship ministry based in Colorado Springs, is considering hosting similar conferences every 18 months. The next one, tentatively planned for the spring of 2000, will be five to seven times the size of the Chicago conference.

LITTLE IMMEDIATE PAYOFF: However, representatives from some of the 30 mission agencies in attendance confirmed that few potential recruits seemed ready to go immediately. In addition, many participants were not retirees, but middle-aged workers weary of the rat race.

"Almost everyone here is looking toward the future," said Dave Hendry, director of Career Missionary Services for Operation Mobilization. "Most are two to five years away from retirement."

Another mission representative, Thomas Gibson, human resource director of Group Ministries for Campus Crusade for Christ, estimates that only a quarter of the participants will be ready to go soon.

Bill Mackie, 43, and his 46-year-old wife, Karen, of Valparaiso, Indiana, are not close to retiring. But they are dissatisfied with their existing careers—his at a library and hers at a restaurant.

"I've been a clerk at one library for 15 years," he said, "and it seems like all of the stuff I have, my private stuff, is practically an extension of work. I can't just be clinging to all this stuff anymore."

Instead, the Mackies are ready to quit and move into full-time ministry, preferably involving the puppet ministry they have done in their spare time for the past seven years.

"I think a lot of the excitement over Finishers is drawn from midlife crises," says Gospel Missionary Union's Kent Reinher. "These people are wondering, 'Is this all there is?' They've made it in the corporate world, and now they're worried about downsizing, and whether what

See **FINISHERS PROJECT** on page 3

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Evangelicals Wary After Conservative Defeat

Many evangelical Christians have been caught off guard by the sweeping changes in national leadership as a result of the September 27 German election that saw Helmut Kohl, his conservative Christian Democratic Union (CDU), and allied parties lose power after 16 years. Along with the CDU's sister Bavarian party, the Christian Social Union, Kohl and company received only 35 percent of the vote, down 6 percent from the 1994 election.

The triumphant Social Democrats (SPD), with Gerhard Schroeder at the helm, gained 4.5 percentage points from 1994 results to win 41 percent of the national vote. The SPD immediately began building a coalition government with, for the first time, the environmental Green party. Together, those two parties achieved a majority in the new 669-seat federal Parliament.

The media-friendly Schroeder, 54, won over voters by pointing to high unem-

ployment and suggesting that the 68-year-old Kohl had clung to power too long. With similar arguments, the Party of Democratic Socialism—the successor to the former East German Communist party—cleared the 5 percent hurdle necessary to be represented in Parliament.

In the wake of defeat, CDU leaders, one by one, dropped out to make way for a younger generation to modernize and reform the party that affirms a commitment to Christian values and a "Christian understanding of people and the knowledge of God's good creation."

The personal morality of the candidates did not play a role in the election. Schroeder, a Marxist-turned-moderate, is married for the fourth time.

EVANGELICAL RESPONSE: Many evangelicals, who represent only 3 percent of Germany's 81 million people, are concerned about an SPD-Green government. They say Christian values, especially the unique legal status of marriage

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Democracy in action: Three nuns vote in Ursberg near Munich during the September 27 election.

could be challenged by increasingly liberal political winds blowing through the land of Luther.

"This will be the most unchristian Parliament in the postwar era," says Wolfgang Baake, director of the Conference of Evangelical Publicists. "There will be ethical implications."

Hartmut Steeb, general secretary of the German Evangelical Alliance, believes moral and ethical limits could be pushed back as more liberal politicians assume power. "The most absurd notions are becoming the norm," he argues in connection with a proposed SPD bill that would put homosexual and other "out-of-marriage" couples on equal legal and financial footing as traditional husband-wife unions.

Green Party legal spokesperson Volker Beck argues that "legal recognition and equal status of homosexual couples takes nothing away from families, but gives gays legal protection in a democratic society."

Steeb also is concerned about SPD-Green demands for dual nationality for foreigners who have long-term residency in Germany, particularly Turks. He notes that Muslim voters could one day outnumber evangelicals. There are more than 7 million foreigners in Germany.

"CHRISTIAN" ISSUES SIDELINED: Prior to the vote, the established large parties pledged more jobs while four small "Christian" parties alone spoke out on moral issues such as preventing introduction of the RU-486 abortion pill.

In a campaign urging a return to "ideals and values," the Alliance of Free Citizens, which came out ahead of other Christian groups with 121,220 votes, or 0.2 percent of the vote nationwide, called for the abolition of legal abortion and opposed any form of legalized homosexual marriage.

Party spokesperson Maria von Below says a new government may opt to replace religious instruction in schools with "ethics" training.

The pro-Israel Party of Bible-believing Christians (PBC) also deplored the "murder of children in the mother's body," which takes place in Germany at the rate of 1,000 a day, according to party leader Gerhard Heinzmann. Some 72,000 people, or 0.1 percent of the national vote, cast ballots for the PBC, which printed Bible verses along with slogans on its campaign posters.

Such issues, deemed important to conservative Christians, are far less pressing compared to unemployment and social justice, says SPD parliamentary group spokesperson Wolf-Michael Catenhusen. He told CT the new government does not intend to raise the issue of abortion and that both SPD and CDU members favor the RU-486 abortion pill.

LOW EVANGELICAL IMPACT: It came as no surprise to evangelicals that the small Christian parties combined received less than 1 percent of the votes cast. Demography and perhaps apathy have worked against new Christian political groupings. "Born-again Christians have for too long said we have nothing to do with politics," says the PBC's Heinzmann. He and other Christian party politicians say they have tried but failed to merge their parties because of deep theological differences.

"The political influence of the evangelical community is clearly very insignificant," Steeb says. To combat this, he says the Evangelical Alliance plans to establish a political lobby office by early next year. The Union of Protestant Free Churches intends to set up a similar office in Berlin.

By Richard Nyberg in Bonn.

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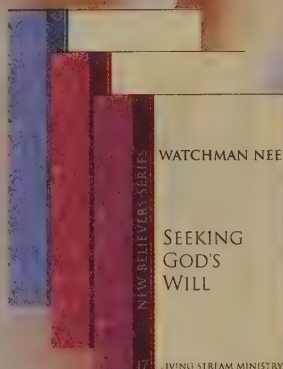
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Helping hands: Around 1,000 volunteers distribute 80,000 pounds of food to 8,000 Newark recipients in September at one of Convoy of Hope's Saturday events that brings churches together.

Food Ministry Seeks Bigger, Broader Impact

Convoy of Hope, a national food ministry to the urban poor, is expanding beyond one-day food giveaways to coordinate weeklong, citywide events that mobilize volunteers to shower inner-city neighborhoods with good works and the gospel.

The first event, called "We Care, L.A.," will unite churches and potentially thousands of volunteers on the last week of 1999 to blitz Los Angeles with acts of kindness. Christians will visit hospitals; clean up parks; paint buildings; comfort the lonely; and deliver free groceries, toys, or clothing.

"We want to be a catalyst," says David Donaldson, one of three brothers who helps lead ChurchCare America, the ministry that founded the Convoy of Hope. "God has already raised up an army of volunteers in Los Angeles. We Care, L.A. will integrate their efforts."

The foundation for We Care has been laid by Convoy of Hope, which has grown exponentially since conducting its first major food outreach in 1995. Convoy events take place on a Saturday, bringing together resources from the evangelical community and making them available to the poor at a gathering that is part food giveaway, part tent revival, and part carnival. The two consistent features of each event are a semitrailer full of food, bagged and distributed by volunteers, and a series of brief tent services conducted by a slate of local pastors. One of the ministry's goals is to "make the

inner-city pastor a hero in his community," says Steve Donaldson, one of the brothers leading ChurchCare America, which has offices in Springfield, Missouri, and Sacramento, California. Follow-up events pull new Christians and potential churchgoers back to church on Sunday.

Convoy of Hope has distributed 4.5 million pounds of food to 311,000 people in most major American cities since its inception. Nearly 80,000 people have become Christians at makeshift altars where Convoys are held.

ROOTED IN COMPASSION: The ministry has its roots in tragedy. Before they were teenagers, brothers Hal, Steve, and David Donaldson experienced poverty after their father, Harold, a pastor and church planter, died in 1969 when a car driven by a drunk driver jumped the divider and hit his auto head-on. Their mother, Betty, disabled by the accident, raised them with the help of members from Bethel Temple Assembly of God in Walnut Creek, California. Hal is now editor of the denomination's magazine *Pentecostal Evangel*.

The Donaldsons have made dignity a pillar of the ministry, refusing simply to unload food off the back of a truck. At Convoy events, the poor are respected and honored guests. Volunteers serve hot dogs and soft drinks and distribute the grocery bags. While parents wait in line, children ride ponies and play in inflatable gym equipment.

Convoy of Hope has largely succeeded

in bringing churches together across racial, economic, and denominational lines by using food and the basic gospel as centerpieces and by not addressing thornier doctrinal issues.

A BIGGER VISION: But Convoy's founders want to push the envelope of what suburban churches are willing to do in terms of serving the poor and performing community service. Recent Convoys have drawn on professional expertise within the Christian community to offer free haircuts, medical screening, dental consultation, legal counseling, and job training. The Donaldsons want to bring more of these workaday skills and services, plus compassion and long-term commitment, from affluent churches to the inner city.

"When Christians from suburban communities spend a day in a poor community, they discover that these are great people to know," Steve Donaldson says. "People imagine the poor as homeless men on drugs who won't work. These outreaches dispel those perceptions."

Can the principles that have succeeded on a local level work on a much larger scale? An early supporter of We Care, L.A. and one of the leading churches in Southern California is Templo Calvario Assembly of God in Orange County, a bilingual church of 3,800. The congregation held a Convoy outreach on Easter weekend, which has spawned several "mini Convoys," says pastor Daniel de Leon. Those events, made possible by the training his people received at the larger event (but planned without Convoy of Hope's direct input), have drawn thousands, bringing hundreds to faith in Christ and earning applause from city leaders.

De Leon's experience has convinced him there will be enough neutral ground to accommodate any evangelical church that wants to participate in We Care, L.A. "We had 40 churches of all ethnicities involved in the big Convoy event," de Leon says. "Not too many things can unite churches. Even crusades are difficult. But everybody cares for the poor. The pastors in this area want to keep working together."

We Care, L.A. is a natural extension of Convoy's ministry, de Leon says. People in his congregation plan to serve as coordinators, ushers, security guards, food distributors, and children's ministers during the outreach. "We Care is what the Convoy has shown they can do, but a lot bigger," de Leon says. "It's going to leave an impact on Los Angeles I hope will be lasting."

By Joel Kilpatrick in Springfield, Missouri.

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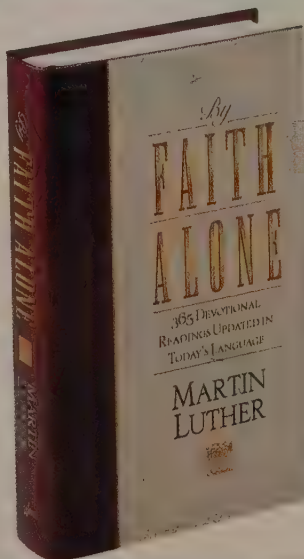
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PENTECOSTALS

World Growth at 19 Million a Year

About 25 percent of the world's Christians are Pentecostal or charismatic, historian Vinson Synan, dean of the Regent University School of Divinity in Virginia Beach, told the triennial Pentecostal World Conference (PWC) in Seoul in September. An estimated 450 million are charismatic or Pentecostal.

"The continuing explosive growth of Pentecostalism indicates that the renewal will continue with increasing strength into the next millennium," Synan declared. "Not only is growth occurring in eye-catching megachurches, but in tens of thousands of small local churches that are

planted each year in big cities and remote villages."

PWC chair Ray H. Hughes says two-thirds of Pentecostals live in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. "PWC offers Pentecostals an opportunity to be a unifying force in a divided world," Hughes said.

Missions expert David Barrett told CT that the Pentecostal and charismatic church is growing by 19 million per year.

On September 25 in Olympic Stadium, 100,000 Pentecostals from more than 60 countries gathered at a closing service sponsored by the Assemblies of God, the Church of God, and the Foursquare Gospel church in South Korea.



Keynote speaker, David Yonggi Cho (left), who pastors the world's largest church in South Korea, addresses PWC.

Church banners decorated the stadium, and hundreds of balloons formed a cross.

South Korean Prime Minister Kim Jong-pil expressed his government's gratefulness for the prayers and contribu-

tions of the Pentecostal movement. Christianity has surpassed Buddhism as the major faith in South Korea.

During daily sessions, prayers were offered for the economic situation in Asia, peace in the Middle East and Albania, and on behalf of the persecuted church.

The next world conference will be held in Los Angeles

in 2001 and will be chaired by Thomas E. Trask, general superintendent of the Assemblies of God, based in Springfield, Missouri. The first such international gathering took place in 1947 in Zurich. [CT]

EVANGELISM

Latin Americans Target Continent

In a flurry of activity, Latin American Christian media and church leaders are linking to blanket their continent with the gospel by the century's end.

Dubbed "the Thousand-Day Plan," the campaign involves mobilizing Christians to pray and fast, saturating the airwaves with programs and commercials pointing audiences to Christ, conducting evangelistic campaigns, and training disciples. The plan blends mass media with personal contact.

In September, media and church leaders from across Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking North and South America convened in San José, Costa Rica, for COICOM '98, the confederation of Iberoamerican communicators. COICOM president Raul Justiniano, a Bolivian broadcaster and also the Thousand-Day Plan president, chal-

lenged coworkers to combine holy lives, evangelistic passion, and technological expertise to finish the task.

Justiniano says Iberoamerica has 600 million people in 300 cities in 26 nations. Latin America has 600 Christian-formatted radio stations, about 100 television stations, nearly 15 satellite radio networks, at least one satellite television network, 500 publications, and nearly 5,000 independent producers. COICOM believes the stage has been set for massive outreach (CT, Nov. 17, 1997, p. 82). Efforts to date have included a "World Cup" edition of the *Jesus* film featuring testimonies of Brazilian soccer players, prolonged citywide evangelism in Monterrey, Mexico, and stadium rallies in the Dominican Republic.

*By Rusty Wright
in San José, Costa Rica.*

INDIA

Gang Rape of Nuns Stirs Outrage

India's Christian leaders are putting pressure on the government to stop a tide of violence against Christian workers in the wake of the September 23 gang rape of four nuns in Madhya Pradesh State.

The assault occurred after 15 to 20 men dragged four Catholic nuns—all under age 35 and from Tamil Nadu—from their convent. One of the men earlier had feigned sickness in an unsuccessful effort to coax the nuns outside. The nuns operate a medical clinic as part of the work of their order, the Foreign Missionary Sisters.

Suspecting an attack, they barricaded themselves in the convent's chapel, but later opened the doors when the men assured them there would be no violence. The gang rapes then occurred in a nearby field.

Police arrested five people the following day. Christian leaders are pressing the government to protect religious

minorities, noting a rise in anti-Christian attacks. Archbishop Alan de Lastic wrote a strongly worded letter to the nation's president warning that the Christian community is "feeling insecure and disturbed at this increasing violence against them." Protestants make up a third of India's 25 million Christians.

The attack came two weeks after the first National Consultation on Reconciliation, Religious Liberty, and Social Justice convened by the Evangelical Fellowship of India. More than 150 Protestant church leaders warned, "If we keep sowing the wind of hatred we shall reap the whirlwind of violence and destruction. The hatred, often spread by religious leaders, has already caused incalculable suffering to the families of the victims of riots, terrorism and religious persecution."

By Alex Buchan, Compass Direc-

Graham Unveils Evangelism Conference

The world's most famous twentieth-century evangelist has announced plans for a massive conference of preaching evangelists for the new millennium.

"In the midst of the rapid change in almost every phase of our lives, the task of worldwide evangelization remains a priority of the body of Christ," Billy Graham declared in announcing the event, to be held July 29 through August 6 in the year 2000 in Amsterdam. "Decay in the societies of the world, consternation in the governments, and a deep heart-cry for revival throughout the church of our Lord Jesus Christ all point to the need of the world for our Savior."

More than 10,000 participants, three-fourths of them itinerant evangelists, from 185 countries and territories, are expected at Amsterdam 2000. Theologians, strategists, and church leaders also will attend

the conference, which will include daily prayer, worship, and seminars. John Corts, president of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA), will be general director of the conference.

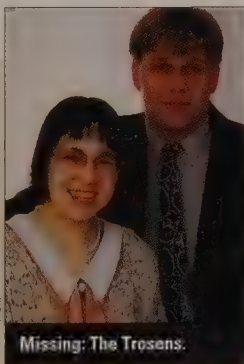
"Though the message of the gospel and the need for that message will not change in the next century, the methods and delivery systems will be different," Corts says. "We can neither count on past victories nor look ahead to anticipate how evangelism will be done in the future."

Graham has been involved in similar conferences in the past, including the Berlin Congress in 1966, sponsored by CHRISTIANITY TODAY. The BGEA sponsored the Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization in 1974 in Switzerland. The BGEA also held international evangelism conferences in Amsterdam in 1983 and 1986. CT

In Brief

◆ Inclement weather and dense jungles have hampered search efforts for a Cessna airplane carrying a **World Gospel Mission** (WGM) missionary family in Bolivia. The plane disappeared September 28 en route from an Andean mountain village to Santa Cruz. Crews are combing the jungles around the Yapacani River in central Bolivia by land and air for signs of the plane. Passengers included John, 27, and Masako Trosen, 33, of Wadena, Minnesota; their children, Isaiah, 3, and Sophia, 8 months; Juan Carlos Zuazo, a Bolivian pastor; and Johny Mamani, a 25-year-old seminary student, and his wife, Lucy, 19. The Trosens were in their first year with the Marion, Indiana-based WGM.

◆ A Turkish court in September sentenced Mehmet Kurt, a member of the outlawed Islamic terrorist group VASAD, to life in prison for a September 1997 bombing of a **Turkish Good News Publishing Company** bookstand. A four-year-old boy died in the blast in Gaziantep, Turkey, and 25 people sustained injuries (*CT*, Nov. 17, 1997, p. 76). Seven other VASAD members received prison terms ranging from 45 months to 18 years for the attack. CT



Missing: The Trosens.



Church treasure: Saint Giorgis in Lalibela is one of 11 Ethiopian churches hand-carved from a single piece of solid rock during the twelfth century.

RELIGION NEWS SERVICE

Centuries-old Treasures Pilfered

Hand-carved from solid rock, the 11 churches of an impoverished Ethiopian mountain village are a wonder of the medieval ingenuity that created them. And their abundant treasures reflect the religious devotion that maintained the churches for centuries.

They also are the scene of a sickening betrayal that has left many wondering if there is something rotten at the heart of

one of Christendom's oldest churches. An Ethiopian Orthodox priest, whose forefathers have preserved the Lalibela churches (see p. 87) since they were carved from the mountainside in the twelfth century, last year stole one of the church's most priceless sacred objects: a 15-pound solid gold cross that had been kept

safely in Lalibela for more than 700 years. The priest and a market trader to whom he gave the cross are in jail, but no trace of the priceless cross has been found.

Home to Christianity since A.D. 34, Ethiopia has some of the most historically valuable Judeo-Christian relics, manuscripts, and art in the world. With increasing frequency, such priceless artifacts are disappearing from Ethiopian monasteries

and churches. Concerned the nation is losing its heritage, the Ministry of Culture has proposed a plan to move the artifacts out of churches and monasteries into secure museums. Patriarch Abune Paulos, head of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, agrees in principle but wants to build secure display places in each church and monastery. For now, neither side has enough money to do either, and parish priests and monks strongly resist anything denying them access to treasures they have guarded for centuries.

Patriarch Paulos says the isolation and simple life of the clergy has been warped by easy money bestowed by tourists. The crisis is not confined to remote churches and monasteries. In Axum, the most important cultural city in Ethiopia, a monk was dismissed after allegations that he stole items from the temple. A committee of the church synod was appointed to investigate allegations against the patriarch himself.

"The committee has expelled large numbers of appointees of the patriarch, who were considered a source of the problem," says Tadesse Tamrat, a religious historian at Addis Ababa University.

*By Ross Herbert in Lalibela;
Religion News Service.*

CHRISTIANITY TODAY

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Vested interest: At a packed South Christian High School in July, Jim and Bertha VanderKodde listen to a proposal to rescue IRM investors from huge losses.

Real Estate Investment Failure Hurts Churchgoers

A year ago, the IRM Corporation sent letters to more than 1,500 investors, including Jim and Bertha VanderKodde of Grand Rapids, Michigan. The letter announced that IRM—Investment Research Management—could make no further payments.

"When we received that letter," Jim VanderKodde told CT, "we said, 'the Lord gave it to us, and the Lord took it away.' We never lost a wink of sleep over it."

For the VanderKoddes, the investment totaled \$10,000, a relatively small part of their savings after he finished a 28-year career as a police officer. But for many other investors in IRM's \$400 million real estate operation, sleep did not come so easily. Many are retirees who had placed most or all of their life savings in the private company.

IRM founder John O. Van Hofwegen and most of its investors are members of the Grand Rapids-based Christian Reformed Church (CRC). The CRC is one of the principal heirs of the Dutch Calvinist tradition in North America. The company's star salesperson, Jay Merron, formerly taught at the CRC-related South Christian High School in Grand Rapids. Besides the hundreds of individual investors, some of the largest CRC-related agencies, Home Missions Board, Calvin College, and the *Back to God Hour* radio ministry, invested a total of \$11.4 million in IRM.

The Barnabas Foundation, another major investor, while independent of the denomination, has many CRC clients. Potential losses for all parties could top \$130 million.

CALIFORNIA CONNECTION: IRM began in the late 1960s as a limited partnership real estate management venture and eventually acquired 59 properties, mostly apartment complexes in northern and central California. For more than 20 years, IRM paid investors dividends of 9 to 11 percent.

In the late 1980s, however, two factors started IRM on a troubled path. First, Congress changed the tax laws on limited partnerships, making them less attractive as investments. Second, and more ominous, the bottom fell out of California's once-booming real estate market.

What happened next is a matter of dispute. IRM "defrauded investors of over \$100 million," asserts Ken Horjus, CRC director of finance, in a court affidavit. A lawsuit filed in July by a group of CRC agencies and individual investors charged IRM with running a "Ponzi-like" operation that "created and perpetuated a real estate investment pyramid scheme."

Not so, insists John Barnard, a lawyer specializing in real estate turnaround, hired by IRM management last winter. "There's no Ponzi or pyramid scheme here," he told CT, just a succession of busi-

ness reverses resulting from a combination of a real estate recession, high interest rates, and financing problems. He notes that the Van Hofwegen family had most of its own capital at risk in the company, too, which is not the case with intentionally fraudulent schemes.

BLAME TO GO AROUND: Despite such reassurances, several other lawsuits followed, and in August IRM filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection. Regulatory agencies in both California and Michigan have opened investigations into IRM's activities.

Barnard still hopes that a buyer will be found for the IRM properties, and that a sale will recover much or all of the capital, especially of the smaller investors.

Jim VanderKodde is not as optimistic. "It's very unlikely we'll ever get our money back," he says. VanderKodde does not see IRM management as crooked. "They just messed up and lost the money. I hold no bitterness toward anybody."

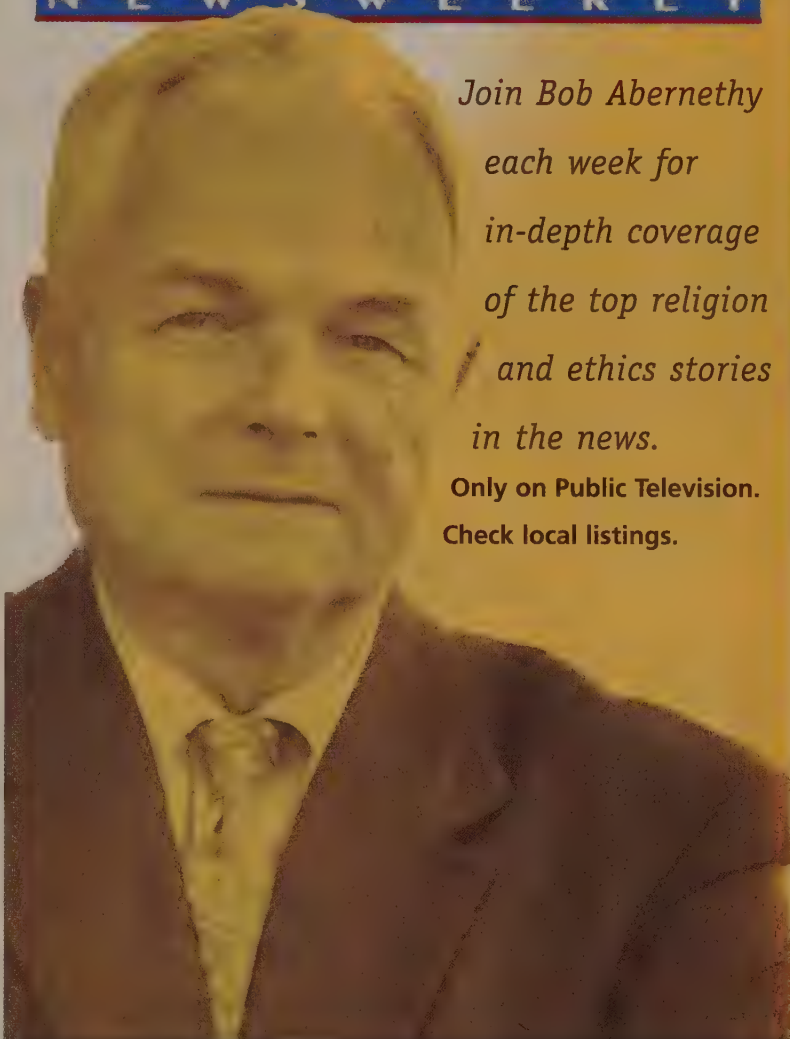
Others are not so serene. Many think IRM might have been able to avoid bankruptcy if the CRC agencies had not insisted on court action. They became angry upon learning that the church agencies and the Barnabas Foundation had been reducing investments in IRM before October 1997. CRC officials did not help their cause when they reacted to the IRM letter by clamping a "no comment" order on all staff, including the denominational magazine, *The Banner*. The order was lifted after protests and the posting of leaked internal denominational documents on the Internet. The denominational synod in June extended its session for a day to hear from CRC staff about the IRM situation.

The Barnabas Foundation, a financial advisory company in Orland Park, Illinois, with 168 client groups—most of them CRC-related—also has been criticized. But executive director David Vander Ploeg says that he and others simply carried out "due diligence" they owed their clients. Vander Ploeg says the foundation uncovered IRM's financial disarray during routine audits in the early 1990s, and the reduction of investments was simply responsible fiduciary management.

SETTLEMENT SCUTTLED: The sense of outrage among many small investors escalated when Christian Reformed Church officials opposed a Grand Rapids businessperson's offer earlier this year to buy IRM's obligations for five cents on the dollar. CRC officials say they felt they could find a better offer. But hundreds of investors who crowded into meetings in Michigan and California during the summer tied up denominational phone and fax lines to pro-

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test plans for court action and to demand acceptance of the deal.

Christian Reformed Church officials also came under fire for ignoring biblical guidelines that Christians avoid suing one another. In a July letter to investors, CRC's director of ministries, Peter Borgdorff, responded, "This is a tragic misuse of Scripture. Of course it is true that we should not seek to use the law in an adversarial way. There is, however, no biblical admonition prohibiting one from seeking the rule of law and the protection of the courts when such rule and protection are sorely needed."

In August, the court approved an 11-member creditors' committee to consider new offers for IRM. Its chair is Grand Rapids businessman Jay Mol, who says he is the largest individual investor in IRM. Since his appointment, Mol has been fielding anguished calls from hard-pressed individual investors and trying to decide which are merely facing "hardship," versus those who are in "dire hardship."

Meanwhile, VanderKodde is not worrying much about the fate of IRM. "I do a lot of volunteer work in hurricane and tornado relief," he says. "I'll keep doing that as long as the Lord lets me."

By Chuck Fager.

Congress Approves Modified Religious Persecution Bill

The Senate ended months of political wrangling October 9 by unanimously passing a no-tolerance policy for religious persecution worldwide. The bill, which the House passed by a unanimous voice vote the following day, awaits White House approval. President Clinton opposed an earlier version, but he is expected to sign this one.

The International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA), cosponsored by Sen. Don Nickles (R.-Okla.) and Sen. Joseph Lieberman (D.-Conn.), requires the President to take action against nations that engage in "systematic, ongoing, and egregious" acts of religious persecution. A 1997 State Department report cites 77 countries—including China, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Sudan—that oppress religious freedom. Lieberman says "millions of lives" will be saved because of the legislation.

The 98-to-0 Senate vote came after tense negotiations with economic conservatives who originally opposed the

measure (CT, Oct. 5, 1998, p. 26). An earlier version of the bill required mandatory economic sanctions, which free-trade Republicans argued would hurt U.S. business abroad. Sen. Chuck Hagel (R.-Neb.), an opponent of the earlier version, told CT that terminating relationships with allies that have records of religious persecution, such as Saudi Arabia and Turkey, would not be in the country's best interest.

SELECTIVE SANCTIONS? But Stephen Rickard, legislative director for Amnesty International, says he believes most Americans want a values-based foreign policy. "They don't want [human rights] sold out for trade opportunities."

The revised bill allows the President to select from a broad menu of 15 options, including public condemnation, withdrawal of aid, and a variety of economic sanctions.

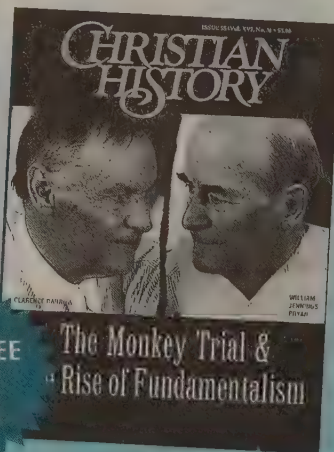
Some evangelicals fear punitive action could hurt the religiously oppressed b

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angering their governments. Mark Alrecht, with World Evangelical Fellowship's Religious Liberty Commission, supports the bill, but says, "I get nervous when the U.S. starts throwing its weight around and determining policy for the church overseas."

Hudson Institute's Michael Horowitz, an ardent supporter of religious liberty, told CT he had been more concerned with the previous bill's lack of an independent fact-finding commission than economic sanctions. Now, he says, politicians cannot ignore the issue.

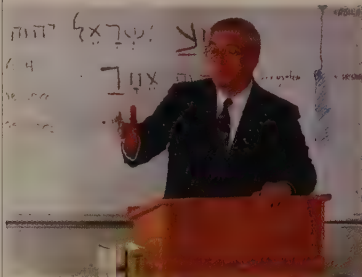
POST, PANEL CREATED: The IRFA creates an ambassador-at-large in the State Department and a bipartisan ten-member commission, which will produce a country-by-country annual report on religious persecution.

Based on the report, the President is required to announce to Congress the action he will take against violators. But the bill allows the President to waive action if "important national interest" is threatened.

Evangelicals provided leadership to the campaign against religious persecution, working together with a diverse range of religious groups, including Catholic and Jewish congregations.

By Christine J. Gardner.

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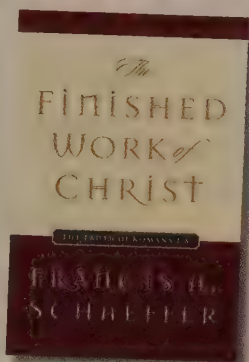
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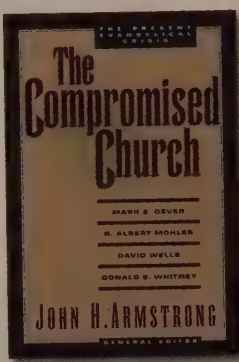
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Rain Forest Churches Brave Uncertain Future

The Mission Aviation Fellowship single-engine Cessna 185 flies low over the expansive rain forest in Indonesia's East Kalimantan Province on Borneo, the world's third-largest island. Pilot Dar Bone points out the wisps of smoke marking brush-clearing fires set by village farmers and then lands the Cessna on a tiny grassy plot. Because of drought, crops are meager and money from the sale of rice is scarce.

The cargo hold of the small plane carries supplies ordered by the Dayak villagers living in isolated settlements. With fuel costs rising, it is questionable whether these supply flights can continue. The Asian financial crisis has rippled into the remotest corners of Indonesia, a nation of 3,000 islands and 207 million people.

Despite the difficulties, even the smallest village supports a church. Evangeliza-

tion of the 21 Dayak tribes began nearly a century ago. Formerly animistic head-hunters and cannibals making intervillage raids, the Dayak now live peaceably, and 95 percent of those in East Kalimantan are Christian.

SURVIVAL AND REVIVAL: In spite of the success of evangelism among the Dayak, economic hardship has threatened the survival of their villages. At the same time, church leaders are engaged in a second battleground for spiritual revival within their churches.

Dayak congregations are not immune from modern pressures. Church leaders say it is difficult to keep villagers focused on their faith, and pastors are not always accorded the respect they once received.

Ngau Ifung lives with his family in the small town of Long Nawang in the deep green thicket of rain forest along



Mission outpost: A pastor and his family minister in Long Lebusan, Kalimantan, in Indonesia.

the Kayan River. Although a layperson, Ifung, a Christian since 1963, serves as a district superintendent to more than 15 village churches.

"My parents were animists, but they thought that if I became a Christian I would be able to go to school," Ifung says. He was pressed into service almost immediately as an overseer of the church. "In those days, a preacher was like an angel. Every word that a preacher said was ac-

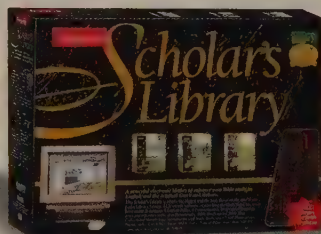
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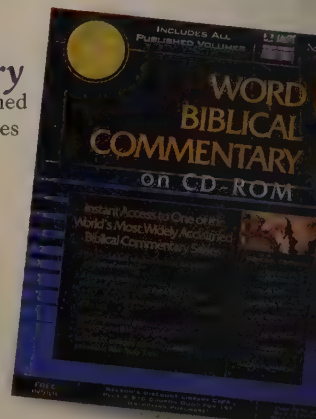
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cepted. But now it is not the case."

Today, the educational level of the typical Dayak pastor and church members is almost equal. Ifung thinks that Dayak Christians have become accustomed to being instructed from outsiders and have difficulty trusting one of their own.

YOUTH FLIGHT: Dayak Christian parents watch as their children leave their village homes for postgrammar-school education or for work opportunities in cities. This conflicts with a tribal culture's main means of perpetuating itself: through the support system of the tribal extended family. Some young people lose their way and their faith. To help those facing an unfamiliar world, Ifung writes letters to pastors of churches that young people attend in cities. He also leads weekly prayer meetings on behalf of those who have left.

Some Dayak young people aspire to Christian service. In 1978, the Christian and Missionary Alliance and Dayak leaders helped launch the Theological School



Training converts: Evangelist Yohanis Sakai, with his wife, Betlem, started a Bible school for evangelists in Samarinda.

of Tenggarong, along Kalimantan's northeast coast. The school has a good reputation, and the government waives property taxes. Students and teachers gave money to support a building program. A new cafeteria and boys' dormitory have recently been completed with financial gifts and volunteer help.

EXTERNAL PRESSURES: As a pilot for MAF, Bone knows that churches in the Kalimantan rain forest are subject to

intense outside pressures. "There is nothing we can do to stop the process of globalization, because that is already in God's plan," Bone says.

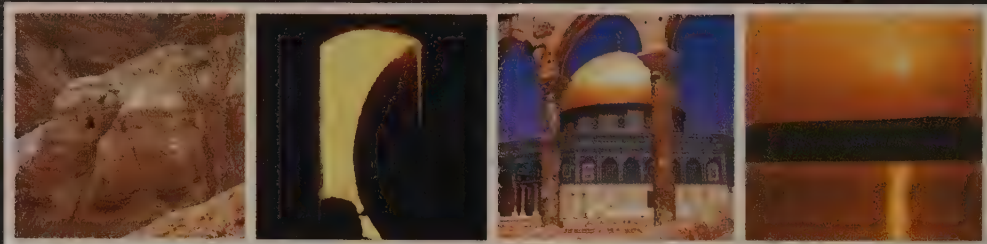
Although the economic and political situation has caused strife, Dayak church leaders pray for revival within their churches and countrywide. Ifung, as he oversees village churches, urgently prays for "inspiration from the Holy Spirit" in facing the challenges posed by the global economy, which is opening up Kalimantan villages to economic development as never before.

"One of the things we struggle with in being here is how to help people with their [economic] needs," says missionary Eric Maxey, a teacher at the Theological School of Tenggarong. "Just giving money creates dependency. So we asked God to show us ways that we could help them. And God opened up a marvelous handicraft business."

Dayak leaders have trained 20 women to create beaded Christmas bells to be sold in North America through Bright

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Loly Dungau, the principal at Tenggarong, says his tribe has reserved the best of their art, dance, and beadwork. In turn, proceeds from selling beadwork may support a family, plus pay school costs.

Kelso Uleh, the student body president at Tenggarong, traces his commitment to Christian ministry to a time when he was nearly killed working for a logging company in Kalimantan. "I got stuck between a boat and a log on the river. The rapids were washing over me," Uleh relates. "I was released and the boat went into the rapids and was destroyed." Soon after that Uleh became a Christian. Now, at 31, he studies theology and is a student leader. The income his wife generates from beadwork allows the family to be self-sufficient and to pay for his education.

"It's a good time to pray for Indonesia" Dungau says. "When the institutions we think are secure collapse under us, many people start to question eternal things. We're praying that in this time of suffering, we'll see God use it for his glory."

By Kathi Henry in Kalimantan, Indonesia.

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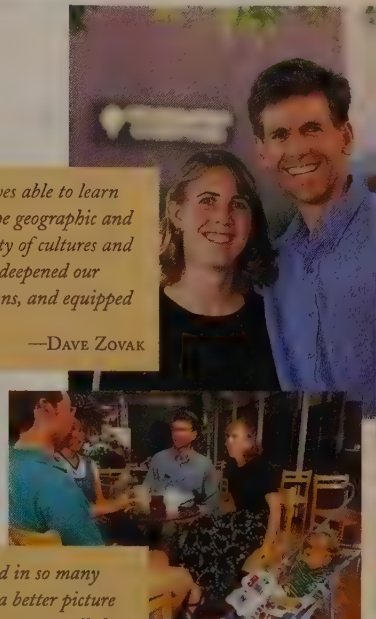
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Crowded opportunity: Bill Mancini of the Presbyterian Church in America's Mission to the World tries, along with 99 other mission agency representatives, to recruit boomers.

FINISHERS PROJECT

from page 22

they've done has significance and meaning."

Nelson Malwitz, founder and chair of the Finishers Project, does not believe attendees are motivated by a midlife crisis. "It's a demographic phenomenon where you say, 'I've done what I've done. Now what?'"

While some Finishers

may be looking at missions more to bring meaning into their lives than because of an interest in the lost, Malwitz is not concerned. "We're not questioning their motivation right now," he says. "Our calling is to give them the opportunity and challenge."

OPPORTUNE TIME: Because changing careers can take several years, Malwitz is glad most attendees were in their forties. "If it hits at 55, they won't be ready," he says. "At 42, you can build relationships, go on short-term missions, and prepare."

Such thinking is relatively new. Ron Linkenback, 49, and wife, Jan, 48, tried to go a few years ago. "Mission boards didn't know what to do with us. It seemed like mission boards wouldn't even consider you if you're over 35," says Jan Linkenback. "At this conference, we've been overwhelmed. There's an army ready to be recruited here."

As with the Mackies, who say they do not have much of a nest egg in place, the Linkenbacks are not waiting for their 401(k) to kick in. "Early retirement is kind of a cop-out," says Jan Linkenback. "I don't think it's really relying on the Lord to use his resources."

Ron Linkenback just changed jobs, and they are in the middle of a move from Cleveland to Springfield, Illinois. Still, they are ready to begin full-time ministry as soon as they can. "If God wants us to go, we'll go," Jan Linkenback says.

As with the Linkenbacks, many of the conferees have had previous overseas missions experiences. By attending this meeting, most sought more than the two-week blitzes they had typically experienced in the past.

SHORT-TERM PREFERENCE: Still, many mission agencies exhibiting at the conference are not counting on the years-upon-years of service the boomers have given to their careers.

"There are two crucial factors at work here: aging parents and grandkids," says Roger Shriner, director of recruitment for OMS International. "I'd estimate that about 75 percent of the people here are going to have to orient themselves around those bookends." As a result, he says, OMS and other mission agencies are hoping to recruit Finishers only for a year or two.

"But that's not new," he says. "Most missionaries today are short-term, and then they generally repeat. But even if they don't, they're better prayer warriors. They give more to missions. They're more holistically 'world Christians,' and the experience has made them new persons."

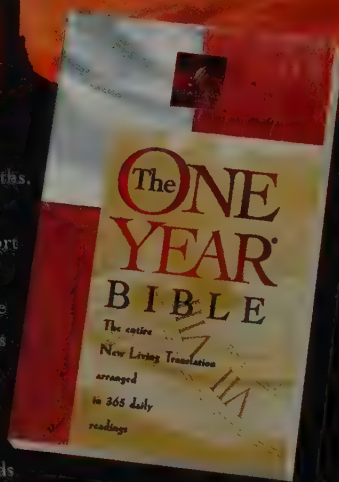
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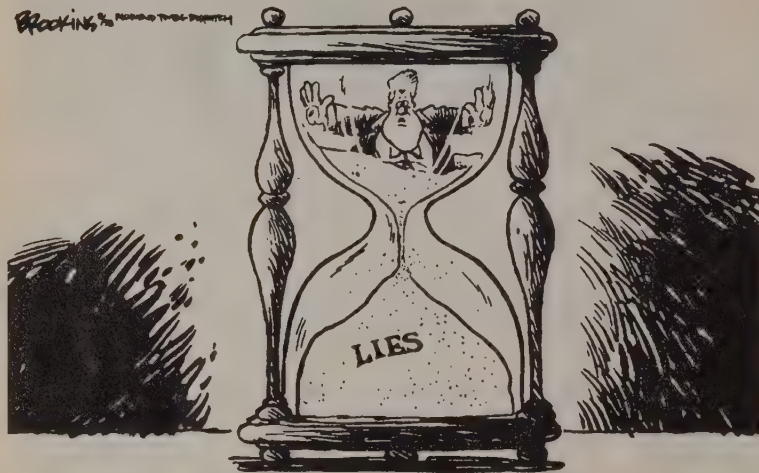
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The Truth About Lies

For a nation in denial, it's time to tell it like it is.



Executive editor David Neff was hooked up by transatlantic telephone line to the BBC Radio 4 program *The Moral Maze*, a weekly ethics-oriented talk show on which panelists display their British wit and wisdom at its most caustic.

The first question the host fired at him was: "Is your American President a liar?"

Neff wished he had had the wit to say, "Well that all depends on what *liar* means." But instead, he told the BBC's listeners that the American people had plenty of evidence before they elected him that Bill Clinton frequently did not tell the truth. President Clinton is a charming person who inspires confidence. As a child in a dysfunctional alcoholic home, he learned to please, to avoid conflict, and to disarmingly reveal his vulnerability while denying any responsibility for a bad situation. He developed the sort of charisma that makes you want to trust him, even against your better judgment. The American people did not want a moral leader, Neff said, so much as they wanted a President they could identify with.

That helps to explain why the release of the videotapes of the President's grand jury testimony not only confirmed people's beliefs that he had lied to them, but also increased their sympathy for him. They squirmed with him, as they watched him try to wriggle off the hook of the prosecutors' questions.

Has the cult of victimhood come to this? exclaimed one panelist. Indeed. What we seem to have in the Oval Office is not so much a chief executive as

a First Victim, the King of Vulnerability in the Land of Oprah.

Home of the whopper

We are in this autumn of our discontent, not because Kenneth Starr caught the President in a lie, but because the grand palace of spin and deception which this president has constructed to live in would no longer hold together. He could no longer be the great champion of underdogs and at the same time be someone who took advantage of an infatuated subordinate many years his junior.

We are troubled as much by the too-easy moralism that said, "The President lied; let's impeach him," as we are by too-quick calls for forgetting and moving on. This simplistic reaction to presidential prevarication reveals much about our culture, and about how little

we know about lies. Presidential lies have not been limited to this one instance in this one administration.

As children, we think of lies as discrete untruths: "The dog ate my homework" or "I lost my lunch money." But as we grow older, we discover that lies exist in networks of belief, that most fibs, big and small, are synthetic threads woven in the fabric of how we see (or want to see) our family system or our national culture or our congregation's way of playing church. They are not simply whoppers told to exculpate and escape punishment.

If la Rochefoucauld was right in calling hypocrisy "the homage paid by vice to virtue," then these lies that form the fabric of our wished-for lives are a tribute to better days, to the possibility of improved lives, to a higher vision of what can be. When we cover for an alcoholic spouse by calling in sick for him or her, or attribute a bruise to clumsiness rather than to a parent's brutality, we say what we want to believe, hoping that in the speaking it will somehow be made true.

Unfortunately, these webs of hopeful denial often trap us in repeated self-defeating behavior patterns. Truly, they offer not hope but wishful thinking.

Painful memories

Whenever the bright lies of wishful thinking or the dark lies of oppression bind us, it is only truth that liberates: First, we need the facts—whether in a family intervention or an artful play or novel that belies

human deception or political propaganda. Second, we need Jesus, who is Truth enfleshed and in whose grace we are free to acknowledge the bonds with which we have tied ourselves. And third, we need communities of memory who are committed to the unvarnished truth—who won't or don't conceal their own painful past. As Robert Bellah put it, if a "community is completely honest, it will remember stories not only of suffering received but of suffering inflicted—dangerous memories, for they call the community to alter ancient evils" (*Habits of the Heart*).

The kind of community Bellah describes stands in stark contrast to the reality of totalitarian governments, which fabricate Potemkin villages of fake prosperity and false contentment and require their citizens to live within an oppressive web of lies.

Almost immediately after the President's Lewinsky-related lies, half-truths, and misdirections became public, sympathetic clergy and public servants called for forgiveness. But, as the *New York Times* editorial page

was quick to point out, "[W]e can afford to be a nation of forgivers. But we must not become a nation of enablers." The nation must refuse to endorse the President's personal lies and our cultural ones.

Truth, as a way of life, is hard. It takes courage and commitment not to settle for the comfort of the lies we tell about ourselves, to have the darkness of our souls made visible. Being truthful is a countercultural, gospel commitment, coloring how we relate to government, to culture, and to ourselves. Being truthful recognizes the way sin shadows everything human and proclaims the need to shine the gospel light on every life and institution. Still, the gospel brings freedom to say no to lies and to live in reality.

All this attention to perjury and misdirection has created a moment, a providential parenthesis in history, in which we can have some kind of national intervention, telling the truth about our cultural denial, pretensions, and wishful thinking. May God give us the courage to seize the day. **CT**

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Jesus told us that the "children of this age are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than are the children of light" (Luke 16:8, NRSV). And our news sources bear out his judgment. Our advice to you is this: Wise up. Don't get suckered.

Over the past few years, CT has published multiple news stories about godly people who have lost millions because they believed what were essentially unbelievable promises. Some of these losses have been the result of Ponzi or pyramid schemes in which high return on investment is promised over a short period of time. The illusion is created and sustained because new investors are constantly sought whose investments are used to pay handsome rewards to earlier investors. The trouble is, the universe for any such investment scheme is always limited, and when the point is reached where not enough new investors can be found, the pyramid collapses of its own weight. Thus, when the New Era Philanthropy scheme came crashing down, \$551 million in liabilities were initially reported in 1995.

Sometimes such schemes fail when federal indictments bring them to a halt, as they did in the case of the Productions Plus "matching gift" ploy that drew in organizations and individuals in 21 states. Other losses (like the soured real-estate partnerships described in "Real Estate Investment Failure Hurts

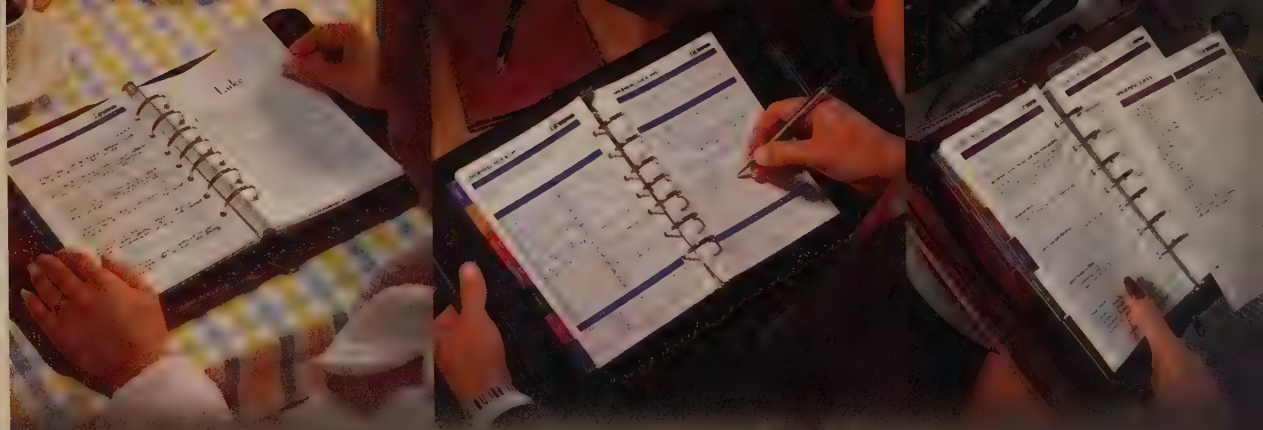
Churchgoers," p. 30) result from market reversals, bad management, or inadequate oversight.

Two factors lie at the heart of all these tragedies: first is the level of trust we Christians exercise as we deal with one another. This is important, and often healthy, in congregational life. Many Christians, skeptical of anything the unsaved have to offer, trust Christian publishers for "Christian" books on financial management, weight loss, and child discipline. They trust Christian record companies to provide them with "Christian" entertainment. And, unfortunately, they are sitting ducks when approached with "Christian" investment schemes that promise the moon. While we need to trust each other in our congregational lives, a dose of skepticism is always warranted whenever anyone else stands to profit from our trust.

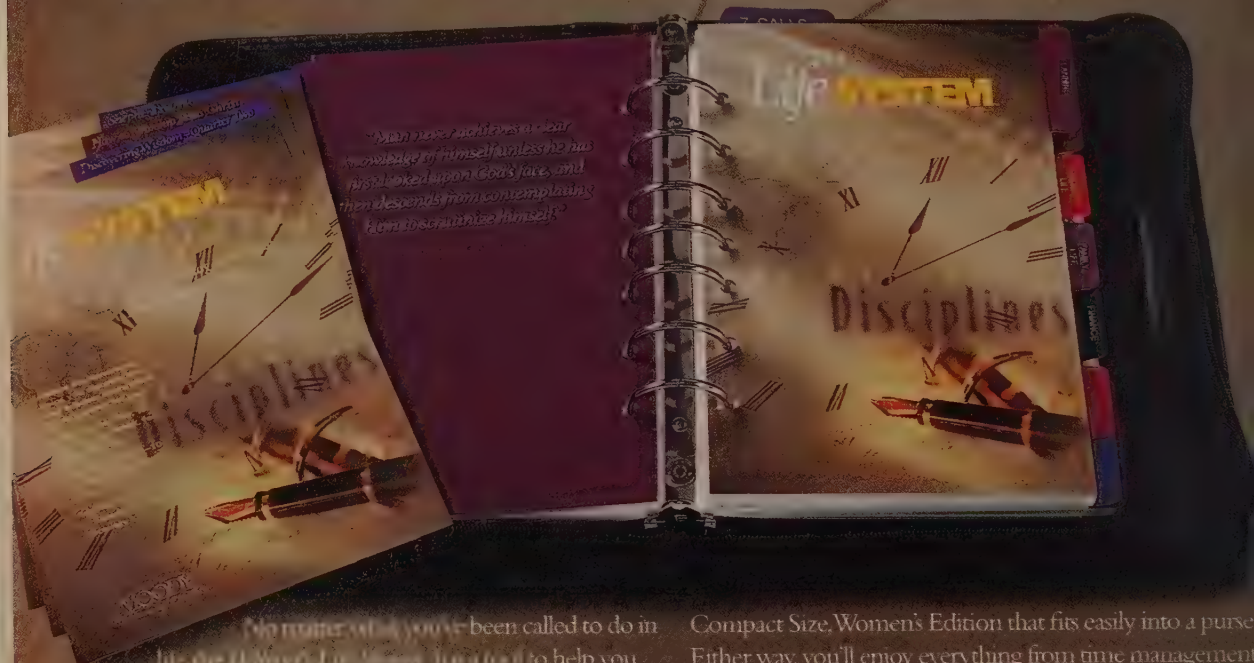
The second factor is the enticing promise of something for nothing, or at least something big for something little. In this sense, the allure of Ponzi schemes is not unlike the allure of gambling. But in investments as in gambling, those who are foolish in small things often get caught being foolish in big things. Contentment is the cure for the gotta-have-it itch. Saint Paul preached contentment in material things (1 Tim. 6:8) and Jesus preached trust in Divine providence for what we eat and what we wear (Matt. 6:25f.).

Today's "radical simplicity" movement is a secularized strain of that message—which sorely needs to be informed by the gospel and its age-to-come dimension. But first, Christians need to refresh their own souls with the simplicity message of Scripture. Those who don't are making themselves marks for con men. Remember, having clean hands and a pure heart does not require getting taken to the cleaners. **CT**

**Those who are
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small things
often get caught
being foolish
in big things.**



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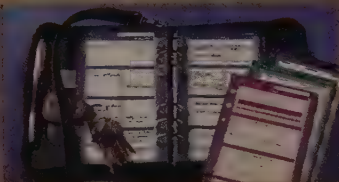
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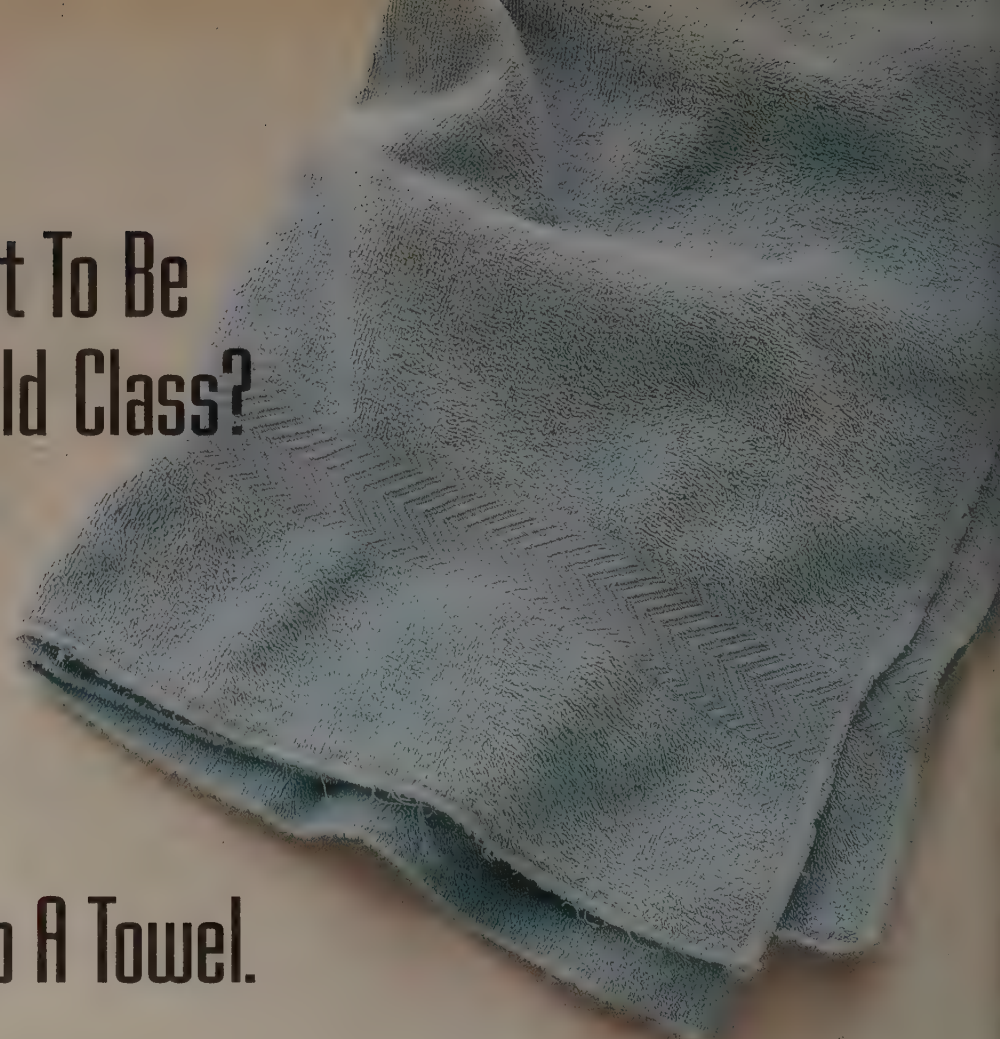
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When we asked a dozen international evangelical leaders to report on the state of the church in their regions, we didn't receive just cold statistics or idealized stereotypes. Instead, we heard from flesh-and-blood believers with attitude, telling their churches' stories from specific points of view. At some points, old hurts poke through (brace yourself for a bit more scolding on the failures of Western imperialistic missions); at

throughout the world. He is not the heavenly CEO giving target figures to his regional directors to meet.

Rather, he is friend and partner to the local jungle pastor of Malaysia and the suburban missionary in Berlin. Our God is involved with the details.

One reason these reports reveal clay feet so clearly—unlike the glowing articles in old-time missions bulletins—is because of the

Now That We're Global

other places, joy for the work God is doing among them bubbles to the surface.

Perhaps the most practical reminder they give us is that the same problems and temptations that plague North American evangelicals—materialism, judgmentalism, evangelistic apathy, unchecked emotionalism, infighting—are found in full measure elsewhere in the church. From Russia we hear that the decades of persecution under communism have not automatically led to evangelistically effective churches now that there is more freedom. Religious fervor in Brazil has not directly translated into spiritual maturity. And material gain in South Korea has not necessarily turned into Christian generosity. The lesson: Christians everywhere walk their faith with feet of clay.

But we also learn that it is the clay-footed that God uses to do his work. Cutting through the fog of problems and issues is the clear sunlight of God's work, specific and local,

unfiltered directness of the reports, thanks to e-mail and the rise of English as the *lingua franca* of the world. In our "global village," such unmediated directness keeps us from romanticizing the faith of faraway Christians and presenting our own faithfulness with ostentation. It also calls for greater measures of not just honesty, but charity, and not just openness, but respect.

The following reports necessarily represent only a sampling of the global evangelical fellowship. Whole regions go unmentioned, and in those regions we do cover, other worthy spokespersons could have described the state of affairs with a different interpretation. Still, we hope that the following pieces will help us both to see the big picture and to connect at a more personal level with our brothers and sisters around the globe. Most of the contributors have listed their e-mail addresses and welcome your comments. Let the conversations—and prayers—begin.

—The Editors



Mexico



It's a Small Church

Two decades later, the 300 Italian members of an immigrant church on the outskirts of Sydney, Australia, still talk about the visit of the "Brazilian brothers." In 1975, in the midst of rapid evangelical and Pentecostal growth in Brazil, Luigi Schilrò, a powerful preacher who came out of charismatic Methodism, and Mario Lindstrum, an engaging Assemblies of God singer and musician, received a prophecy from an Armenian woman in Brazil that they were to go to Asia, but on the way, they were to pass through Australia. So they began their journey.

Arriving in Sydney, they lodged in the central-city YMCA, where they prayed for guidance. Looking through the phone book they found a pastor named Anthony Foti at a church under the listing "Assemblies of God—Italian." They took a train

Mark Hutchinson

out to the suburb of Yagoona in hopes of visiting the church. As Lindstrum tells the story: "We sat down on the footpath under a tree. People were walking past and looking at us. Then there arrived a man in a car. While still at a distance, I called out, 'Are you Pastor Foti?' 'Yes!' he replied. And thus we went into the garden, where he asked us questions and took us into his house to eat together."

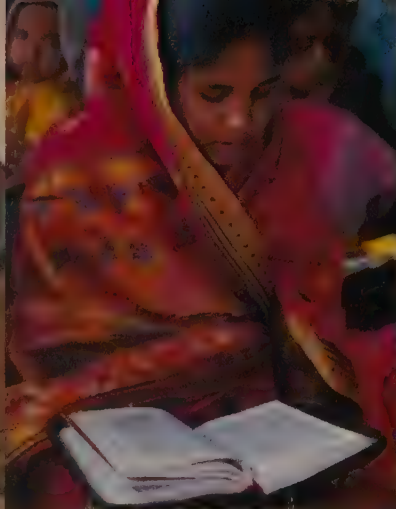
Foti, an American by birth, invited Luigi and Mario to preach in his Italian church. But first he took them to visit a Slavic Pentecostal church in the area, where Schilrò preached in Portuguese (his native tongue), Lindstrum translated into English, and the Slavic pastor translated into Russian. The visit to Foti's church sparked four months of intense evangelism and spiritual blessing that the members remember to this day.

Consider the mix of labels in this one small story—Methodist, Assemblies of God; Brazilian, Italian, Armenian, American; English, Portuguese, Russian. In a small way, it illustrates how evangelical Christianity has moved out of its traditional nationalist and ethnic boxes to engage the world in a more global and universal way. It also illustrates the much-heralded shift in the center of evangelicalism and evangelical activity away from white, middle-class, North Atlantic believers in developed countries to believers in the Third World.

While this shift is not news for anyone who has paid any attention to religious demographics in the last couple of decades, what is less well understood is how this "globalization" of our movement affects who we are (identity) and how we do church (ecclesiology). Before exploring the effects of a shrinking globe upon our movement, however, we should keep in mind where evangelicalism fits in terms of world population and geography (also see the map on p. 50).

Three-quarter billion strong

About one-third of the world's population has some allegiance to Christianity, and about 700 million of these are what researcher David Barrett calls "Great Commission" Christians. These are Christians who believe in the centrality of the Cross, in Jesus Christ as Savior, the Bible as God's Word, and in the mandate to spread the gospel. It is to these Christian believers I am referring when I speak of evangelical Christians. Of these evangelical Christians, more than half are charismatic or Pentecostal.



After All

Globalization is changing how Christians do ministry.

Pentecostalism is the largest and most dynamic movement within evangelicalism. The explosive numerical growth and geographical expansion of Pentecostals in the last 30 years has given a new look to the religious make-up of the Third World—or the Two Thirds World, as it is more accurately and positively called. “Two Thirds” has become descriptive of not only non-First World countries (such as Germany or the United States) but also of where evangelicals are located around the world. Two-thirds of Pentecostal and charismatic members, says Barrett, are to be found in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

In First World countries, the relationship of “evangelical” churches (that is, non-Pentecostal evangelical churches) with “Pentecostal” churches (evangelical churches that are Pentecostal in expression) is often tinged by suspicion and a sense of theological superiority. Not so in places like Brazil and other parts of the Two Thirds World. While only about two-thirds of evangelical churches in Greater Rio de Janeiro are Pentecostal in orientation, for example, 90 percent of those founded in the last three years are Pentecostal.

Statistics show that the Pentecostal/charismatic element in evangelicalism is becoming an increasingly larger percentage of global Christianity. At the same time, this growing force has generally (though not universally) combined the biblicism of “evangelicals” with the experientialism of “Pentecostals.” For our purposes, both groups will be considered overlapping traditions within the larger evangelical movement. With this picture of worldwide evangelicalism in mind, let us look more closely at how the dynamics of the modern

phenomenon of globalization shape our movement as we ourselves become more and more global.

Straining to be one

One of the most visible dynamics of globalization is multiculturalism—the many straining to be one. The story of the Brazilian brothers leaping across national and cultural boundaries provides one such example—though I should finish the story to illustrate how completely multicultural it was. The musician, Mario Lindstrum, was the son of a Swedish immigrant to Brazil who was brought to a knowledge of Christ by two Japanese Christians in Brazil. The Italian immigrants to whom Lindstrum and Schilrø had preached in Australia in turn witnessed to their extended families around the world. This church eventually helped start a Portuguese assembly in Sydney and began sending missionaries to Spain, Portugal, and South America.

Such low-level, yet global-scale activity among evangelical churches has changed the way believers in Latin America and Asia see themselves. It has also changed how evangelicals in the First World view themselves and their Third World brothers and sisters. Western evangelicalism sprang from traditions that depended heavily on nation-states for their identity and strength. Denominations were called the “Established Church of Scotland,” for instance, or the “Dutch Reformed Church.” Even Wesley, who saw the world as his parish and would unintentionally found a church based on method and not national identity, died a minister of the “Church of England.”

Naturally, these groups assumed the cultural and

ethnic assumptions of their cradle countries. Anglicans, it was perceived, were English (or in the United States, white, Anglo-Saxon, upper-middle class). Reformed people were Dutch and "plain." Lutherans held surnames like Simpfendorfer. But as the decades rolled by, and as these groups pressed out into the world, their national and ethnic identities became harder to hold together.

Today, an American Episcopal diocese searching for vibrant Anglicanism looks to Uganda to recruit a leader to oversee its missions program. Australian churches adopt Korean cell groups and Samoan prayer summits as models for congregational action while sending song leaders to American congregations. Because of cases like these, observers of the current evangelical/Pentecostal expansion (that began in the 1960s) no longer speak about "this church in that country," but instead use such odd-sounding terminology as "flows of cultural and theological influence."

How did this shift occur? Leading sociologists such as David Lyon and David Martin note that what many pundits thought was the death of the church in the 1960s through secularization was really its relocation and rebirth into the rest of the world.

"What many pundits thought was the death of the church in the 1960s through secularization was really its relocation and rebirth into the rest of the world."

When the river of evangelical faith in missionary-sending countries (particularly the United States) hit the logjams of modernism and individualism (gathering strength already in the last century), the evangelical river began altering its course by flowing sideways and around the obstructions. The results started to become visible in the last half of this century as evangelical Christianity seemed to burst out into a myriad different forms in a thousand places around the globe.

When communities become global, no forms or patterns remain unconnected, especially in a world where methods and ideas seem to move almost without reference to time and space. A good case study is the "church growth" movement of the last several decades. While widely criticized, the movement, in effect, brought the lessons of the Third World into First World practice, particularly through the books and teaching of Donald McGavran and C. Peter Wagner. Today, as a result, "every major Protestant denomination has adopted a church-planting project," says Chris Forster of Challenge 2000. The Lausanne-backed Discipling a Whole Nation project (DAWN), which was first used in the Philippines, has been highly successful in countries such as Zimbabwe and is now in 40 countries. The goal is to start 3 million new churches worldwide in the near future. The Willow Creek Association, the Alpha Course, and the Toronto Blessing are other examples of local evangelical events that have expanded onto the global stage. As these and other numerous programs spread, they bring in their wake new institutions and new patterns by which groups cohere and exert influence. "Our" world and "their" world become connected, making it impossible for any culture to remain a culture completely unto itself.

Riding crosscurrents of influence

The shift of the center of evangelical Christianity away from the Northern and Western Hemispheres into multiple hotbeds

around the world has also created multiple centers of power and influence. As seen with the story of the Brazilian brothers, this has changed the nature of evangelical activity, whether the undertaking be training new leaders (such as the evangelical seminaries in Kenya and Brazil noted in this issue of CT) or doing missions.

Today, nearly as many missionaries are being sent out from Two Thirds World countries as are being sent to them. Evangelical ministries in South Korea and Brazil commission workers to immigrant populations throughout the First World. Islander communities in the Pacific, which were first evangelized by Australians, now support (through agencies such as the Deep Sea Canoe Mission and South Pacific Partners) outreaches in Australia, with a view to "taking the gospel back to Jerusalem." PM International, founded in 1984 by Mexican Pablo Carillo, currently supports 40 Latin American missionaries in three regions of the Muslim world. There are scores of other organizations sending out some 4,000 missionaries from the Latin world. The scene in South Korea, with 5,000 cross-cultural missionaries, and, to a lesser extent, the Philippines, is similar.

These new sending countries are not, however, simply reproducing the models of the traditional evangelical mission programs that originally reached them from the First World. They instead operate using a more flexible approach (many using short-term workers and "tentmaking" methods), are church-based rather than agency based, and are often not one-directional. For instance, not only is Brazil the largest sender of evangelical missionaries in the Latin world, it is also the largest receiver—which makes it a lot easier to remember the Golden Rule as they do missions.

It perhaps goes without saying that multiple centers of influence also increase the potential for tension. Such tension can be seen in evangelical reactions to the South African "Truth and Reconciliation Commission." With strong input from evangelicals like Michael Cassidy of African Enterprise, the commission is a rare example of Christian principles being applied to solve national problems. But not all evangelicals are happy with it. Why? Because the dual ideals of "truth" and "reconciliation" meet on equal footing—thereby exposing our deep-seated convictions about which of these two Christian and culturally shaped principles are given our tacit priority. Missiologist Rosemary Dowsett points out that Western traditions have emphasized the "justification" elements of the gospel as well as related "truth" aspects of the text. More communal cultures beyond Europe, which are less in debt to Roman legal traditions (Japan, for instance), have emphasized the "reconciliation" elements of the gospel. This is also true in places where the church struggles under the weight of civil war, endemic disease, famine, cultural and religious conflict, or political dictatorships. For some First World evangelicals, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's approach doesn't give a proper pride of place to truth. But who—and this is the point—in South Africa is waiting for a North American's advice on this controversy?

The globalization of evangelicalism means that the tradition-

l locus of power, the First World, no longer has the ability to control the conversation. By virtue of controlling the theological colleges, voluntary associations, and church fellowships that have energized missions and given identity to the church, Northern Hemisphere Anglo leaders in the past could and did set the terms of debate. Identity questions were settled in a similar way. You knew who you were by whom you excluded—charismatics, ecumenists, evangelical entrepreneurs who have meetings with the pope, and so on. Most noticeably, some evangelical leaders built small organizational empires by judging how “biblical” this TV evangelist is or how orthodox that doctrine on inspiration might be.

So what happens when these traditional holders of power hear a different set of issues being raised by evangelicals in the Two Thirds World, such as the question Bill Dyrness heard in the Philippines: “Why is there so much poverty in the part of the world where the Christian faith is growing most rapidly?” (*How America Hears the Gospel*). The danger is that the First World questioner will patronize Two Thirds World concerns with “reconciliation” theology by discounting them as weak or naïve, implying that the only good sort of truth is systematic, rational truth. On the other hand, there is great potential for both sides to learn from the others’ perspective and insights.

In a globalized movement, fault lines run not only between traditions but also through them. At any meeting of evangelicals, it seems two-thirds of those present are cheering the growth of the church, while the “biblical remnant” are bemoaning the fact that evangelicalism is going to hell in a handbasket. In an age of e-mail and satellite conferences, those who are disgruntled—on whichever side of the divide—can form their own centers of influence that have little to do with geographical location or organizational strictures. So Christian communities are driven apart as well as brought together by the spread of the global village (a phenomenon analysts are calling “glocalization”). Evangelicalism today, like Earth’s oceans, is composed of multiple currents and crosscurrents issuing from many unseen sources. How we adjust to these multiple sources of influence will determine much of our identity in the future as well as the reasonableness of calling evangelicalism a singular movement at all.

Clicking onto technology

Just as a Baptist evangelist like Billy Graham can touch millions in a crusade by satellite, so fundamentalist Baptists can form a worldwide community of those disgruntled with Graham’s “popularized” Christianity. Technology, for better or for worse, is the reason. It has not only fed the expansion of evangelicalism around the world but also fed the fractures within it. As a result, issue-based communities are formed on the basis of those who have come to know “the truth” that a particular group holds. To survive, such groups have learned to become lobbyists, taking their cases onto the world stage.

The difference today is that global technology makes the effects of such debates and fractures anything but confined. When one evangelical group attacks its opponents as, say, Luther attacked the Anabaptists, the words now echo instantaneously around the world and have unpredictable results. In an era when geographical distance has disappeared, we are no longer just in Germany, and the cost of our infighting is much higher for those evangelicals who—in Singapore or India or the Middle East or

Africa—live in the context of the other major world religions. These Christians often do not have the luxury of the “no cost, no compromise” position typical of North American fights, and distinguishing the essentials from mere theological “trivial pursuit” is literally a matter of life and death for them.

To Third World Christians, for instance, the distinction drawn by many in the First World between religion and economic or cultural identity is confusing and potentially dangerous. While First World journals can distinguish between mere culture and Christian belief or between church and state, from the other side of the global engagement such compartmentalizing looks unintelligible to, say, the believer in Mexico whose friends have been stabbed to death with machetes or to the Christian in Indonesia whose house and shop were burned.

As the stories in this issue of CT illustrate, evangelicalism has become a global faith with all the problems and opportunities that come with participating in the global village. These are the problems of success for evangelicals, not failure, but they are problems all the same and demand our close attention. Because of the technologies that make the global village possible, the problems are unlikely to disappear by themselves. The challenge for evangelicals in a megaphone world is to address these problems in ways that will build up the unity of the church rather than let the differences drive us further apart.

Jesus is still Lord

How do we react to such a picture of global evangelicalism? We are believers in the sovereignty of God, and the fact that his people have burst their historic barriers and spread out into the world does not strain his capacity to remain the author and finisher of our faith. Jesus told his disciples, “Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom.” I dare to say that our Father will be pleased to give us the kingdom, even though the little flock has grown to become a global flock.

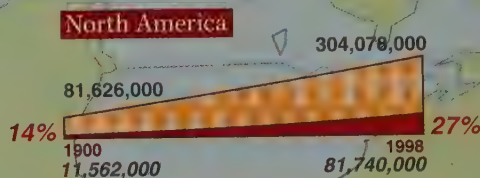
Standing, literally, before the world, evangelicals now experience both danger and opportunity on a scale we have never experienced before. The danger is that we will not pull together enough to grasp the opportunities we face. The opportunities arise because evangelicalism has internal limits in a world that is falling apart. While the rest of the world throws out its big stories, its “metanarratives” in a fit of postmodernity, evangelicalism is constrained by the biblical self-revelation of God in Christ and his command to “go into all the world.” As the world contracts, evangelicals must learn to be one people through the love of Christ. By this, as the story goes, shall all people know that we are his disciples.



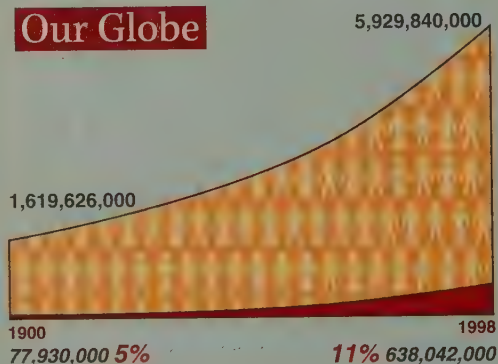
Mark Hutchinson, 40, lives in Sydney, Australia, where he serves as director of the Centre for the Study of Australian Christianity at Robert Menzies College at Macquarie University and as chair of the church history department at Southern Cross College. His latest book is *A Global Faith: Essays on Evangelicalism and Globalization*, written with Ogbu Kalu. He is also working with historians John Wolffe, Mark Noll, David Bebbington, and director Brian Stanley on the “World Christianity Project,” which aims to rewrite church history from a global perspective. E-mail: 100026.3265@compuserve.com

A CENTURY OF

Percentage of evangelical Christians compared to general population, 1900–1998



Our Globe



Growth Since 1970

	of population	of evangelicals
World	60%	126%
Europe	11%	41%
North America	31%	57%
Oceania	53%	93%
Africa	114%	207%
Latin America	76%	233%
Asia	67%	326%

Latin America



*Evangelicals: 11% world population; a one-third of all Christians

All Christians (including nominal) compared to evangelical percentage of world population

GROWTH



The map shows the numerical growth of all people and of evangelicals (defined as all persons of evangelical conviction who are active in spreading the gospel) since 1900. In each chart, the top figures identify general population numbers on the continent, and the bottom figures (in italics) identify the number of evangelical Christians on the continent. We

also indicate (in the red figures) the percentage evangelicals compose of the continents' populations in 1900 and 1998.

These figures were prepared for CHRISTIANITY TODAY by David B. Barrett, research professor of missiometrics, Regent University in Virginia Beach, Virginia, and author of the *World Christian Encyclopedia*, to be published in three volumes next year. Map and chart design by Richard Sears.



Ge

"We pray that a lost generation of Europeans will come home to the God of their forebears."

REFORM US AGAIN

Nine years after the Berlin Wall came down and eight years after the reunification of the two German states, the country of Martin Luther and of the Heidelberg Confession faces challenges as never before. Germany truly has a new face, one that people in both the east and the west of our nation still have to get used to beholding in the mirror. The same is true for the church.

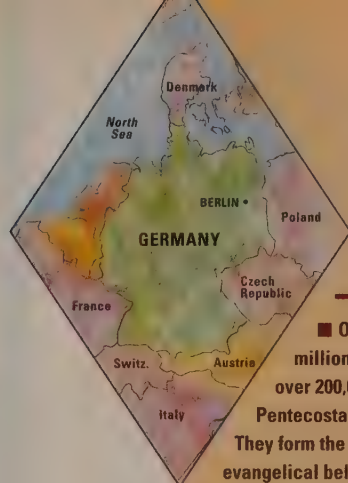
Before reunification, just under half of the population in West Germany was Roman Catholic, and just over half was Protestant. We now are confronted with a three-thirds situation, the last third being unchurched or openly atheistic citizens. Under the rule of communism and the antireligious policies of the East German government, church membership dropped from 95 percent in 1945 to about 20 percent in 1990. Over a million people left the official church after reunification on October 3, 1990 (which is now our National Day). This was due in large measure to the reintroduction of the system of church taxation in the east. Today, only 5 percent of the Protestants and 10 percent of the Catholics bother to go to church on any kind of regular basis. In the east, many families have been unchurched and therefore untouched by

Roland Werner

the gospel for three or four generations. At a recent evangelistic outdoor event, young people were asking: "God—what is that? We have never heard about it."

Nevertheless, there is a real—but by no means pervasive—evangelical movement within the traditional Protestant churches, as there is, of course, in what are called the "free churches." Free churches include Baptists (80,000 members), Methodists (almost 50,000), Free Evangelicals (30,000), various Pentecostal and charismatic churches (80,000), the Salvation Army, and a few other small denominations. Altogether, their membership totals only 300,000, which is less than half a percent of the total population. Even though attendance in these churches is sometimes double the actual membership, their numbers are still minuscule in relationship to the overall population.

Sadly, there is an unhealthy tendency toward in-house fighting among certain evangelicals. Some more fundamentalist evangelicals, who have stood their ground against liberal, neoliberal, Marxist, and feminist interpretations of the gospel, are now turning against their fellow evangelicals, whom they see as compromising culturally and dogmatically. They protest especially the



In Europe Today

■ Of the estimated 10 million Gypsies in Europe, over 200,000 are fervent Pentecostal Christians. They form the largest group of evangelical believers in both Spain and France.

■ French evangelicals have more than 200 missionaries in 30 foreign lands and operate 10 evangelical Bible schools and seminaries.

■ German evangelicals publish more than 150 magazines with a combined circulation of 50 million and publish more than 65 percent of all Protestant book titles.

■ Polish evangelicals use radio station TWR to broadcast Christian programming 24 hours a day.

■ An evangelical movement called Oasis in the Catholic Church in Poland now numbers in the hundreds of thousands. Reached through Bible-study groups, camps, and publishing houses, these believers continue forming Bible studies and informal fellowships throughout the country.

Source: Operation World (1998)



Roland Werner is a Bible translator, university evangelist, and the leader of an interdenominational church for students in Marburg. At 41, he serves as chair of the Christival evangelistic festivals and is a member of the German Lausanne committee. E-mail: rolwerner@aol.com

Germany

inclusion of charismatics into the German Evangelical Alliance and cooperation in evangelism with renewal groups inside the Roman Catholic church.

But despite these internal problems, there is also a growing interest among evangelicals from the traditional, free, and charismatic churches to make the gospel known in Germany. The opening up of the Iron Curtain has opened up new avenues of outreach to sister evangelical churches in central and eastern Europe, which need our support. There are many partnership and exchange programs linking Christians from different European countries. Some of these links had been formed in communist times, when Christians from East Germany already shouldered the responsibility of helping their more eastern brothers and sisters.

Christians are also responding to the millions who have lost their jobs and find themselves in a psychological and spiritual vacuum following the breakdown of the Communists' centralized system. Under the motto "Come follow Jesus," Christival 1996—a five-day congress for young Christians—brought together over 32,000 young people from all over Germany, plus another 2,000 from neighboring countries, to the east-German city of Dresden. It helped define a new positive identity for young people of many different churches as followers of Christ.

In the wake of Billy Graham's 1993 "Mission to Europe," held in Essen and linked via satellite to 330 venues in Germany and throughout Europe, other similar events followed—in 1995 from Leipzig with 360 link-ups, and in 1997 from Nuremberg with 660 link-ups and a combined participation of 1 million people. In January of this year, a youth event trained and challenged young Christians to work together across denominational lines in witnessing to their friends. Two major evangelistic events are being planned for 2000, one of them involving youth at the World's Fair to be held in Hanover.

Although the fires of the gospel may not burn as high and as brightly in "post-Christian" Europe as in other areas of the world, and though most churches and ministries are small and regional, the fruit they are producing is real and will last. Christians here are confident that the tearing down of the physical walls is a sign of what God wants to do in the spiritual world as well. We pray and believe that a lost generation of Europeans will come home to the God of their forebears. For Germany is not only a country with a rich spiritual history, but also a people called to trust the God of the future. **CT**

Russia



JON WARREN

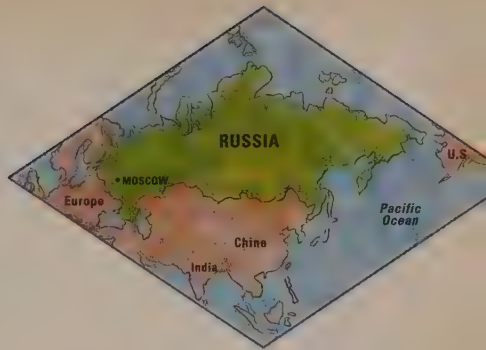
LEARNING TO SPEAK RUSSIAN

When the Communists fell and the door was opened, we thought we needed only a few years to convert Russia for Christ. We started very intensive evangelization. We preached to hundreds of thousands, started missions and Bible studies, distributed millions of Bibles and Christian literature, and planted a lot of churches.

What we discovered later was that we did not always speak the same language as secular Russians. For decades the church had developed its own culture in isolation—you cannot ignore the fact that Russia was closed to the gospel for 75 years. We held church services, but to have Bible studies we would sit around a table with biscuits, sandwiches, and cups of tea. But this big table was nothing but decoration for the secret police. If they would break in, it's a party. The main

Sergei I. Nikolaev

"When the Communists fell, we discovered we did not speak the same language as secular Russians."



purpose was to study the Bible and pray. That was our culture. So when we went and preached to secular people, we could not connect well with their culture. Even after ten years of openings, evangelical ministry in Russia is still both relatively small and very new.

This is why most people here still do not know what evangelical Christianity is about. They have heard so many negative stories about born-again believers that they are surprised to hear good stories. For many, evangelical Christians are still those who killed their kids and sacrificed infants, and all the other propaganda they heard. When they hear what evangelical Christianity is really about, it is a revelation.

When we preached the gospel, people responded enthusiastically. Our church had a front-row bench where we celebrat-

ed everybody new. But the next Sunday there was another bunch to celebrate. And then after 20 Sundays those who were in the first row moved to the last row and then just stopped coming.

These converted secular people thought, "If I come to the church I will find something I never found anywhere else." So you had teachers, doctors, lawyers, artists, actors eagerly listening to a pastor who was a shoemaker. Often, the level of teaching was homecooked, pastors were not educated enough and didn't know who they were talking to. These people started to go around the circle from this church to that church.

So not only do we need to convert people out there to Christianity, we also need to convert the church culture and build up the new generation of church leaders. Today we have to decide—and this is what is on the minds and souls of younger pastors—whom evangel-

ical churches in Russia are going to serve. Are we going to serve old-style believers already in the churches, or we are going to be the kind of church that also serves those who are not church people yet? We need to find the forms that will not be radically different from our Russian tradition, but at the same time will be attractive culturally, intellectually, spiritually, theologically, and emotionally to those new to the church.

One example of the challenge we face is a class of people sometimes called "the New Russians." They represent a new mentality, an entrepreneurial and consumerist class. They madly accumulate a lot, but the values are not real life—more the product of Hollywood movies. So, with their new freedom, they seek opportunities without a moral core within

their hearts. Many of them are good people who don't really understand what is going on. So many find that when they drive the new Mercedes, they did not change at all on the inside.

In building our seminary, we worked with a woman who is one of the new Russians. She is a president of a very successful company. In the process of helping us she found that she needed something else. I invited her to teach the course on management at our seminary. Later she called and said, "I manage my money; I manage my company; but I'm not managing my life." Now she is visiting our church, singing our hymns. There are a lot of people like that.

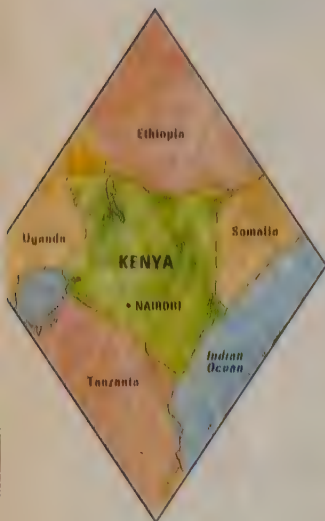
These New Russians value their time, they treasure their powers, and they will not go to the churches that will not give them what they expect. This is a great challenge for the church—to be ready for the actual needs of today's people. This is why theological education is so important for our leaders. In Russia, evangelical Christianity is young, but I believe it can be the spark of reform in mainline churches and the beam of hope for a hopeless country. Overall, I am very optimistic about the way evangelical Christianity is developing. Our numbers are small, but our opportunities are great. **CI**



The son and grandson of evangelical pastors, **Sergei I. Nikolaev, 49**, translated for Billy Graham's historic preaching tours in the Soviet Union.

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*"Africa is a land of great potential,
a sleeping spiritual giant."*



Kenya

CURSED BY SUPERFICIALITY

The church in Africa has been compared to a lake that is a mile long and an inch deep. Because of the political and social turmoil that Africa is going through, the church has become like a hospital where people come to get hope. As a result, many people are coming to the Lord. But the teaching and the knowledge of the Bible are often superficial, and Christianity is not transforming people's lives.

This is graphically illustrated by looking at the powerful revival that started in Rwanda in the 1930s—the East African Revival. It had such a big impact that by 1994 about 80 percent of the population of Rwanda was Christian, either Protestant or Catholic. But sadly, Rwanda was the site of the 1994 genocide in which a half-million people were murdered. Christians were slaughtering Christians. How could this happen?

I am grateful for the missionaries who came to Africa. My father was converted by one from America. Only now is the African church waking up to the fact that

David M. Kasali

we might not only be a receiving church but a sending one like the American church. But there are some things we should learn to do differently.

There is a saying among my people that missionaries don't cry. This perception grew out of the early missionaries' method of ministry. Typically, they would build their homes on the top of a hill and the health clinic or church down the hill. They would come down to minister to the people, then retreat to the hilltop to live in the security of their homes. This was not discipleship; this was not modeling, identifying, and living with others as Jesus did. To this day, Africa is in desperate need of open, transparent leadership that not only preaches but also models what is preached.

The missionaries also placed an unhealthy emphasis on being separated from the world. While being called out is biblical, it was sometimes applied in misleading ways. Up until the 1980s, the common understanding of African Christians was that Christians should not be in-



INTERNATIONAL MISSION BOARD

volved in social matters—the “affairs of the world.” We learned not to play drums in the church, because that was worldly; and we stayed out of politics and business, because they were considered worldly. This stance would cost the church a great opportunity when independence came to many African countries in the 1950s and 1960s. During those turbulent years, African society desperately needed the contributions of Christians.

I recently presented a paper at a consultation of church leaders in Nairobi. In it, I made the point that the responsibility of the church now is to preach the whole counsel of God—a message of redemption, a message of rehabilitation, and a message of reconstruction. Christians should help build stronger societies by building churches, hospitals, schools, and businesses. Islam is very appealing to Africans today not because of its belief system but because of the

material gains it offers. Muslims come with money from the East and build very good primary schools and high schools. They build some of the best hospitals around. They provide loans to governments and to people who want to start small businesses. They send young Africans to the Middle East to be trained in their religious schools.

Fortunately, the church in Africa is experiencing a healthy self-correction. In the midseventies and eighties, a new generation of church leaders arose who brought drums and our own songs into our churches. They encouraged Christians to become involved in politics, even to run for office. Today, more and more are doing that successfully.

Of course, it would be a mistake for the African church to swing to the other extreme and “Seek first the political kingdom, and all the rest will be given to you,” as the first president of Ghana urged fol-

In Africa Today

■ In 1900, there were 4 million African Christians and 60 million Muslims. Today 275 million Africans call themselves Christians compared to 129 million Muslims.

■ The largest Christian majorities in Africa live in the southern half of the continent. The following countries, in ascending order, contain between 70 and 92 percent Christian populations: Kenya, Swaziland, South Africa, Burundi, Rwanda, Congo, Lesotho, Gabon, Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire).

Sources: CHRISTIAN HISTORY (issue 5)
MARC Mission Handbook: 1998–2000



lowing the independence of his country. Politics alone has not brought solutions to the challenges of Africa. In fact, since independence, we have had more problems to deal with than ever before. Our problems ultimately are not economic, but spiritual. If we engage the world from this spiritual perspective, we will maintain a biblical balance of being in the world but not of it.

Not all of our problems are inherited ones. A lesson Christians in Africa could learn from those in America is about how to operate in a democracy. In many African countries today, people vote not necessarily for the best candidates or according to issues, but along tribal lines. If Christians in my country (where 80 percent are Christians) and other countries would rise above these tribalisms, they would make a tremendous difference in Africa.

I believe African Christians must also take an active part in forming democracies that are not defined by the West but by the African context. American-style democracy cannot work in Africa for two reasons. The first is that democracy is expensive. It costs a lot to maintain it, and we cannot afford it in Africa with our current economic situation. The second is that democracy can run well only where people are informed about the issues. We are not trained in democracy. Many people in my country have not even finished primary school. And so they depend on their leaders to decide for them what is good and what is right.

But Africa is a land of great potential. It is a sleeping giant spiritually. My prayer is that we can awaken this giant so that we can be a blessing not only to our own countries but also to others around the world. As Christians, we too are called to make *disciples* of all nations, both in Africa and abroad. **CT**



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BANKRUPTING THE PROSPERITY GOSPEL

*"Since the economic
crisis, prayer mountains
have never been busier."*

DAVE BARTHOLOMEW

In recent years, the economy of Asia has been a speeding train, moving full-steam ahead toward modernization. I travel across Asia three months out of the year, and everywhere I go one scene stands out: tall building cranes dotting the skyline. They have become the hallmark of a continent on the move. Everywhere, high-rise apartment buildings are going up next to thatched-roof huts. Businesses are spreading their wings to new and bigger facilities.

The church in Asia has been aboard this speeding train. Especially in countries like South Korea, known as "the Tiger" of Asia, economic prosperity has brought astonishing amounts of material wealth to the church. The faithful keep the coffers full. One very wealthy businessman in Seoul gives up to half of his wealth to the church. I know of an elder who, when his church was embarking on a building program, sold his house and gave the money to the building project.

And the church has something to show for it. At least, outwardly. Churches have

Bong Rin Ro

not only put up large, impressive sanctuaries, they have purchased whole mountains on which to build discipleship training centers and facilities where people come, day and night, to pray. The South Korean churches, which number among the largest in the world, often build and run their own schools. Recently, churches have even begun to purchase land for cemeteries—something new for the Asian church.

But now Asia's speeding train has entered a dark tunnel, and many see no light at the end. Long to be remembered as the year of economic bailouts, 1998 finds the East deep in the throes of economic depression. Countries such as South Korea, Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines, and Malaysia are reeling daily from the devaluation of their currency, nose-diving stock prices, ever-increasing commodity hikes, and growing unemployment. South Korea alone is faced with at least \$150 billion in foreign debt. According to a recent article in the Korean *Daily Business Newspaper*, one billion people in Asia are presently unemployed.

In North Korea, where I grew up, and in South Korea, where I presently live, one is quickly reminded of the early 1950s when our country was still smoldering from the Korean War. Since then, we have known amazing growth and prosperity, but many of us have not forgotten a past when one had to scratch and

n Korea



claw for the next meal. While we are not facing anything like the devastation of war, Asians are clearly shaken—and the church along with it. Amidst this economic gloom, the church is stopping to take stock, to ask itself some tough questions.

The mood, especially in South Korea, has turned toward repentance. Listen in on almost any Sunday morning Protestant worship service in the urban areas—where the effects on the church of secularism and materialism are most keenly felt—and you will most likely hear prayers of confession, confession of arrogance and of indifference toward God in the face of affluence. Prayer mountains have never been busier. People are there to plead with God for healing, both spiritual and financial healing. While I have not noticed a particular increase in church attendance since the economic crisis hit South Korea, I have noticed a new fervency in prayer. Churches were calling for special all-night prayer sessions, and attendance in early-morning prayer meetings is on the increase.

It is not altogether surprising that the Asian church is turning toward repentance in the face of economic crisis. In Asian countries of great affluence, such as South Korea, "Prosperity Theology" has long been taught from the pulpits. At its core is this reasoning: The more you give to God, the more he will bless. Forget him, and hard times are bound to come. In South Korea, such thinking reflects a strong shamanistic influence.

As a child, I remember walking by the open door of a house and hearing the

"The South Korean church, with over 5,500 missionaries in more than 100 countries, is scrambling to come up with new ideas of how to continue funding its mission endeavors."

awful wailing of the Mudang woman—a kind of shaman witch doctor—who had been called into a home where there was a crisis. The woman would dance in order to drive out the spirit that had caused the crisis. As the Mudang danced, the members of the family would put money into her pockets. They believed the more money they gave, the more blessings they would receive. Now that the "blessings" are drying up for the Asian Christians, they are beginning to look inward.

For example, the church in South Korea is finally recognizing its materialism and secularism—trends that have been predicted by some who have charted the tremendous church growth in our

country during the 1980s. To these ecclesiastical watchdogs it was just a matter of time until the South Korean church would be facing the kinds of things the church in the West is facing. They have been proven right. Decay has set in. Already in 1994, a statistical bulletin put out by the government's Ministry of Information posted a 4 percent decline in church attendance. That decline has continued, and pastors are feeling it at the grassroots level. One pastor of a 6,000-member church in Seoul recently told me his church has experienced a 43 percent decline in giving since the economic crisis became full-blown. That same church has laid off nine of its pastoral staff

and cut a number of its projects for the year. Construction on a building project had to be halted for lack of funds.

Since the Asian churches, particularly the churches in South Korea and India, have become sending churches, missionaries have also taken a severe hit in the economic fallout. The South Korean church with over 5,500 missionaries in more than 100 countries, is scrambling to come up with new ideas of how to continue funding its mission endeavors. In November of 1997, the South Korean World Missions Association arranged meetings among the missions executive of South Korea to deal with the critical situation arising from the 100 percent devaluation of the South Korean currency. In January, the same group adopted a strategy that included seven recommendations to its 58 member agencies. Included among the recommendations was one that supporting churches raise 41 to 50 percent more support for each missionary, while the missionary in the field cut living expenses by 50 to 60 percent. They encouraged South Korean missionaries to send their children to local indigenous schools rather than to expensive foreign schools. And the South Korean World Missions Association recommended mission administrators reduce overhead costs and cut back on travel expenses for executives.

Pastors and denominational leaders are also hearing the summons. In the countries of Asia where economic prosperity has flourished, the pastor has also participated in the blessings. A long-time

concern stemming from the rapid growth and economic prosperity of the church in South Korea has been the politics of money. Money has been the cancer eating away at integrity within the church. Bribery has been common in church politics. I know of one pastor of a large church who was running for the position of moderator of his denomination. At the annual convention, he paid the hotel bill for key delegates in return for their votes.

The current crisis has also been a reminder to the church about its social responsibility. Many Christian leaders in South Korea have forgotten that the South Korean church has flourished in part because of a document called "The Nevius Papers." In 1890, a British missionary from China, John Nevius, visited South Korea, bringing with him the three indigenous principles of missions upon which the South Korean church was founded: self-support, self-propagation, and self-government. While Nevius made the three principles famous for the South Korean church, another of his principles was that the church should offer help to those in economic need.

After the Korean War in 1950, it was the church that helped pick up the pieces, offering food and clothing to a nation that, basically, had lost everything. While much of the relief came from the West, it was channeled through the churches. The churches came to be known as the place one could go for help. Thousands of South Koreans flocked to the church to fill their empty bowls with rice. In fact, the churches grew so fast during that time that soon their members became known as "rice Christians"—giving rise to the concern about easy believism among the church members of South Korea. Nevertheless, during that time, the church established a strong reputation for its concern for the needy. But in recent years, the church in Asia has, to a great extent, forgotten the widows and the orphans, the underfed, the elderly, unwed mothers, prostitutes. Some have leveled the charge that the churches of South Korea were so busy with their expansionistic plans that they had forgotten people in need.

Because of the crisis, this is beginning to change. The church is calling believers to return to a renewed faith and practice, to a new purity of lifestyle, and to a new financial integrity. Foremost in many church leaders' minds is how to minister

to the unemployed. Several churches I know of are making housing available for their members who can no longer afford to pay rent. Churches are setting up committees to plan programs for the unemployed—helping them with such practical matters as writing résumés and preparing for job interviews. Some churches are offering psychological counseling for the unemployed as well.

Recent months have brought a "gold drive" to South Korea, initiated by churches and civic groups. The citizenry was called upon to donate their gold—rings, bracelets, watches—to help pay off the national debt. Pastors announced the drive from their pulpits. Some even took off their gold rings during their sermons and placed them in special baskets. Many churches are sponsoring clothing drives and are recycling appliances and household items among their membership.

In Asia today, where only 8 percent of the 3 billion people claim to be Christians and where the traditional religions of Buddhism, Hinduism, and Islam are prevalent, many non-Christians are asking, "What are the real differences between Christianity and Buddhism?" Now, however, we have a chance to show the world the love and care for the community that has, for centuries, been a hallmark of Christianity.

In my early years, I lived in North Korea. My father died during the Korean War of complications from malnutrition. Before he died, he wrote in his Bible this simple request: "Please return to North Korea some day and establish a church." It has been the goal of my life to go back to North Korea someday and fulfill my father's request.

My story, I believe, represents where the Asian church is today. We are passing through a dark tunnel, but we have not forgotten our heavenly Father's request to build his church. God has chosen the Asian church to proclaim his message of salvation to the nations. Ours is a young church compared to the West's. But it is a strong church, one that I believe will rise to the challenge before it—that of using the current crisis as an opportunity for cleansing and renewal so that it may give itself more diligently than ever before to the task of world evangelization. **CT**

Bong Rin Ro was interviewed by Ruth Senter, a freelance journalist and a former editor of CAMPUS LIFE magazine, who lives part-time in Seoul, South Korea.

■ Asian evangelicals surpassed the number in North America in about 1987 and in the entire Western world (North America, Europe, and Australia) in 1991.

■ Buddhism and East Asian religions are the majority in Bhutan, Cambodia, Japan, Laos, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam. Islam is the majority religion in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Maldives, and Pakistan. Christianity is the majority religion only in the Philippines but is rapidly growing in South Korea, Indonesia, China, and Singapore.

■ In 1949 there were 3 million Catholics and 1.5 million Protestants in China. Today reasonable estimates list 12 million Catholics and 63 million Protestants in the country.

■ In 1980, there were no known Christian believers in Afghanistan and Mongolia. Today these countries have growing churches.

■ The first largely Muslim country to see many Muslims coming to Christ is Indonesia. Some estimate a fifth of the population could be Christian today, though not all of these are of Muslim background.

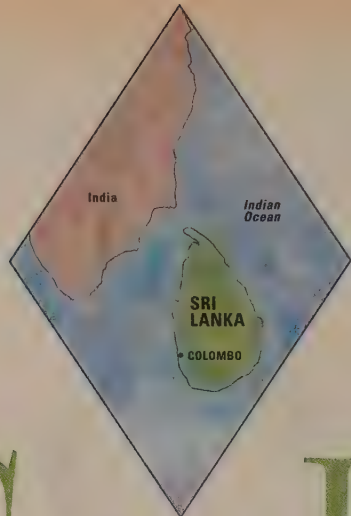
■ South Korea has the world's largest Pentecostal, Presbyterian, and Methodist congregations as well as the largest theological seminaries. It is also the largest non-Western missionary-sending nation.

Sources: MARC Mission Handbook: 1998–2000; Operation World (1993).



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A LIGHT IN BUDDHA'S SHADOW

Sri Lanka

"With no end in sight to the war, we persevere in seeking to be faithful to God."

Ajith Fernando

In the early 1980s, something good happened in the church here. Christians, especially in the newer charismatic churches, began taking the gospel to the rural villages (most Christians lived in the cities), and churches began springing up in areas where there had previously been no Christian witness. Many Buddhists and Hindus came to Christ—something that rarely happened in the past. This evangelistic fervor hit segments of the older mainline churches too, and they began planting churches in non-Christian areas, often creating new structures to accommodate these new churches.

This is a welcome development in a country where the number of Christians has dropped from about 10 percent of the population at the start of this century to 7.5 percent in the early eighties, with Protestants accounting for just 0.7 percent.

This is happening in a context where Buddhism—the religion of 67 percent of the population—is the national religion (though the Hindu, Muslim, and Christian minorities have the freedom to practice and propagate their faith).

There are several reasons for this growth spurt. The first is that Christians began to talk in a new way about practical ways of fulfilling the Great Commission. This reflects the influence of the emphasis of "reaching the unreached" in the great international conferences on evangelization attended by Sri Lankan Christian leaders in the sixties and seventies. Many had been praying for revival in Sri Lanka, and revival came in the form of a revived interest in evangelization. Larger churches have sponsored the starting of daughter

churches in unreached areas, and giving toward such missionary activity by Sri Lankan Christians has increased markedly.

A second reason is that this fresh growth of the church coincided with the intensifying of the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka into a full-blown civil war. About 100,000 people are estimated to have died in the two major conflicts in the past 15 years. In this time of uncertainty and fear, the idea of a supreme God who cares for us and meets our needs has become very attractive to the people. Most non-Christians have come to faith through friends taking them at a time of need to a Christian meeting where needs were prayed for.

A third reason for the recent church growth has been the disillusionment with Buddhism many have felt. After independence there were great expectations that with the country's possession of a pristine



which helps them accrue good karma. Thus usually a monk who performs a service is given alms. The result is that alms becomes almost an essential payment if one is to receive their services. This makes it difficult for the poor, who may have to hire a taxi, provide a good meal, and give a gift if they want a monk to come to them. The Christian minister, on the other hand, will go to a place of need and offer his help to alleviate suffering.

Christians have been in the forefront of relief operations in connection with the unrest in Sri Lanka and also in connection with alleviating poverty. This has made the people receptive to the gospel. My wife and I belong to the majority Sinhala race, and over the years we have kept several Hindus from the minority Tamil race in our home during times of tension for the Tamils. I know of at least two of them who are now Christians.

Understandably, the growth of the church has resulted in much opposition to evangelism in the country. There is the constant talk of unethical conversion, where Christians are supposed to be winning converts by bribing them with financial and other inducements. Organizations have been set up to monitor Christian activities and oppose what they call "proselytization" resulting in these "unethical conversions." Attempts are

being made to introduce legislation that restricts the freedom of expression of faith "in the interest of religious harmony." The opposition has also taken more violent forms with the torching of as many as 21 churches over the past few years and with assaults on Christian workers.

Some of those who joined the church have reverted to Buddhism as the opposition has intensified. Because of this, we are learning how essential it is that people attracted by the power of God are introduced to the other aspects of God's nature and salvation. Many churches in Sri Lanka seem to be weak in this area. Through ob-

form of Buddhism (Theravada Buddhism), Sri Lanka would become the launching ground for a worldwide missionary thrust. But many have become disillusioned with the few numbers of people, even among the clergy, who actually practice the noble ethic of Buddhism.

A fourth reason is the witness and challenge of Christian servanthood. A Hindu journalist for an Indian newspaper attributed three reasons for the rapid growth of the church among the tribal people of India. First, he said, Christian missionaries (usually from South India) go where others don't go—to the most interior parts

where these tribal people live. Even government census workers usually make their own estimate of the population living in remote mountain tribal areas without actually visiting the areas. Second, Christian missionaries hand over leadership to the tribal people very soon. And third, Christianity is a cheap religion because it usually costs nothing to receive the services of a Christian "priest," unlike in Hinduism.

These points apply to Sri Lanka equally well. The Buddhist monk is one who has renounced possessions to live on people's charity. But the people regard the giving of alms to a monk as a meritorious act

Southcen

serving the pattern of professed conversion and falling away, I am convinced that while most people come to Christ to meet a personal need, they stay with Christ because they know the gospel is true. After many followers of Christ had left because of his "hard teaching," Peter said that the disciples could not leave him because he had "the words of eternal life" (John 6:68).

This lack of teaching of the "whole counsel of God" may also account for evidence of a lack of godliness amongst a significant portion of the leadership of the church. Leaders often leave the group they belong to and join another group when they encounter problems (and there are foreign sponsors who are waiting to grab them as their representatives in Sri Lanka!). It is heartening, however, to see the new churches taking an interest in theological education. This is evidenced by the rapid growth of the four-year-old interdenominational Colombo Theological Seminary here in Sri Lanka.

The difficulties encountered by the church have also been an opportunity for great heroism. Lionel Jayasinghe was a Buddhist monk whose quest for the truth resulted in his becoming a Christian. On completing his studies at Lanka Bible College, he went as an Assemblies of God "missionary" to an unreached area in South Sri Lanka. After the church he started had grown to



about 35 converts, he began to get threats that if he didn't stop preaching he would be killed. His brutal murder was witnessed by his wife, sister-in-law, and one-year-old son. Lionel's wife, Lalani, did not leave the area. She stayed on and continued the work even though she has also received death threats. Ten years after Lionel's death, his church has given birth to four other churches with about 1,000 believers in the five churches. The sister-in-law who witnessed the death, with her husband, leads one of these daughter churches in one of the most difficult places in Sri Lanka for doing evangelism.

When the war was raging in the North we asked the Youth for Christ leader there, Suri Williams, to return to the South, where he was originally from, since it was not safe for him and his young family. He replied that he could not leave his people at that time, and he added that, besides, the safest place to be

was in the center of God's will.

Arul Anketell was a brilliant young pediatrician who gave up bright prospects for a career in medicine to minister full-time with people in the health-care field. Five years later he lost everything when his house was burned down in a riot. The first time I met him after this incident, I was hoping that I could be a source of comfort and encouragement to him. I left that meeting with a distinct sense that the reverse had happened, and that I had been deeply ministered to!

So amidst the gloom that engulfs our land, with no end in sight to the war and the suffering of the people, we persevere in seeking to be faithful to God. We know that through the frustration and pain God is working out his purposes and answering the prayers that have gone up through several centuries that this beautiful island will indeed be filled with the glory of God. C



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graduate of Fuller Theological Seminary, he was born and raised in Sri Lanka and is an active lay preacher in the Methodist church of Sri Lanka.

ral Asia

*“‘You are more Christian than Christ,’
my Hindu friend told me.”*

STRIPPING JESUS OF HIS WESTERN GARB

Greetings from your brothers and sisters on the other side of the world, people you will one day meet when we all get to glory.

I am a native of a Southcentral Asian country where many Muslims and Hindus live. I myself, though, was raised by a Christian mother and attended a church that encouraged us to take the gospel to the villages around us. My message has always been and will always be that Jesus is the only Son of God and the only way to the Father. I believe that with all my heart. But in my experience of sharing Jesus with those of different religions, I have learned something that I think Christians in the Western church should take to heart as well: it is not Christianity we have to offer, but Jesus himself.

I remember the first time I heard a Muslim man read the passage of Jesus' birth from the Qur'an. It hit me that there was a lot about Jesus in the Qur'an that I could agree with, which meant there was a lot a Muslim could share with my view of Jesus. With my evangelical theological training, though, I was predisposed to throw out all things Muslim, regardless of the good in them or of the potential bridge they might provide for witnessing to our Lord. This posture led many believers in Jesus in my country into absurd practices, such as our young women getting married in white dresses when the only women in my country who wear white are widows.

A childhood friend of mine who is Hindu and who had risen to an important government post once told me, "The problem with you Christians is you're more Christian than Christ." I began to see there was a lot of truth to that. We were, in fact, far too judgmental. I began to see the reality that if we would just lift Jesus up, he would draw all people to himself.

Soon after this realization I was given a dramatic reminder of its truth. I was sitting in my office in the city when a man came in and asked me, "Do you have any other book about Jesus other than John's Gospel?" Knowing from his dress and his language what part of the country he was from, I was sure there was no Christian witness there. I replied, "Sure! But how did you find out about John's Gospel?"

"One of our people was traveling here," he said, "and when he came back, he brought this book about Jesus with him." In his village in the evening, people gather around and somebody who is literate will read whatever he has gotten his hands on—

perhaps a month-old newspaper or some comic book. To make a long story short, the reading of the Gospel of John touched this man I met, and he had accepted Jesus as his Savior. And in God's sense of humor, the person who had read aloud that tract of John was the Hindu priest of the village temple—not an ordained, theologically trained minister of the gospel. It reminded me that it is the message, not the messenger, that counts. That message is Jesus. It's not, "Forgive me, Christianity." It's not, "Forgive me, my denomination." It's not, "Forgive me, my home church." It is Jesus alone.

When the movie *The Last Temptation of Christ* came out, Christians made a small protest against it, but the only countries in the world where today that movie is legally banned—because of its blasphemy against Jesus Christ—are in the Islamic world. This reverence for Jesus provides me with a natural starting point for sharing the gospel. I begin by asking what the Qur'an teaches about Jesus. Muslims answer that "He's a prophet." When I ask what kind of prophet he was, they explain that he's a prophet like all the other prophets and that the Qur'an teaches them not to discriminate among the prophets. But then I point out that the Qur'an also teaches Jesus was miraculously born without a father and that he was born at God's command while all the other prophets had a physical father—so the Qur'an itself is discriminating.

Their strongest objection comes next: the Qur'an does not teach the Christian blasphemy that he was the Son of God. How then, I ask, does the Qur'an describe Jesus? I ask this knowing the Qur'an goes so far as to say Jesus was the "essence" and "breath of God."

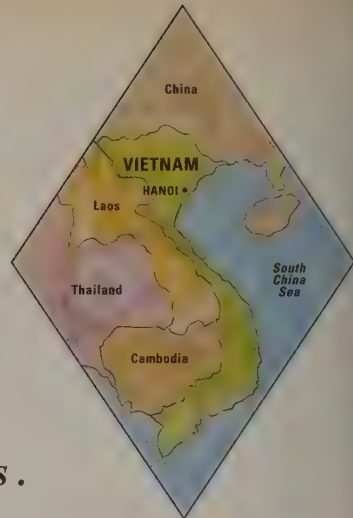
After hearing this discussion one day, a government official stood up and said to the group, "We know there is a division between Christianity and Islam over Jesus being the Son of God. The more I come to know Jesus, however, the more I see him as being God. If he is the breath and essence of God, that means he is God." That's what it is all about: to help somebody come to the position that is not the "Christian viewpoint" or the "Islamic viewpoint," but the Jesus viewpoint.

Today, because of the faithful witness of local believers over the years, I'm happy to say that in the Parliament of my country and of several surrounding countries there are Parliament members who meet together weekly to study the Word and to pray. Naturally speaking, this could never have happened, for sociologically they are Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists. But the barriers society and religion have built between them, Jesus has torn down. They are followers of Jesus Christ. Please remember these brothers and sisters in your prayers.

By an Asian Christian who wishes to remain anonymous.

JESUS CAN STILL MEAN JAIL

The plight of Vietnam's 700,000 evangelical Christians.



The crime scene was a simple village school in central Vietnam's Quang Ngai Province. The time was late 1997. A group of 12-year-old children were talking about a teacher from a nearby village who had come and told them stories about Jesus. Some of the children had decided to become Christians, and they began telling others about their discovery—until one of the teachers reported this “dangerous” activity to the local police. The police gathered the offending children and told them that they must stop talking about this “foreign superstition.”

Though subdued for a couple of days, the children soon resumed their “Jesus talk.” It wasn’t long before the police again showed up at the school and picked out the three “ringleaders.” These children were taken to a police camp and held incommunicado for a full week. The pleas of their parents for their immediate release fell on deaf ears.

When the children were released, they told how they were deprived of food and water for long periods of time, had been interrogated for hours, were pressed to reveal the identity of the teacher who had told them the stories, and had been lec-

tured about the stupidity of the superstitions they believed. The boy who most resisted the questioning had had his head held under water in the toilet until he almost drowned. The families of the children were told that because their children had persisted in the religious faith, they would never be permitted to attend the public school again.

This event is not an isolated one, particularly in Quang Ngai Province, where it is often dangerous to be a Christian. Compared to the oppressive first decade of Communist rule beginning in the mid-1970s, the situation for people of all faiths has improved in Vietnam. Vietnam’s growing community of evangelical Protestants, now estimated at 700,000 believers, is four times the size of what it was only 23 years ago, in 1975, when Communists took control of all of Vietnam. The most remarkable growth has been among minority tribes. At least 120,000 Hmong along the Chinese border have become Christians in the last decade. Yet widespread harassment and abuses persist, from remote mountain villages to the big cities of Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon). The following list of religious-

liberty abuses from just the last two years document this continuing persecution:

- At least nine Christian leaders are in prison, some serving three-year sentences and others languishing for months without formal charges or trials. Many more Christian leaders among Vietnam’s minorities, whose names are difficult to obtain, have been arrested and detained by security forces for various periods of time and often under horrible conditions.

- Church buildings are still being confiscated. A church in Thanh My in Lam Dong Province was bulldozed in December 1997. Currently the Evangelical Church of Vietnam in Ho Chi Minh City is appealing an action of the city’s People’s Committee to confiscate its valuable An Dong property.

- In Gia Lay, Kon Tum, Christian members of a minority group being relocated because of a government dam project were alone excluded from an offer of new land and

Vietnam



new homes. In other locations, Christians in minority tribes are denied access to the public water supplies in their villages—specifically because they are Christians.

- Worship services in Vietnam's more than one thousand house churches are routinely "busted" by security police. The leaders and the homeowners are levied heavy fines—often in excess of \$100. There is no guaranteed freedom of assembly, even though Vietnam's laws permit meetings of up to 20 people in homes. Christian literature is routinely seized in these raids, including Bibles with the official government imprimatur.

- Two pastors of the "open" churches, who have led their congregations' churches for 15 and 17 years, may be forced to leave them because their residence papers are said to be out of order.

- In the last 22 years, authorities have permitted only one class of 13 students to take a pastoral training course. Other

than that small exception, no theological schools have been permitted. No ordinations are permitted. Any training of church leaders must be done in ways not visible to the public and the authorities.

- In northern Vietnam, leaders of the only church body in Vietnam with legal recognition, the Hanoi-based 20-congregation Evangelical Church of Vietnam, are being visited by representatives of the Bureau of Religious Affairs and the police. The church leaders have been asked about their thoughts on the need of holding another church conference (the last one permitted was nine years ago) and about who should be the next leader to succeed the Reverend Bui Hoanh Thu, the long-time and pliable leader who died last year.

Similarly, in southern Vietnam, authorities are trying to recruit a leader for the Evangelical Church of Vietnam to replace the seriously ailing 98-year-old Reverend Ong van Huyen. Eight precon-

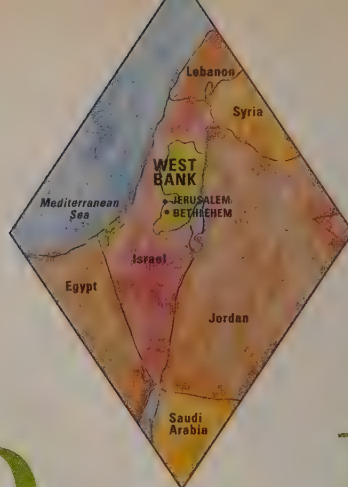
ditions are presented to candidates. One person who has seen the conditions says that they clearly require compromises unacceptable to evangelical believers. If a leader cannot be found, there is little hope the authorities will allow the organization to resume normal operations or hold annual conferences to choose leaders.

These are all reasons to pray—and to advocate appropriately—for religious freedom for the church in Vietnam. The story of the church in Vietnam is one of growth in spite of suffering. Anyone who has visited the church in person comes away humbled by the courageous faith of Christians in the midst of hardship. Theirs is a story to challenge and inspire all believers. **CT**

This report was first given on World Evangelical Fellowship's Religious Liberty E-mail Conference. The author, a long-time missionary to Vietnam, wishes to remain anonymous.



*"We are a
forgotten faithful,
but not
by the Lord."*



West Bank

SQUEEZED BY WARRING MAJORITIES

An Arab Christian community has existed in this land since the Day of Pentecost (see Acts 2). Palestine and much of the Middle East were predominantly Christian during the Byzantine era. In spite of 2,000 years of wars and unrest, we see the faithfulness of the Lord in keeping for himself a living witness here.

By some estimates, the number of Arab Christians in the entire Middle East is 16 million, less than 7 percent of the total Arabic population. We are a forgotten faithful, but not by the Lord. An important head of state, also a Muslim, once put it this way: "It is important to keep the Arab Christians in the Middle East; they are the glue that holds the community together."

In the Holy Land, the situation is more precarious, with the percentage of Palestinian Christians today being less than 2 percent. This is a tragic drop from 17 percent at the turn of the century.

As a Christian who was born in the Holy Land and who can trace my ancestors back several hundred years, I don't feel that this land is only mine. People of all nationalities have deep spiritual, historical, and emotional ties to this land—the cradle of Christianity and Judaism. Pilgrims come from all parts of the world to walk in the footsteps of Jesus, to see

Bishara Awad

the empty tomb, and to revitalize their faith in their Lord and Savior.

A colorful spectrum of churches comprises the Palestinian Christians in the Holy Land. Members of the historical churches—namely, the Greek Orthodox, Greek Catholic, Syrian Orthodox, Coptic Orthodox, and Latin Catholic—take pride in tracing their heritage back to the earliest church. Their monasteries, cathedrals, and churches stand as a physical timeline of their faithfulness to the Christian witness. In addition, the Protestant and evangelical churches are making their impact in this land. Most of these churches were started in the eighteenth century by Western missionaries. Baptists, Pentecostals, Nazarenes, Missionary Alliance, and other evangelicals work together as if they are one congregation. Their small numbers and the great challenges facing them draw them to each other as they serve their one Lord.

In keeping with the example set before them by the first church, Palestinian Christians have always been on the forefront in providing charitable relief to the needy. In 1948, an estimated 750,000 Palestinians were forced out of their homeland and became refugees. Today, 20 refugee camps

are home to over a million people. All Palestinians, both Christians and Muslims are restricted to tiny areas of land within the West Bank. This continues to have devastating effects upon the Palestinian economy. Palestinian Christians, in cooperation with the church worldwide, are working to alleviate this suffering.

The church's influence is also felt through the spiritual encouragement it brings to the surrounding communities. Presently, under the Palestinian National Authority, the church has many opportunities to present the good news to the lost. Palestinian Christians freely distribute Christian literature, hold Bible studies, do correspondence courses, and advertise in the local papers. On several occasions, the *Jesus* film has been broadcast in prime time on Palestinian public television. Recently, in Bethlehem, an evangelical church was allowed to begin broadcasting Christian programs from its own local radio station. Soon the same church will have its own Christian television station. We praise God for these and many other opportunities. We see this as a clear signal that under the Palestinian Authority freedom of religious expression is tolerated—which is quite the opposite of rumors that the Palestinian Authority is persecuting Christians.



DAVE BARTRUFF

Nonetheless, the church in the Holy Land has not escaped the suffering brought about from nearly a century of political and economic unrest. The growth and outreach of the church is severely hampered by the ongoing conflict between the Palestinians and Israelis. On top of this, the Jewish and Muslim majorities, by their sheer numbers, are gradually squeezing out any Christian presence here, making the church very vulnerable and susceptible to changing political winds.

Another believing community in the Holy Land is the Messianic Jews. God is doing a great work among them, too, and the number of Messianic assemblies is growing. Some estimates report the number of Messianic Jews to be approximately 3,000. Like the Palestinians, they have their own congregations and institutions. Palestinian Christians praise the Lord for these brothers and sisters in Christ. It is not easy for them to express their faith openly. Israeli monitoring organizations have been set up to track their mission activities, and attempts are being made in the Israeli Knesset to pass legislation making it illegal for them to possess Christian literature or to evangelize.

Unless the world understands the precariousness of this remnant of faithful

believers—Palestinian and Jewish—who are determined to keep the gospel light shining, pilgrims to this land of promise may visit our shrines and churches yet never meet a local Christian. Christians here believe that despite the darkness of the hour there is still hope for the Middle East, for Palestine/Israel. Why? Because God's people, those redeemed by the blood of Jesus, are still here.

The church of Jesus Christ in the Holy Land needs the prayers and support of its brothers and sisters in the West. Our churches have taken the Great Commission to heart. They have planted churches in different parts of the land. Some have their own institutions and schools. Without their influence, Christianity in the Holy Land would be nearly extinct.

It is unfortunate that some Christians from the West believe God gave the land solely to the Jewish people. The resident Arab population, Christians and Muslims, are dismissed as trespassers or a stumbling block to the fulfillment of prophecies.

Very soon the church in Bethlehem and the rest of Palestine will celebrate a new millennium. The challenge facing the church for the year 2000 and beyond is how to be a catalyst of Christ's love, peace, hope, and renewal. As the church moves

forward in proclaiming the true faith by word and deed, may the eyes of the world be drawn to the Middle East—not, we pray, to view clashes between warring parties, but to behold afresh the miracle of God incarnate in the lives of dedicated disciples. Then, from Bethlehem and Jerusalem, Christ, the Savior of the world, may once again be lifted up and glorified. **CI**



Bishara Awad, 59, is founder (in 1979) and president of Bethlehem Bible College in the West Bank. In 1948 he and his Palestinian family became refugees. That same

year he lost his father to a stray bullet during the fighting surrounding Israel's statehood. Since 1972, Awad has been a leader among the evangelical churches in Jerusalem and Bethlehem. He currently attends the East Jerusalem International Baptist Church. Bethlehem Bible College is located on Hebron Road and welcomes visitors. E-mail: bethbc@planet.edu

WRESTLING WITH SUCCESS

*"Pastors want more people,
and if a strategy works—regardless
if it is biblical or not—it is used."*

Antonio Carlos Barro

Adult evangelical Christians in Brazil still remember what a stigma it was to be known as a *crente* (a believer). We were considered stupid, poor, and backward. People openly disliked us. But not any longer. We have left our underprivileged status behind us. Today we count soccer players, artists, business people, politicians, and high-society people among our ranks. Sophisticated convention centers and five-star hotels serve as our meeting centers. Weekly magazines cover the evangelical presence in society.

Much of this has come through the sheer numbers we have attracted into our churches in the last two decades, though precise numbers are difficult to come by. Some figures say evangelicals make up 20 percent of Brazil's population of 160 million people. A 1996 census, however, put the evangelical figure at 10.95 percent.

At any rate, the growth of the Protestant church has attracted attention—including that of the Vatican in this historically Catholic country. Pope John Paul II has visited Brazil twice (in 1980 and 1997). What worries him is the growth of Pentecostalism, which has begun to threaten the hegemony of the Catholic church here. Still, as Leonardo Boff, a prominent Catholic spokesman, declares, "The growth of the evangelical church is based on its own merit, due to the fact that they are more organized and closer to the Brazilian reality."

The major evangelical denomination here is the Assemblies of God, which claims a membership of more than 10 million. Other major denominations include Uni-



versal Church of God's Kingdom, Christian Congregation, Four Square Gospel, and many other Pentecostal churches. Baptists and Lutherans rank the highest of non-Pentecostal evangelical churches.

The Universal Church of God's Kingdom deserves special attention. It is a ten-year-old church, born in Brazil with no help from outside. Under the leadership of a self-proclaimed bishop, the church has grown from a small group to 3 million members today (yes, in one decade!). It is now established in major cities around the

world, where it buys theaters and movie houses for its meeting places (paying as high as \$6 million for one). It owns the third-largest TV station as well as countless radio stations in Brazil. The church is even creating a political party, called the Social Action Party, with the intention to launch its leader, Edir Macedo, for president in 2002. The church already has six representatives in the Congress.

However, many of the practices of this church are denounced by other evangelicals. Some of its preachers encourage peo-

ple to give all they have in order to be blessed. Television evangelists instruct viewers to place a cup of water on their TV sets, which they then bless and urge listeners to drink in order to be healed. Some sell anointed oil for similar healing purposes. The Brazilian Evangelical Association has issued a statement alerting Christians against such practices.

Of course, the Universal Church of God's Kingdom does not hold a monopoly on problems here. One of my greatest concerns is that almost all growing churches in my country are sold out to prosperity theology (the belief that God will reward the faithful with material blessings). In a land where poverty is rampant, high unemployment and bankruptcy are everywhere, and the health system is inadequate, it is no surprise that people flock to churches and cru-

sades that promise all kinds of cures and blessings from God.

The numerical growth of members has all too often become a primary goal. Pastors want more people, and if a strategy works—regardless if it is biblical or not—it is used. And little reflection is given to what kind of Christianity we are producing. This has placed a tremendous burden upon those who refuse to employ such strategies, especially when these pastors are accused of not being anointed by the Holy Spirit. When pastors do address biblical issues of suffering and identification with Christ on the cross, they see many people leave to attend churches that offer what they are looking for.

Because of prosperity theology, some look on the poor as a curse ("If the thousands living in the shantytowns in our major cities would just believe . . ."); whereas the poor present the greatest mission field in our country. Another neglected group is our native Indian population, whose numbers have plummeted from around 6 million in 1500, when Brazil was colonized by Portugal, to 242,206 today. While 131 out of 243 tribes have no evangelical missionary presence, it is very hard to raise money to send missionaries to our own Indian tribes. The missionary work and Bible translation being done among them is usually the work of foreign missionaries.

It remains to be seen how the church in Brazil will react if times of persecution, severe economic depression, or political oppression should come. On the one hand, we have high hopes for the church and that Brazil will become a major launching ground for worldwide missions. On the other hand, we hope that the church will become a strong voice in our society against the maladies and injustices of our land. We pray that the church will grow in maturity and be a witness to our society of the signs of the kingdom of God. **CT**



In Latin America Today

■ Nearly 40 percent of all members of the world's Pentecostal denominations are in Latin America.

■ The largest percentages of Protestants (a term used interchangeably with "evangelical" in Latin America) are in Chile (28), Guatemala (24), El Salvador (20), Brazil (19), Nicaragua (18), Panama (17), Honduras (11), Costa Rica (11), Bolivia (9), and Argentina (8).

■ Though the evangelical presence is strong throughout most of Latin America, pockets of large immigrant communities remain mostly untouched. These include 109,000 Japanese and 100,000 Chinese in Peru; 110,000 Arabs in Venezuela; 1 million Arabs and 500,000 Jews in Argentina; 1.2 million Japanese and 160,000 Arabs in Brazil; and 400,000 Arabs and 53,000 Gypsies in Mexico.

Sources: *Operation World* (1993); *MARC Mission Handbook: 1998-2000*



Brazil



Antonio Carlos Barro, 44, is the founding president of the South American Theological Seminary in Londrina, Brazil, and pastor of Eighth Presbyterian

Church in the same city. A native of Brazil, he is a graduate of Fuller Theological Seminary. E-mail: acbarro@sercomtel.com.br



Mexico

OUT OF THE SALT SHAKER

"The evangelical church is steadily becoming a visible presence in Mexican society."

For nearly 400 years, the evangelical faith and the study of the Bible were prohibited here. As early as the mid-sixteenth century, Lutherans who had come with the Spanish conquerors suffered persecution, and the Holy Inquisition was in force in Mexico longer than in many other countries. Eventually, under President Benito Juárez (1806–72), a growing reaction to the Catholic church's power led the government to enact anticlerical legislation, which remained in force until this decade and declared the following restrictions: (1) No church could legally own property; (2) foreigners could not serve as priests or pastors; (3) worship services should be held exclusively in temples or churches, not in public buildings; (4) clergy could not directly or indirectly criticize government authorities; (5) clergy could not vote or participate in politics; (6) mass media should not be used to promote religion; and (7) government leaders supposedly should never participate in religious ceremonies.

But in the early 1990s, President Carlos Salinas de Gortari succeeded in reforming the Constitution. As a result, any religious association may now bring

Juan M. Isáis

in foreign missionaries or pastors provided they are officially affiliated with the church they serve, have their financial support guaranteed for the duration of their service, and fulfill the requirements of the laws of immigration (which are liberally applied). Compare this to the time when foreign missionaries ministered for decades by returning as "tourists."

Also, churches now can hold evangelistic campaigns or healing services in public places. Recently, for example, an evangelical group conducted a Communion service at the Monument to the Mexican Revolution of 1910 in Mexico City. Several large rallies with foreign evangelists have been held in the Plaza of the Constitution. And it is no longer uncommon to see open-air meetings where thousands of people pray, sing, and even take offerings in public.

However, Catholic persecution and hostility against evangelicals persists in many parts of the country. In Chiapas, more than 30,000 evangelical Indians have been expelled from their homes, property, and schools and now live as

refugees. In 1990, I was part of a group of 160 evangelicals in Mexico City who had climbed a mountain south of the city to hold an all-night prayer meeting. Thousands of Catholics were incited by a local priest, Ernesto Pérez, to chase us on foot for more than five kilometers. We were hit with stones, clubs, metal bars and even guns. As the women tried to flee through cornfields, they were threatened with rape. One young medical doctor was struck on her legs by machete 13 times. Hundreds of police arrived in time to save us. One police officer told us, "Pray to your God, because these people obey no laws. If God does not hear you, none of us will get out of this alive." Later, 20 of those police officers were converted to Christ.

Still, the Catholic church is showing a spirit of better cooperation with the government and even with evangelical leaders. There is a clearer separation of church and state. And even though not always enforced, these laws are now on the books.

One hidden blessing that came with the many decades of religious restriction was that the Mexican evangelical church developed its own strong and health



LIFELINE MINISTRIES

national leadership. Our leaders are conservative in theology and practice but express a strong social consciousness. While precise data are not available, reasonable estimates are that in 1970 all non-Catholics numbered fewer than 1 million, in 1980 more than 2 million, in 1990 perhaps 7 million. Some sources say that non-Catholics today represent 17 percent of the population. The State Department lists nearly 6,000 religious associations, 75 percent of them Protestant, and of those more than 60 percent are Pentecostals, who formerly represented the poorer segments of society but today include many professionals and middle or upper classes. Charismatic evangelicals have the largest buildings while their ministers tend to be younger. Their worship services and systems of leadership are similar to the Willow Creek Community Church model in the Chicago area. Some are following the model of the Toronto Blessing.

The evangelical church is steadily becoming a visible presence in Mexican society. An interdenominational Christian choir called Amen has sung in important concert halls, often accompanied by symphony orchestras. Most news media have

evangelicals on staff. There are three Protestant universities in the country. An interdenominational group is in the process of starting the first evangelical university in Mexico City. Christian camps show a strong presence. And after long years when Christian radio was forbidden, the airwaves today broadcast numerous gospel programs—though Christian stations as such are not yet allowed.

At the political level, almost all the parties have evangelicals among their leaders. In Mexico City, Maria de los Angeles Moreno, of Baptist background, has been a senator, president of the Congress, member of the presidential cabinet, and national president of her political party. Pablo Salazar Mendicuea, a member of the Church of the Nazarene, was secretary of state in Chiapas and is now a senator and member of the Commission of Good Will and Pacification, the group attempting to mediate an end to the religious conflict in that important state. Another evangelical Christian is Pablo Monzalvo, a former director of some 20,000 auxiliary police, who teaches in the national university and leads a charismatic congregation. For bet-

ter or worse, most political parties now seek a better relationship with evangelicals through contacts with their leaders and through organizations such as the Mexican Evangelical Fellowship (CONE-MEX), which played an important part in the reformation of the Constitution.

While everything is not rose colored here, Mexico is changing for the better. I am encouraged. We have more liberty for evangelism and the practice of our faith than ever before.

CI



Juan M. Isáis, 72, is director of Latin America Mission of Mexico and publisher of *Prisma*, an evangelical Mexican magazine. He has served as a missionary in Mexico, Central America, and New York City and was president of the Mexican Evangelical Fellowship. E-mail: milamex@compuserve.com



Which Part of the GREAT CO

Much has been made in recent years of the fact that the church in the Third World has taken on the mantle of missions instead of simply being its recipient. I would like to issue a challenge to the North American church to regain the evangelistic fervor so evident among many Third World Christians. As the apostle Paul put it, let us follow them as they follow Christ.

Luis Palau

My recent crusades at El Paso-Juárez (Texas/Mexico) and Bristol, England, showed me the sharp contrast that exists in the level of evangelistic energy within the evangelical church. Great hope and a sense of thrill grip the church in Latin America (including the many Hispanics of El Paso-Juárez). Pastors are preaching the pure gospel without apology. Laypeople share their faith with authority.

In North America and Europe, however, I find that while there is much discussion about evangelism, real evangelism is hard to detect. "There simply isn't the same enthusiasm for evangelism there was ten years ago," Anthony Bush, the mission chairman for the crusades in Bristol, told me. Unlike the El Paso experience of revival, Britain greeted us with empty, frigid cathedrals that serve as little more than museums of long-ago revivals. For all but a small percentage of the people in Britain and Western Europe, Christianity is ancient history, not a living relationship.

As an evangelist, I measure the pulse of the church by its evangelistic fervor. Church historian Kenneth Scott Latourette writes that throughout its history, "the primary emphasis of the Church was upon the salvation of the individual for eternal life." Charles H. Spurgeon, the great nineteenth-century British preach-

er, believed that "the work of conversion is the first and great thing we must drive at; after this we must labor with all our might." And John Wesley reminded preachers, "You have nothing to do but to save souls."

The evangelical Christians of North America cheerfully pay any amount to go to a concert. They fill the civic center for worship sessions and even intercessory spiritual-warfare conventions. But when it comes to face-to-face warfare, which is talking to people kindly but directly about their need for Christ, suddenly the numbers diminish. In too many churches the response to the challenge to proclaim the gospel to their city is, "Why should we be doing this?" and "This is expensive."

I thank God for the continuing health and strength he is giving to Billy Graham. I thank God for the wonderful evangelistic work of Franklin Graham, Greg Laurie, and many other young evangelists, some of whom are partners with us in the Next Generation AllianceSM. The ministries of Alpha, March for Jesus, Prison Fellowship, Promise Keepers, and Willow Creek Association advance the kingdom of God around the world. Everywhere I go I meet Christians who gave their lives to Jesus Christ after hearing the gospel on radio or viewing Campus Crusade's *Jesus* film. The growing interest in revival, prayer, and fast-

Don't Y



Kenya



Bulgaria

MISSION

ing, spurred on in North America by Joe Aldrich, Bill and Vonette Bright, David Bryant, Evelyn Christenson, Ed Silveso, and others is truly a great thing.

But the church must match those efforts with a vision for evangelism that confronts millions upon millions of people with the gospel in every generation. In the West, only small fires of passion for evangelism are lit, not the conflagration that ensures fulfilling the Great Commission. If the church does not take seriously its responsibility to evangelize, to whom does the Lord entrust this priority? The world has experts for everything else of concern to our churches, but the church alone is an expert in evangelism.

Gone "fishing" or golfing?

A few years ago the missions committee of a large church notified the various mission agencies it had been supporting that they were cutting their giving by as much as 50 percent. Paraphrased, the letter said, "Giving is down. May God provide for your needs." In the same envelope, however, was the church's weekly bulletin. One announcement caught my attention: "The pastor and 20 men in the church will be leaving this week with their wives for a golf tournament in the Bahamas." Was I wrong to conclude that in this church hitting and chasing a little white ball was a greater pri-

ority than missionary evangelistic ministry?

In the Spanish-speaking world, the church is showing its evangelistic priority through missions. Argentina, Brazil, and other nations in Latin America have joined Asian nations, such as South Korea, Hong Kong, and Singapore, as missionary-sending nations. The division between missionary-sending and missionary-receiving nations has been obliterated. "From all nations to all nations" is happening.

My colleague James M. Williams, who directs our Latin American ministries, recently returned from El Salvador where a church welcomed home a couple who are planting seeds of the gospel in an Arab country. In fact, many Latin Americans are being sent to the Middle East. As I discovered earlier this year in Cairo, there is a cultural affinity among Latin and Arabic peoples.

Called to cities and children

This transnational movement gives me hope for America's cities, which are a ripe mission field. The national majority in America, the Anglo-Saxons, must overcome its fear of the city, where minorities—African Americans, Asian Americans, and Hispanics—are the majority. America's cities are the target of political action, social action, and all sorts of government programs with good intentions, but most of the ruling

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Do You Understand ?

people, which include those in middle- and upper-class churches, have no idea how to relate to minorities spiritually.

The cities need missionaries and the boldness they bring—a sense of purpose and clear-cut commitment. We should have the same missionary purpose in our own culture. We ought to be just as bold and courageous and unashamed in confronting *our* neighborhood and *our* city with the claims of Christ. But it seems to be much harder.

A second ripe—but often overlooked—mission field is children. There are a hundred million abandoned children around the world. Yes, we must feed them and educate them, but we must also win them to Jesus Christ. For 34 years Colleen Redit, a doctor and a single woman from New Zealand, has labored on behalf of abandoned and orphaned children in Madras, India, where more than a third of the population is homeless. Redit herself is mother to 15 or more children at any given time. She supervises educational, nutritional, and vocational programs at the overcrowded Haven of Hope mission, where several hundred young women and teenage girls discover a future. But in the midst of all these vital programs, Redit always makes “the main thing the main thing,” helping children to put their trust in Jesus. On every visit to the mission, it is beautiful to see the beauty of the Lord Jesus in their lives.

Dreaming of Jesus

This evangelistic fervor of which I am speaking is sometimes found in the most unlikely places. I have hope for the Arab world because there is such a stirring among Christians there to reach out in love and respect while clearly inviting others to follow Jesus as the crucified and resurrected Savior and Lord. The Arab world is in a state of deep-seated change. There is a growing hunger to know God. Pastor Menes Abdul Noor of Kasr El-Dobara Evangelical Church in Cairo, where I preached the gospel this past March, told me he talks individually to a hundred searching people every month. Quietly, great numbers of women and young people are coming to Christ.

And where Christians like Noor are moving ahead in faith, God seems to have prepared the hearts of those they are reaching. Every Arabic Christian I have talked to who converted to Christ from a non-Christian background relates a dream or vision in which Jesus, dressed in white as in the Transfiguration, speaks directly

to them, telling them he is the Savior of the world. A woman whose father is a top leader in her nation—a nation where there are no church buildings—was converted through a dream in which Jesus revealed himself. The first five years of her Christian life she didn't even have a Bible.

Christians in the Middle East, many of whom are respected professionals with postgraduate degrees, expect God to work in this way. They believe in his supernatural intervention. If God is God, he is going to do supernatural things. No barriers can thwart or frustrate God's redemptive plan. Who could have imagined that Marxism would collapse overnight? But God made it happen. I believe something just as unthinkable will happen to the resistance to the gospel in the Arab world. Already I sense a momentum from God in the Middle East that no one will be able to stop. The gospel still meets strong resistance—in some cases, violent resistance—but I believe that within the next 20 years that is going to change. I am persuaded of this by faith and by Scripture, which says God the Savior wants “all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.” God will work events, as Isaiah 46 says, so that his purposes will be accomplished. I look forward to the day when I will preach in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, or Tehran, Iran.

When the door opens, let us be ready to take advantage. After World War II General MacArthur called for ten thousand missionaries to Japan. But after ten years, hundreds—not thousands—had gone. By then the doors began to shut. In Japan today, only 2 percent of the population claims to be Christian.

The relative recent openness of the People's Republic of China is another fact that ought to give us hope. Although there are pockets of religious oppression and need for more freedom, compared to 20 years ago the freedom is enormous. The number of Christians worshipping there is so high that I can foresee in China a similar collapse of the Marxist ideology that we saw in the Soviet Union. The change could be even more pronounced because so many overseas Chinese have been converted to Christ. Along with seminary-trained pastors and biblically knowledgeable lay leaders, thousands of successful businesspeople in the churches of Hong Kong, Singapore, and Taiwan are eager to take the gospel back into China.

Climbing through open windows

Though Christians in the Third World must address their own weaknesses—

many practice intense evangelism but lack a biblically grounded and reasoned understanding of Christian doctrine—they also present a living challenge to those of us who have lost our evangelistic fervor in a secular culture that values toleration and denounces confrontation. The overwhelming sense I have as I travel is that we live in a time of great opportunity. We must go on saturating the nations with pure, simple evangelism and solid Bible exposition while these opportunities last. For they will pass, as history teaches us. In some now-open areas, persecution is rising, and already evangelism is becoming much more difficult.

It was wonderful to see Christians in Western nations pouring into the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe with Bibles and the gospel when the window (it was hardly a door) opened, even though criticism—some unfair—was launched against this activity. As someone who has lived in a nation under dictatorship and who reads church history, I think this was one of the best moments in world missions. Far better that we are berated for perceived excesses of evangelizing the once-closed countries of Eastern Europe than miss the opportunity altogether.

Our world is in flux. Large populations and ethnic groups are moving from country to country, region to region, city to city. According to missiologist Donald McGavran, such times of transition provide the best moments to lead people to God through Jesus Christ. My prayer is that the church of North America would once again awaken to the Great Commission Christ gave us. Let it begin today with the unsaved around us and then move on to the many lost throughout our world. Now is the moment—perhaps a unique moment in history that may not return for several hundred years. Let us press on.

CT



Born in Argentina, international evangelist **Luis Palau**, 63, has proclaimed the gospel to 13 million people through crusades in 67 countries.

He is president of the Luis Palau Evangelistic Association, based in Portland, Oregon. E-mail: luis@palau.org

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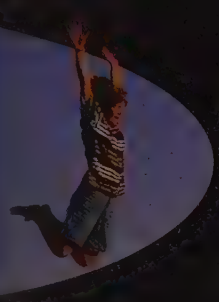
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Cloaked in Mystery

Q:

What's the significance of the Shroud of Turin?

—Ron Lee, Carol Stream, Illinois

Those who believe it is Jesus' shroud point to features on it that seem unique to Jesus' death, including pathological ones.

A: Do we have the very cloth that wrapped Jesus' body when God raised him from the dead? For many Christians, that potential tangible connection to the greatest moment of history drives them to fascination with—even devotion to—the Shroud of Turin. The shroud (pictured here) is a centuries-old piece of linen that measures 14'3" by 3'7". Visible down the length of the fabric is a double, front-and-back likeness of a man apparently reposed in death. He has suffered injuries associated with crucifixion: a beaten face, freely bleeding head lacerations, more than 100 whipping wounds, punctured wrists and feet, as well as a bloody wound in the side of the chest.

For one week in Turin, Italy, in 1978, about three dozen researchers and assistants took thousands of photographs and x-rays and collected other data from which they performed a range of nondestructive tests. Their conclusions: the cloth apparently draped a real body (or body image), the blood was most likely real, and the image was only superficially present—meaning that it was only located on the very uppermost thread fibers. No paint, dye, or other foreign substance could account for the image. Three-dimensional analysis of the photographs revealed that the image was present even in areas that did not actually touch the body.

Before these tests, Swiss botanist Max Frei had detected several pollens on the shroud that in ancient times were found nearly exclusively in Palestine, even though the cloth had not been out of western Europe since the fourteenth century. And objects over the eyes appeared to be coins. Image enhancement of the right eye showed what some believe are letters of a Roman coin minted by Pontius Pilate between A.D. 29 and 32.

A decade of publications, discussions, and mystery followed the 1978 tests. But in 1988, a report was issued that stunned many. Scientists in three laboratories in England, Switzerland, and the U.S. found that the Shroud of Turin had been radiocarbon-dated to the thirteenth to four-

teenth centuries. Whatever else the artifact was, it appeared to be of medieval origin and definitely not the burial garment of Jesus. Proponents were shocked; antagonists were relieved.

Why, then, this past spring did the shroud reappear on the cover of *Time* magazine (April 20)? Partly because the shroud was about to be placed on public display for the first time in 20 years. But also because the conclusions of the 1988 radiocarbon-dating had come under fire on various fronts. The *Time* article listed no fewer than four critical hypotheses regarding the carbon tests. For example, one of the chief chemists from the 1978 investigation noted that infrared spectroscopy showed that the 1988 threads differed from those on the remainder of the shroud. A scientist visiting Turin in 1993 observed a bacterial coating on the shroud fibers that on other artifacts of known age had skewed the dating by making them appear much younger than they were. Physicists also pointed out the possibility of neutron flux on the shroud, which would make it appear much younger than its true date. This all means that the scientific evidence remains inconclusive.

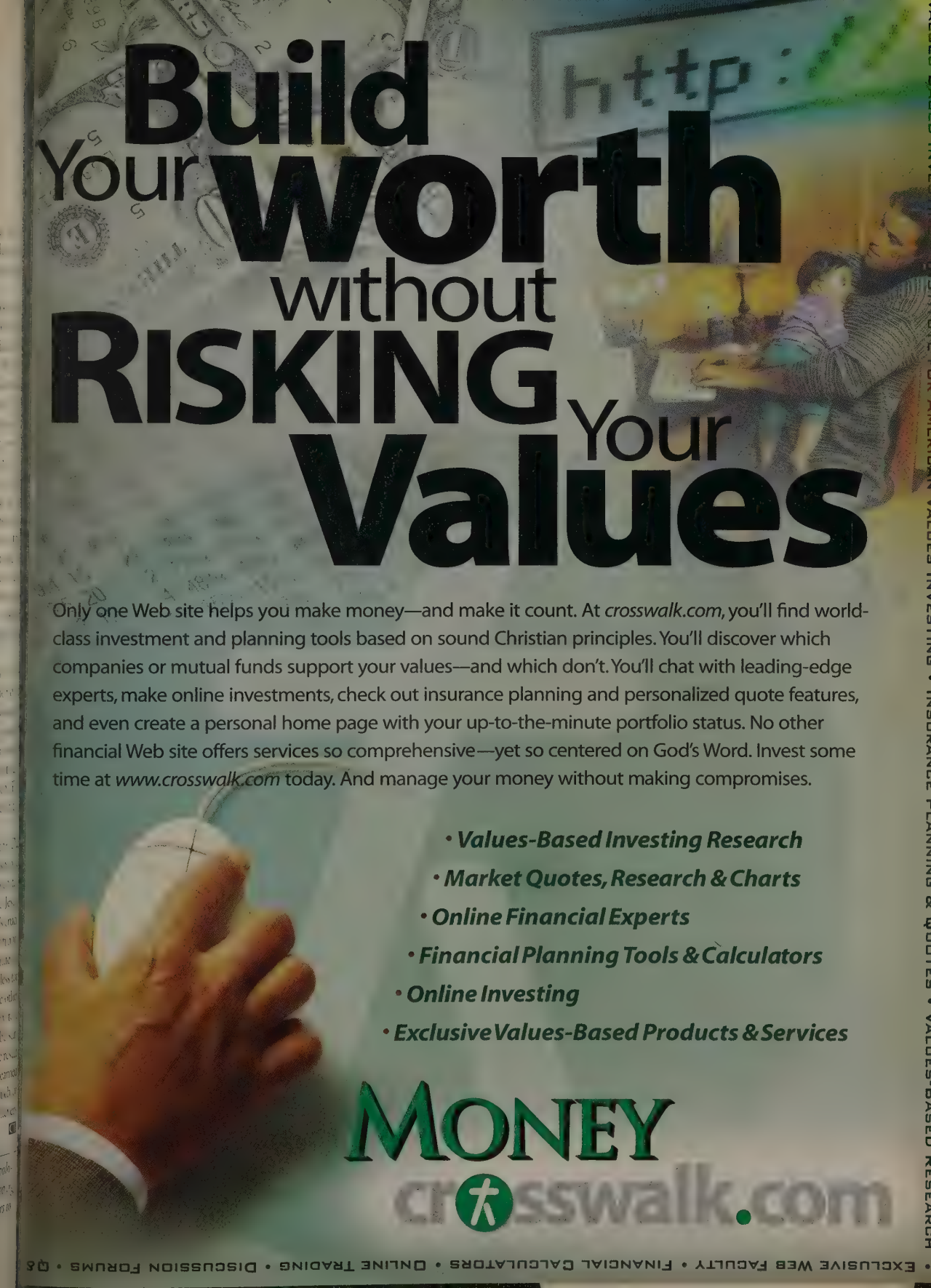
Those who believe it is Jesus' shroud point to features on it that seem unique to Jesus' death, including pathological ones that amaze medical professionals: position of the nail holes, bleeding from an apparent crown of thorns, postmortem blood flow, rigor mortis, evidence of asphyxiation, and so on. Most intriguing is the question of how the image was caused. The possibility of a light scorch on the cloth is one of the ideas under discussion.

So what does the shroud mean for our faith? The answer, on the one hand, is nothing. If the shroud should prove to have been a work of art or even the shroud of a man crucified long after or before Jesus' time, it casts no negative reflection on our Lord's crucifixion. But it could still tell us much about crucifixion. At the very least, it would remain a forceful reminder of the nature of Jesus' suffering, helping us to take less for granted the physical aspects of his death. On the other hand, if the evidence pointed more conclusively to a crucifixion under Pontius Pilate, we would not be surprised that God's act in history had left a tangible result on a piece of cloth. In this case, much could be learned concerning Jesus' death and resurrection. Yet, much of this seems to be on hold. In the meantime, believers should avoid the temptation of idolatry. **CT**

By Gary R. Habermas, distinguished professor of apologetics and philosophy at Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia. Send your questions for evangelical scholars to CTedit@aol.com.



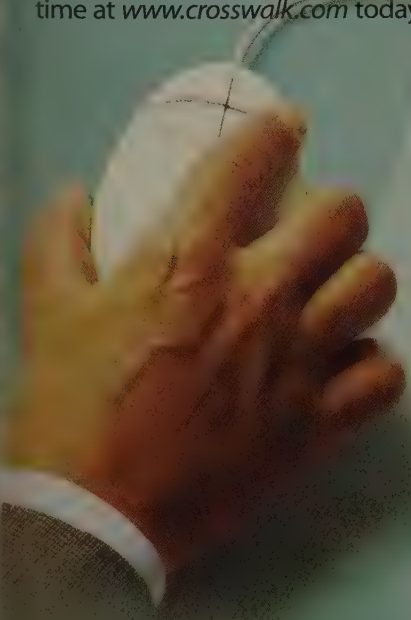
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Classic and contemporary excerpts

Born November 29, 1898, Clive Staples Lewis in his lifetime gave us many writings that explicate the Christian faith and walk. This page of Reflections commemorates the centennial of his birth.

Seduced by the World

Prosperity knits a man to the World. He feels that he is "finding his place in it," while really it is finding its place in him. His increasing reputation, his widening circle of acquaintances, his sense of importance, the growing pressure of absorbing and agreeable work, build up in him a sense of being really at home in earth which is just what we want. You will notice that the young are generally less unwilling to die than the middle-aged and the old.

The truth is that the Enemy, having oddly destined these mere animals to life in His own eternal world, has guarded them pretty effectively from the danger of feeling at home anywhere else.

—*The Screwtape Letters*

Our Gravest Evil

The worst sins of men are spiritual.

—*The Four Loves*

Spiritual Map Makers

Doctrines are not God: they are only a kind of map. But that map is based on the experience of hundreds of people who really were in touch with God.

—*Mere Christianity*

Life in the Blood

"Son of Adam," said Aslan, "Go into that thicket and pluck the thorn that you will find there, and bring it to me." Eustace obeyed. The thorn was a foot long and sharp as a rapier.

"Drive it into my paw, Son of Adam," said Aslan, holding up his right fore-paw and spreading out the great pads towards Eustace.

"Must I?" said Eustace.

"Yes," said Aslan.

Then Eustace set his teeth and drove the thorn into the Lion's pad. And there came out a great drop of blood, redder than all redness that you have ever seen or imagined. And it splashed into the stream over the dead body of the King. At the same moment the doleful music stopped. And the dead King began to be changed. . . . His eyes opened, and his lips both laughed, and suddenly he leaped up and stood before them.

—*The Silver Chair*

(The Chronicles of Narnia)

No Home Here

The joys of Heaven are, for most of us in our present condition, "an acquired taste"—and certain ways of life may render the taste impossible of

acquisition. Perhaps the lost are those who dare not go to such a public place.

—*The Problem of Pain*

Hard Freedom

The hardness of God is kinder than the softness of men, and His compulsion is our liberation.

—*Surprised by Joy*

From the Beginning

No philosophical theory which I have yet come across is a radical improvement on the words of *Genesis*, that "in the beginning God made Heaven and Earth."

—*Miracles*

Hunger for God

God gives what He has, not what He has not: He gives the happiness that there is, not the happiness that is not. To be God—to be like God

and to share His goodness in creaturely response—to be miserable—these are the only three alternatives.

If we will not learn to eat the only food that the universe grows—the only food that any possible universe even can grow—then we must starve.

—*The Problem of Pain*

First Things

You can't get second things by putting them first; you can get second things only by putting first things first.

—*God in the Dock*

The Only Way

We are told that Christ was killed for us, that His death has washed out our sins, and that by dying He disabled death itself. That is the formula. That is Christianity. That is what has to be believed.

—*Mere Christianity*

Not Enough

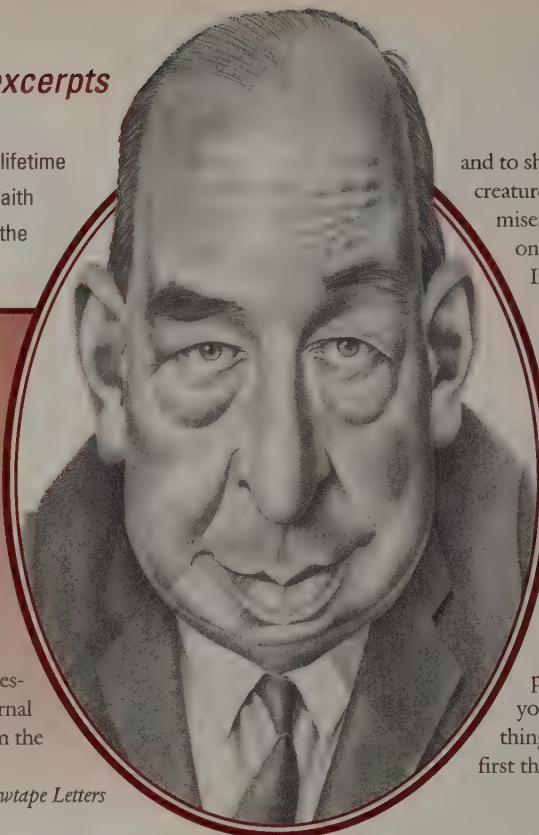
Feelings come and go, and when they come a good use can be made of them: they cannot be our regular spiritual diet.

—*The World's Last Night and Other Essays*

Freedom Misused

Man is now a horror to God and to himself and a creature ill-adapted to the universe not because God made him so but because he has made himself so by the abuse of his free will.

—*The Problem of Pain*



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The Great Escape

Peter T. Chattaway



MELINDA SUE GORDON/SMPS

For Truman Burbank, freedom means abandoning his false though perfect world.

The desire for "escape" is pervasive. People hide behind jobs, possessions, and gated "communities" for peace of mind. Community is now found in overhyped, though immediately forgettable, media events (remember the last episode of *Seinfeld*?). Two recent video releases will help you fight this impulse.

The media hype last summer targeted, ironically, *The Truman Show*, Peter Weir's imaginative critique of consumerism. *The Truman Show* is about an insurance salesman named Truman Burbank (Jim Carrey) who, without realizing it, has spent his entire life inside a giant TV studio. Every second of his existence has been broadcast to a worldwide audience. He is surrounded by commercials and product placements, and his wife—actually an actress—regularly encourages him to replace old household accessories with new ones. Episodes from Truman's life are commodified and sold as videotapes to the show's fans. Meanwhile, talk shows hash out issues raised by events in Truman's life.

Truman himself is not as media-saturated as those who watch him. He is, however, living in a materialistic world defined by his conformity to what others expect of him. It slowly dawns on him that the world around him is a fake, and that everyone in his life has participated in one great lie.

The greatest liar of all is Christof (Ed Harris), the show's godlike producer. This god is not the world-redeeming creator of Christian belief but a jealous, soulless deity. Christof created the show because he wanted to experience, albeit vicariously, a blessed and perfect life. But this perfection is a fraud. And when Truman finally figures out this scheme, there is only one thing to do: escape. Truman's freedom means abandoning the false world and letting it die. How will this new ethic play itself out in the "real world" to

which Truman escapes? We never find out.

Still, that the question is asked—Is our commodified suburban world a lie, something to escape from?—is worth marking. But that question is to wonder what comes next. And that takes us to David Fincher's masterpiece of paranoia, *The Game*.

Nicholas Van Orton (Michael Douglas), a financier, finds himself mysteriously caught in the web of "the game," an organization that "plays" with the lives of its members. Van Orton's entry is a birthday present from his brother. Nicholas lives in a largely abstract world, made up of stock exchange reports, business contracts, perfectly polished furniture, and little true human contact. Pension beneficiaries and others depend on his work, but you get the impression he'd rather not meet them. He lives in a husk he has built around himself to hide the hollowness within.

The gamers who insinuate themselves into Nicholas's world at first appear to be a much more sinister version of Christof. But where Christof maintains an illusion of peace, the gamers are trying to wake Nicholas up. One of them, explaining "the game" to Nicholas, even quotes the Gospel of John: "Whereas once I was blind, now I can see."

One thing leads to another, and Nicholas finds himself robbed of his possessions, drugged, and buried alive in a shallow Mexican grave. Waking up, he breaks out of his coffin—a clear allusion to his spiritual rebirth—and returns to California, where his first move is to make amends with his ex-wife. Slowly something stirs in Nicholas's soul. He is becoming a real person once again.

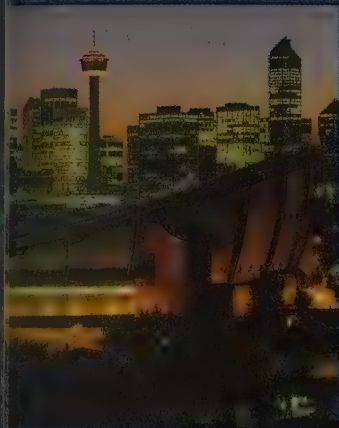
A few plot twists remain, building up to a shockingly upbeat finale. When I first saw the film, I could not decide if Fincher, who previously directed the more fatalistic films *Alien3* and *Se7en*, had sold out or found a particularly shrewd climax for his story. The second time, however, I saw pinpricks of hope scattered through the story and realized how obvious the film's resolution should have been all along.

The Game, for all its visual seediness, is an allegory of grace and redemption, in which a man trapped within himself is set free and—most important—sent back into the world from which he came. He can continue his good work, but this time, he will be open to the people for whom that work is done.

Both movies question our drive to escape life by burrowing into the bosom of affluence. They reject false comforts in search of real ones. "Whoever loses his life . . ."

CT

Peter T. Chattaway is a film reviewer.



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The Calling of Elmer Yazzie

For this Calvinist Navajo, art is not a part of life, it is life itself.



ELMER YAZZIE

Above: Yazzie's *Prayer Warriors*; at top right: a yucca brush.



call himself an artist was due, in part, to his Navajo perceptions.

"In the Navajo way of thinking, there is no word that defines *artist*," the 44-year-old says in a soft voice. "What the artist is or does has to do with spiritual work," Yazzie says. "Artists are more like healers—our work can be therapy for ourselves and for others. Sometimes in my own work, I have created works that influenced my life and thinking; later on, someone has come along with a very similar need."

The concept of art so thoroughly permeates the culture of the Dinee (which means "The People") that the thought of separating it from life or spirituality strikes Yazzie as absurd. He will tell you that by his personal definition, art is simply "the way to live"—an all-encompassing matter of making choices that, in his case, must please God.

The painting that preached

Yazzie says that for most of his career, he didn't understand what an artist was. "I had the skill, and I had the understanding, but I didn't have a real experience with the inspiration," he says. "I think that's the critical part. I didn't totally understand what it meant to be 'chosen.'"

But in 1981, when he decided to donate a sabbatical year to a mural painting for a church in Red Mesa, New Mexico, Yazzie experienced inspiration for the first time. The other five Yazzies, including his wife, Sharon, agreed to live off savings for a year. "You were doing it for the love of the whole project, and you knew Who it was for." Although he is certain that native people, "Christian or not, have a spiritual outlook on life that can outmeasure Christian American people," he found that many of the church people were biblically illiterate. It took three years to complete the Red Mesa murals—which could cover all the sides of a large bus from floor to rooftop—because Yazzie kept stopping to explain his visual themes to anyone who asked.

One day at Red Mesa, Pastor Jim Charlie was delayed, and Yazzie was asked to preach—extemporaneously. He decided to talk about the mural in progress. He explained his depictions of Abraham Isaac, and Jacob, and the section where Moses lead the Israelites out of captivity in Egypt—a theme that especially resonates with the humiliating experience of Native Americans who have been forcibly displaced by whites in recent centuries. "The talk had to be interpreted from English to Navajo. It took about three-

Born in Shiprock, New Mexico, he hesitates when asked to pronounce the name of his Navajo clan aloud, though he has known it since his youth. The problem for artist Elmer Yazzie is not secrecy, but that the language of the *Dinee*—the name by which the Navajos prefer to be known—is not a written one. Attempting to spell the long clause that means "Where the Two Waters Meet" is virtually impossible.

A reservation-born Native American with a mission-school education and a Dutch-American wife, Yazzie is truly an individual at the place where many different waters, or cultures, meet. A lifelong Christian in the Reformed tradition, he received his undergraduate degree in art education at Calvin College in Michigan. He accepted in a general way the Calvinist doctrine of being chosen, but until eight years ago, he had not applied it to his artistic bent.

The artist as spiritual healer

Though he has painted dozens of murals in southwestern churches since 1976 and mentored aspiring artists of all ages for 22 years at the Rehoboth Christian Reformed School, Yazzie's reluctance to

Elmer Yazzie

hours, but everybody just sat there," Yazzie recalls. "I finally ran out of painting—the wall was blank—so then I told them what else was going to be happening.

"What was so nice about the whole project is that no one in the mission dictated what was to be on the wall. So often there's very little left up to the artist. In the first two mural projects I did, there was so much freedom. People came and suggested thoughts. There was so much discussion going on. There was a lot of trust." The experience pointed Yazzie toward a ten-year summer commitment to complete one large-scale mural each year.

God's masterwork

Often invited to lecture about contemporary Native American art in the eastern United States and in far-flung places such as Germany or Israel, Yazzie is unabashed about his Christian faith. Given his Native American demeanor and background, audiences listen attentively in ways most Anglo preachers would covet. Yazzie's core lesson involves various aspects that characterize God's artistic nature.

Yazzie's Rehoboth students struggled with questions about identity and self-esteem, so he teaches that true identity is embedded in God's image: Because Genesis first presents God as a creator, being creative is an important reflection of his image.

Moreover, Yazzie teaches that God's masterpiece is human life, which means that life deserves utmost respect. This means artists also can expect to create one or more masterworks in a lifetime. Asked about his own masterwork, Yazzie mentions a miniature of three horses running, painted on the thin side of a yucca brush handle. He also mentions a portion of sky in one mural "where the colors and the simulated texture in the sky tend to flow—they just flowed out of me. It was really a powerful experience. I tell my students that because of God's perfection and divine nature and greatness and wholeness, he had to make just one major masterwork—human life—and that he continues to recreate that human life through all generations."

One difficult aspect of God's creative image is that he gave away his best: He gave his Son over to death, and creation was given over to humans who have, in part, destroyed it. Similarly, Yazzie says, any artwork really

has little value if it is kept in a closet or treated as a precious gem. Yazzie sold the yucca brush piece to a woman at an exhibition in Santa Fe, but he confesses, "I didn't realize how difficult it was to sell it until she wrote a check." If Christian artists don't get their work out into the world, Yazzie insists, people will not understand the whole picture that constitutes God's creation.

Finally, Yazzie says, God was pleased with what he had made, and his response was one of love and appropriate pride. "You've got to recognize that when you've experienced inspiration, your work is worship. Sometimes when I paint I start making up my own songs, and I'll start to pray and talk about how I see God in the painting. I'll tell God out loud why I'm going to do this or that. This is so the Evil One can hear. Satan can't read your mind, so you have to tell him how the Holy

Spirit is talking to you and inspiring you, and I want to make him jealous."

A baffling witness

He adds: "If the heart and the head and the hands are working together, the result is going to be uniqueness, and it's uniqueness that baffles and perplexes. What drew people to Christ was this: it says a number of times that the crowds were amazed. And about the conversion of Paul, it says the Jews were baffled, perplexed.

"When someone is working effectively through God's inspiration and in unison with heart, head, and mind, the end result is going to baffle someone. That's when you have the opportunity to testify—when the observer asks, 'What does it mean?'" **CT**

By Karen L. Mulder. For more information, write Elmer Yazzie at P.O. Box 2, Rehoboth, NM 87322.

Keepers of the Lost Ark

One thing that makes Ethiopian Christians unique is their belief that they are directly descended from the early Israelites; the ark of the covenant, containing the Ten Commandments, is said to be housed in an Ethiopian chapel.

Ethiopian Christianity is devoted to re-enactments of the Old and New Testament. The incredible city of Lalibela testifies to the lengths to which Ethiopian believers in the twelfth century went to transfer the Holy Land to Africa. Carved out of solid rock, some Lalibela churches contain replicas of the patriarchs' tombs, Golgotha, and the tomb of Christ. Such recreated sacred sites, it has

been argued, were safer for devout believers who could not risk the dangerous trip across Egypt to Palestine.

In addition to the amazing monuments of Lalibela, each service today re-enacts the journeys of Christ and of the saints on their feast days. The elements for Communion, for example, are carried from a place representing Bethlehem to another place representing Jerusalem in imitation of Jesus' life journey.

Richard Marsh, secretary for ecumenical affairs for the archbishop of Canterbury and a frequent traveler to Ethiopia, writes in *Black Angels: The Art and Spirituality of Ethiopia*, "If there is one word that characterizes Christianity in Ethiopia, it is *richness*. The worship is vibrant, with priests and deacons in brightly colored vestments carrying splendidly gaudy liturgical umbrellas. The music is a mixture of chants of Semitic origin and African rhythms, accompanied on distinctive goatskin drums. The walls and ceilings of the churches are brightly, even luridly, painted with scenes from the Bible or from the lives of the saints." (Other books in the series *Art and Spirit* from Lion Books, England, include works on Celtic, "plain," and Russian Orthodox religious art.) —KLM



The Nativity, Ethiopian style: In a modern, yet traditional painting, Joseph carries a prayer stick, and the Magi wear Ethiopian crowns.

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Franklin Graham
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BOOKS

Though the Darkness Hide Thee
By Susan Wise Bauer

Reality Is for Real

Why we can't give up on objectivity, even though it is decidedly uncool.



Ceci n'est pas une pipe.

"This is
not a pipe."

The Last Word, by Thomas Nagel (Oxford University Press, 160 pp.; \$19.95, hardcover); **Objectivity: The Obligations of Impersonal Reason**, by Nicholas Rescher (University of Notre Dame Press, 264 pp.; \$35, hardcover; \$16, paper). Reviewed by Ric Machuga, professor of philosophy at Butte College.

A mere 30 years ago I was an undergraduate philosophy major wrestling with intellectual doubts surrounding my emerging Christian faith. Back then Bertrand Russell, A. J. Ayers, B. F. Skinner, and their acolytes were proclaiming that Christ's claims to be the Son of God were simply not true and that anyone who believed them was irrational. Seeking to be both rational and a Christian, I had to come to grips with their arguments.

Today, there is good news and bad news for Christians. The good news is that the Russells, Ayerses, and Skinners have died and left no intellectual heirs. In the postmodern world, Christians are not so likely to be told that their faith is not true. The bad news is that now when we proclaim Christ to be the way, the truth, and the life, we will most typically be greeted with a Pilate-like sneer: "What is truth?"

For us, Thomas Nagel's little book *The Last Word* and Nicholas Rescher's slightly bigger book *Objectivity: The Obligations of Impersonal Reason* are a godsend.

The heart of Nagel's manifesto is that—contrary to the rampant subjectivism and perspectivism of the day—he really does know that things like rabbits exist. He flat-out denies that "the first person, singular or plural, is hiding at the bottom of everything we say or think." A person need not preface all statements with "for me rabbits exist" or "for us it is true that there are rabbits." Instead, Nagel argues that there is nothing philosophically presumptuous, and certainly nothing arrogant, in simple assertions about rabbits. Nor are questions about the existence of rabbits of mere theoretical interest. The result of postmodernity's ubiquitous retreat to the first person is "a growth in the already extreme intellectual laziness of contemporary culture and the collapse of serious argument throughout the lower reaches of the humanities and social sciences." Few readers of CHRISTIANITY TODAY will dispute the seriousness of what is at stake.

So how does Nagel propose to combat such nefarious influences? The skeptic's arguments always begin by viewing reason from the outside. Reasons are given to justify a knowledge claim, but instead of examining the reasons themselves, the skeptic seeks to get behind reasons and look instead at causes. The skeptic is the one who says, "Yes, I know you say that you believe X because of reasons a, b, and c. But a, b, and c are really [said with a slight snicker] the product of your language, or your culture, or your economic class, or your deeply repressed will to power."

But as Nagel persuasively argues, this attempt to evaluate reasons from outside the realm of reasoning is doomed to failure: "The familiar point that relativism is self-refuting remains valid in spite of its familiarity: We cannot criticize some of our own claims of reason without employing reason at some other point to formulate and support those criticisms."

Despite its familiarity (especially to those who cut their philosophical teeth on C. S. Lewis's many refutations of such reasoning, most notably in the third chapter of *Miracles* and in the wonderful metaphor in the *Abolition of Man* that he who sees through everything sees nothing), Nagel's various applications of the ancient argument will more than repay the effort this very accessible book demands of a lay reader.

Nagel's book is also rich with tidbits for readers who like to keep track of current philosophical debates. For example, the more moderate and pragmatic versions of antirealism—as described in the current jargon—like to trace their roots to the American philosopher C. S. Peirce and his “idea of convergence at the end of inquiry.” One of the reasons this notion has appeal to those who feign doubts about rabbits is that we will never have to worry about what else might be discovered at the end of inquiry (moral obligation? immorality? God?) because, like the mathematical asymptote, the end of inquiry will never be reached.

But did Peirce really intend to define truth as convergence? Nagel has his doubts; here is just one of his quotes from Peirce himself: “The soul’s deeper parts can only be reached through its surface. In this way the eternal forms, that mathematics and philosophy and the other sciences make us acquainted with will by slow percolation gradually reach the very core of one’s being, and will come to influence our lives; and this they will do, not because they involve truths of merely vital importance, but because they [are] ideal and eternal verities.”

Nagel’s second line of argument will also be familiar to many. Robust philosophical realism about even the most mundane kinds of things has always pointed toward the supernatural. Some will find this shocking and attempt to dismiss it as little more than special pleading by theists. Nagel is himself a little shocked about the direction in which he seems to be going. He explicitly says, “I don’t want there to be a God; I don’t want the universe to be like that.” So much for special pleading!

Nagel’s final chapter, “Naturalism and Religion,” is especially rewarding. There the reader will find such morsels as this: “much of the scientism and reductionism of our time [is supported by] the ludicrous overuse of evolutionary biology to explain everything about life, including everything about the human mind.” The substance of Nagel’s argument is that epistemology can’t be naturalized—that is, reason can never be explained or reduced to nonreason.

Nagel does not contest the evolutionary account of the biological origin of species, but it can’t be the whole story because it is self-defeating to give such an account of human rationality the last word. If reason itself does not have the

last word, then there can be no reason to trust the evolutionary account of reason: “The reliance we put on our reason implies a belief that even though the existence of human beings and of ourselves in particular is the result of a long sequence of physical and biological accidents, . . . nevertheless the basic methods of reason we employ are not merely human but belong to a more general category of mind.” So if matter by itself never creates mind, where did our minds come from? Nagel says “we are left with a profound problem.”

And Nagel is left with a profound problem, as long as his wants and his reason point in opposite directions. Nonetheless, he is to be commended for his courage in acknowledging that “a fear of religion” has had “large and often pernicious consequences for modern intellectual life” and for his humility to add, “I speak from experience, being strongly subject to this fear myself . . . and am made uneasy by the fact that some of the most intelligent and well-informed people I know are religious believers.”

Enter Nicholas Rescher. While Rescher and Nagel cover much of the same ground, Nagel’s primary goal is to refute subjectivism, including the more moderate advocates of naturalized epistemology; whereas Rescher’s primary goal is to flesh out the alternative: normative epistemology. Nagel argues, in effect, that reason can be impersonal; Rescher carries the argument one step further. His thesis is that *reason has a moral obligation to be impersonal*.

Broadly speaking, Rescher is working within the Aristotelian tradition. In this tradition, rights and obligations are always connected to needs. People have the right to what they need and a corresponding obligation to cultivate their talents in such a way that their own needs and the needs of others are met. Needs, in turn, flow from our nature as “rational animals.” Just as our biological nature carries with it a need for food, drink, and shelter, our rational nature carries with it a need to reason objectively.

Objectivity does not require a “view from nowhere” or a “God’s eye point of view.” Both of these are unattainable, at least for us. What objectivity does require is that people be willing to ask: What would someone else standing in my shoes

say or believe about this situation? “Rationality is universal,” says Rescher, “but it is circumstantially universal—and objectivity with it.”

Yes, all rational judgments must be made from some particular perspective. After all, we are not disembodied spirits; rather, we are rational animals whose particular location in space and time is inescapable. But that does not mean that all perspectives are equally valid. Only those perspectives that consciously seek to remove all that goes “against the dictates of reason: phobias, groundless anxieties, delusions, senseless antipathies, and irrationalities of all sorts” have a claim to objectivity.

Though the definition of rationality implies a “monolithic uniformity,” there is necessarily a “pluralistic diversity of appropriate answers to the question ‘What is it rational to do?’” The universal human need for shelter is fulfilled differently in different times and places. We all need houses, but a rational Eskimo builds his house differently from a rational forest dweller. So, too, “We need to build a cognitive home for ourselves in this world: to create a viable thought-structure for our beliefs, choices and evaluations. Here too one must simply do the best one can . . . [so that] what we do can be seen as circumstantially appropriate by anyone.”

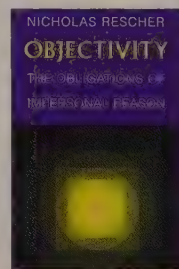
Objectivity, then, does not imply infallibility. It merely implies that people form their “judgment on the basis of the available experience, including that of other individuals and cultures insofar as this is vicariously accessible.” Ptolemy’s and Galen’s understanding of astronomy and

the cardiovascular system were both rational in contrast to the systems propounded by the astrologers and quacks who were their contemporaries.

To this claim someone will certainly object: Since all four were wrong, what sense does it make to say that the first two were acting rationally whereas the astrologers and quacks

were not? If any knowledge claim might be mistaken, then there is no way to know that all knowledge claims aren’t mistaken. But logic itself refutes this argument. While any \$100 bill might be counterfeit it is conceptually impossible that all \$100 bills might be counterfeit.

One of the standard postmodern responses to such defenses of rationality is to question the validity of “Western” logic. It is simple arrogance, the postmodern skeptic might say, for Rescher to claim that a



people have an obligation to adopt our standards of logic and rationality. While it is true that we seek to avoid contradictions, other cultures have quite different standards of rationality. So who are we to say that our standards are obligatory?

This sort of response has become so embedded in the conventional wisdom of the day that it is hard to remember that its rhetorical force has only recently become persuasive. Rescher brilliantly cuts through such bluster. Suppose, he says, that some primitive society should "deem it rationally appropriate (or even mandatory) to attribute human illness to the intervention of

the rock-spirits." Anthropological observations do indeed show that other peoples have goals and problem-solving techniques different from ours, but those different goals and/or processes "do not mean that they have a different rationality any more than those blowguns of theirs mean that they have a different rifle."

And far from producing megalomania, the universality of reason's obligations produces humility, because it forces one to ask: If I were in living in the shoes of the Azande or Wazonga, would I want them to employ my current "Western" standards of rationality in their relations with me?

No generic answer is possible; it all depends on the particulars of the question. Would I want missionaries to put a blouse on my wife? Probably not, since it rains so much where I live that she would certainly get sick walking around in wet clothes all day. Would I want them to vaccinate my children against the standard childhood killers? Probably, since I love my children just as much as Westerners love theirs. Would I want them to lovingly communicate the truth of the gospel? Of course, since I am just as much a rational animal as anyone else, and no rational person lives by bread alone. **CT**

Stripping the Darkness

A couple's spiritual quest turns them into searchlights exposing family and community secrets.

Though the Darkness Hide Thee,

by Susan Wise Bauer (Multnomah, 364 pp.; \$11.99, paper). Reviewed by Annette LaPlaca, associate editor of MARRIAGE PARTNERSHIP.

Through the dark glasses of personal sin, it's hard to see God's glory in a fallen world, but we're looking all the same. That is the topic at the heart of every "Christian" story, because it is the condition of every Christian soul. In some stories, such as Flannery O'Connor's, these moments of epiphany rip through the narrative and leave the reader gasping over truth. In others, like Susan Wise Bauer's *Though the Darkness Hide Thee*, the search for God's face is portrayed with gentle authenticity.

Bauer—whose first novel, *The Revolt*, was published by Word in 1996—unfolds a fast-paced mystery that involves dark-and-dirty crimes, old and new. The story line of criminal secrets should satisfy even those readers most inured to subtlety in Christian fiction (which will come as a tonic to those numbed by Christian-market offerings that are more propaganda-with-a-plot than literature).

Unobtrusively echoing the whodunit plot line, the heart of Bauer's second novel is the search for God's character and his will on the part of the protagonist and her minister husband. Amanda and Thomas Clement are attempting a fresh start in the small Virginia town where she grew up—leaving behind the big city where they were bruised in min-

istry and disillusioned by the world of business. Bauer's portrait of their flawed but tender relationship is so winsome and rings so true, it's hard not to guess that she has drawn herself, heart and soul, into this narrative. And she has: The Bauers themselves recently moved back to family property in a rural Virginia community, where he ministers to a small fellowship while she teaches literature at William and Mary.

There is a plainspoken naturalness to the prose, both in descriptive narrative and declarative passages like this one: "Thomas wanted a family, a home, a place to perfect his service to God; and I wanted something more elusive. I wanted reassurance, reassurance that I could still find a place where God was as real as the sunlit fields, as easy to hear as a hawk keening overhead. Somehow I'd lost that certainty."

Bauer captures an experience every believer encounters at some point: the silence of God. How many of us have prayed, despite the coolness of our own spiritual temperature and despite our doubts that God will act? Bauer writes, "I stood on the back porch and prayed for Thomas and the Sunday morning service and the Little Croft congregants; I put them all together and held them up to the God who lingered just out of sight and pleaded, Break through to us."

Thomas and Amanda are a believable pair. Whatever mistakes they make, in

serving God or approaching each other, their intentions are so pure, their desire to see God's glory so wistful, that their errors in judgment are easily forgiven.

The young couple's search for authenticity encounter with God has the unintended

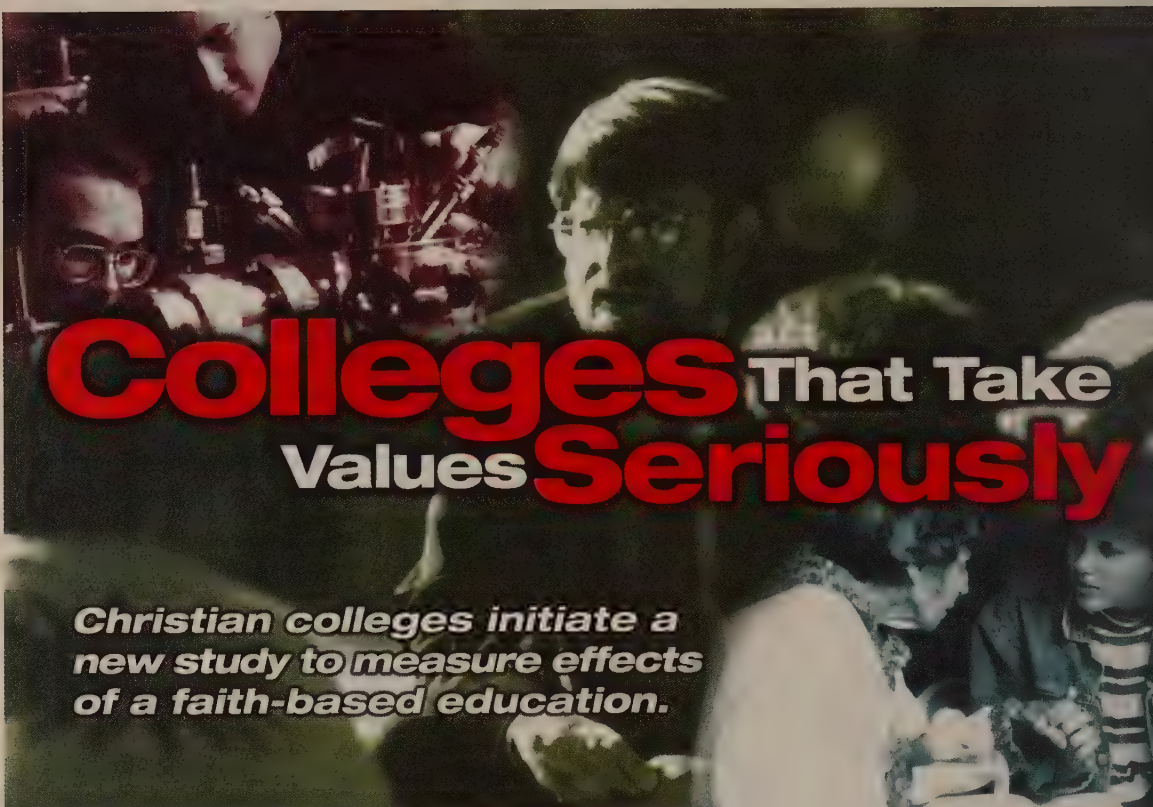
effect of turning them into searchlights illuminating Amanda's family and the rural community where they have transplanted themselves. "Darkness" is stripped away at community, family, marital, and personal levels, sometimes with frightening results.

Bauer draws strong personalities (and their secrets) with great finesse and with penetrating insight into family stories that cross generations. The perennial story of human sinfulness obscuring truth plays out powerfully among these characters. Beware, for example, the farmer who, despite the muck and mire of his workaday chores, insists on wearing dress shirts and bow ties every day of the week. Something's wrong here: Who is that farmer trying to be?

Christian writers often struggle with depictions of human sinfulness. Draw characters with too much earthy reality, and you will have to find a secular publisher. (Can anyone imagine Buechner's *Bebb* coming out of the Christian market?) Write a book that is overtly spiritual, and you'll find your work rejected as "too religious" to be marketable by secular presses. Bauer nimbly walks that fine line, depicting failure and evil compellingly in a book that overtly, realistically describes the spiritual seeking and setbacks of believers.

The darkness hides God's glory. The eye of sinful man God's glory may not see. But thank heaven for the distinct hopefulness in that simple word *though!* Though the darkness hides him, God is still holy, merciful, and mighty. **CT**





Colleges That Take Values Seriously

Christian colleges initiate a new study to measure effects of a faith-based education.

For many years, people have assumed that colleges are doing their job: preparing students for successful careers and instilling in them values that would contribute to the building of a better society. Beginning in the 1970s, however, various folks began to question this assumption. The reasons are debatable: some cite a perceived cultural decline, but others say skyrocketing educational costs have prompted a movement toward accountability.

Thus, over the last two decades or so, the word *assessment* has become very important at Christian colleges and universities—indeed, within the entire community of postsecondary education.

Whatever its ultimate causes, the assessment movement has been driven largely by regional accrediting associations, which have consistently urged institutions of higher learning to make a focused effort to determine their specific

missions and to assess their progress in fulfilling those missions.

Christian colleges lead the way

The assessment movement among Christian colleges began as a response to the broader assessment movement. However, thanks to the detailed and far-reaching study "Taking Values Seriously: Assessing the Mission of Church-Related Higher Education," coordinated by the Coalition for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCCU), Christian higher education has become a model—in fact, a trendsetter—in the assessment movement.

Representatives from various Christian colleges participated in several assessment-type conferences in the early 1990s. They realized that generic assessment tools were inadequate in the Christian college setting. Messiah College sociology professor Ron Burwell explains,

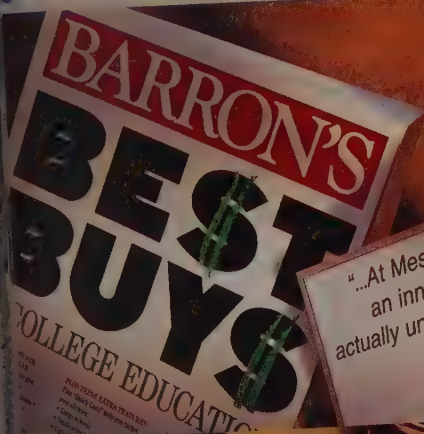
"When it comes to determining how well we are succeeding, issues related to faith development, and specifically Christian values, are at the top of our list. The problem is that these categories do not appear as categories for postsecondary education at large."

It was Karen Longman, CCCC's vice president for professional development in research, working alongside campus leadership, who proposed the solution to the problem. Her idea was to seek a grant from the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) in order to conduct assessment-type research within the context of Christian higher education. Some considered CCCC's chance of getting a FIPSE grant a long shot, since the fund approves only about one of every ten grant proposals it receives.

Furthermore, because FIPSE operates under the auspices of the U.S. Department of Education, there were some initial concerns about issues related to the

(Continued on page 9)

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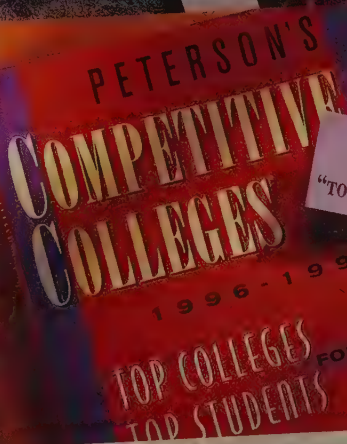
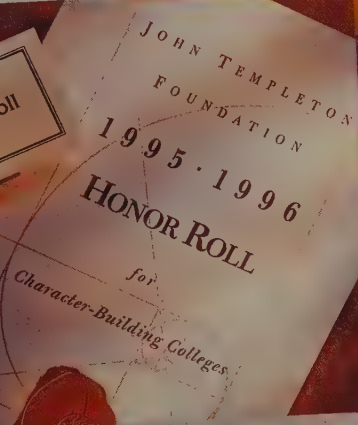
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separation of church and state. But supporters of the proposal were ultimately successful in arguing that a school should not have to compromise its mission in order to gain fair access to government funds for the purpose of assessing its success in accomplishing its mission. Thus in 1993, CCCU received a \$222,000 FIPSE grant for what was to be a four-year study. In 1997, FIPSE awarded an additional \$258,000, extending the study to six years.

While "Taking Values Seriously" contains several components, among its most significant features is an emphasis on tracking students' attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs over a long term. According to Patrick Terenzini, professor and senior scientist at Pennsylvania State University's Center for the Study of Higher Education, one critical weakness of many typical studies on the effects of college is that they focus on a single year. As a result, these surveys amount to mere snapshots—which can be helpful, but are ultimately incapable of measuring change or growth.

In contrast, "Taking Values Seriously" will follow some students for as long as six years. In 1994, researchers conducted in-depth interviews with hundreds of freshmen representing over 40 CCCU schools. (The number of CCCU schools participating in the study has since grown to more than 50.) Those same students were interviewed again as graduating seniors in 1998. The second interview included the opportunity for students to view the videotape of their previous interview so as to evaluate how they had changed in four years. Then, the same students will be interviewed a third time as alumni in the year 2000 in order to help determine the lasting effects of their Christian college education.

In an endorsement of the project written on behalf of CCCU, Terenzini states, "Your six-year plan is a credit to the project's planners and to FIPSE for funding it. I wish more foundations or federal agencies were willing to do things right."

Similarly, Barbara Cambridge, director of the American Association for

Higher Education Assessment Forum, calls "Taking Values Seriously" an "ambitious and important undertaking in the field of assessment." She adds, "While many colleges and universities purport to develop values in their students, few have undertaken the careful, methodical approach your project does in defining and assessing the development of values."

An approach both quantitative and qualitative

"Taking Values Seriously" includes a major quantitative component, making use of standard survey resources commonly used by colleges and universities throughout the country to survey large numbers of students. However, by adding questions related to faith development and values (see "Sample Questions from 'Taking Values Seriously,'" pp. 98–99), the study adapts these standard tools to the Christian college context.

Study results (Continued on page 96)



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allow for ready comparisons between students at Christian colleges and their secular college counterparts on a variety of social and political issues. The videotaped interviews make up the major qualitative component of the survey. Between 20 and 40 students have already been interviewed at more than 40 CCCU-member schools; most have been interviewed twice. Given an average interview time of one hour, the result is nearly 2,000 hours' worth of videotaped interviews to be transcribed, read, compared, and analyzed.

Messiah's Burwell and John Van Wicklin, psychology professor and director of Houghton College's Department of Integrative Studies, are spearheading the effort to conduct and interpret the interviews. Both say that in the project's initial stages, they were concerned about how much interest it would draw from Christian schools. "We hoped for 20 and held our breath," says Burwell. "We got 40, which was far more interest than we expected."

This kind of cooperative project is

something of an anomaly within educational circles. Many schools, realizing that competition for students and donor dollars can be stiff, hesitate to engage in any kind of cooperative effort that can result in sharing of trade secrets or inside information. Yet, coordinators believe, the fact that so many CCCU schools have signed on to the project testifies to the conviction that schools regard the overall mission of Christian education as being more important than the mission of any individual school. Some hope that the cooperative model represented by "Taking Values Seriously" will spread to the broader postsecondary education community.

According to Van Wicklin, one of the most positive features of "Taking Values Seriously" is that it provides, for the first time, some meaningful basis by which individual CCCU schools can compare themselves with other CCCU institutions. In the general surveys, by contrast, the only category available to CCCU schools was "Four-year Protestant Schools," many of which have strayed from the

religious foundations out of which they were born.

Preliminary results

Both Burwell and Van Wicklin are understandably hesitant to comment too extensively on what they have learned so far given that the project is in midstream. In fact, at this writing, the two were still in the process of poring over the results of the 1998 interviews of graduating seniors who had been interviewed four years previously.

According to Burwell, the surveys and interviews, taken collectively, point toward Christian college students who, in some ways, are a lot more like their secular college counterparts than many might have assumed, though generally they are less materialistic, more altruistic, and noticeably more conservative on abortion and issues related to sexual morality. "We have found a tendency," says Burwell, "for students to describe themselves as politically conservative, even though when it comes to social issues—such as gun control,

(Continued on page 10)

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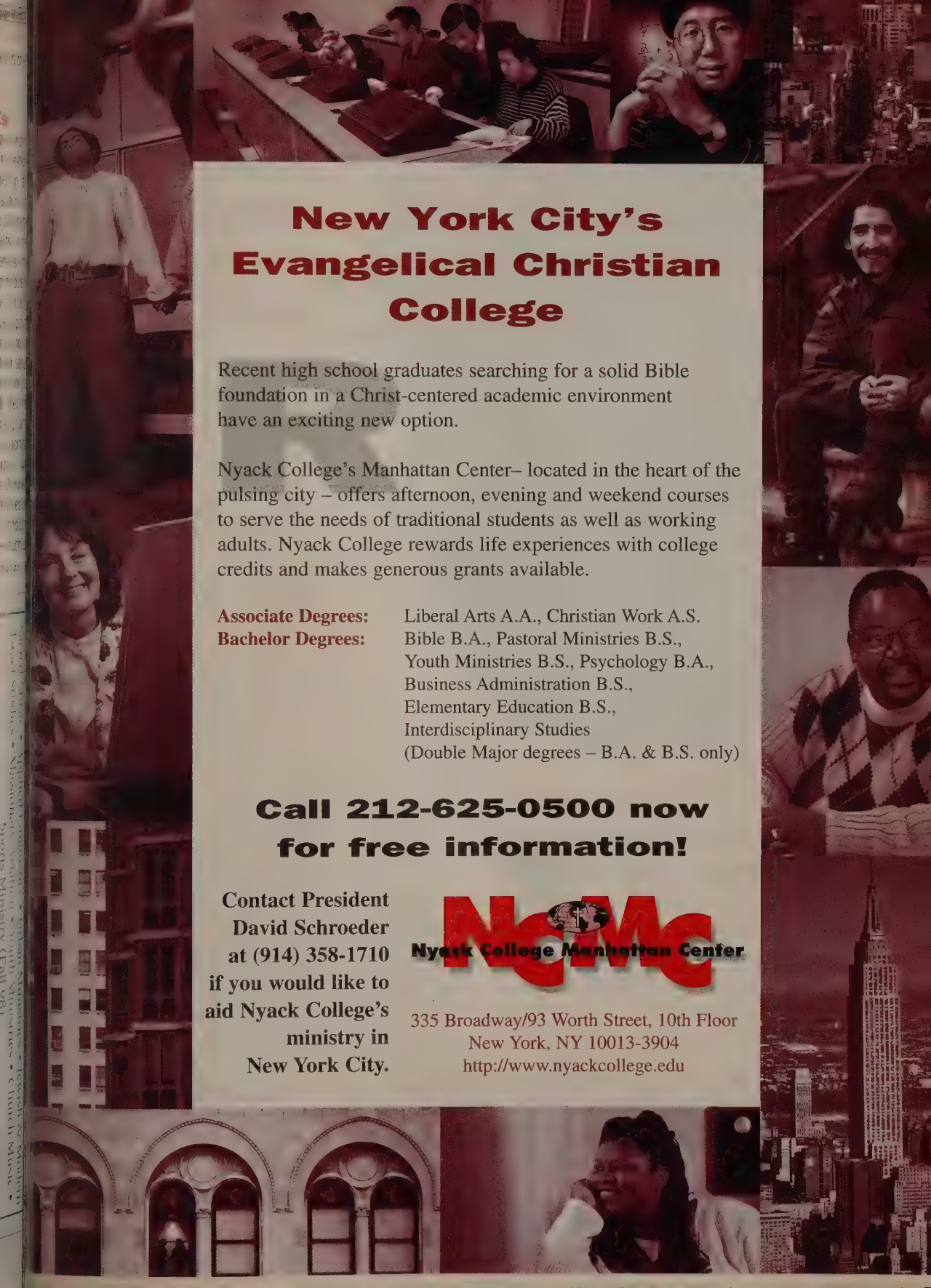
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Sample Questions from **"TAKING VALUES SERIOUSLY"**

Many of the quantitative types of questions that are a part of the study are identical to questions asked on standard reference tools, in this case, the CIRP (Cooperative Institutional Research Project) freshman survey. However, several supplementary questions, such as the following, make the survey distinctive for the Christian college context:

- How regularly did you engage in each of the following activities during the past year?

Maintained daily, personal devotions;
Shared my faith with another person;
Developed a friendship with a person of a different race;
Studied the Bible or prayed in a small group.

- In addition, the quantitative survey asks respondents whether they strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statements:

I have a personally meaningful relationship with God.

My relationship with God contributes to my sense of well-being.

The way I do things from day to day is often affected by my relationship with God.

Even if the people around me were opposed to my Christian convictions, I would still hold fast to them.

I feel like I need to be open to considering new insights and truths about my faith.

I feel that identifying and using my spiritual gifts is not really important.

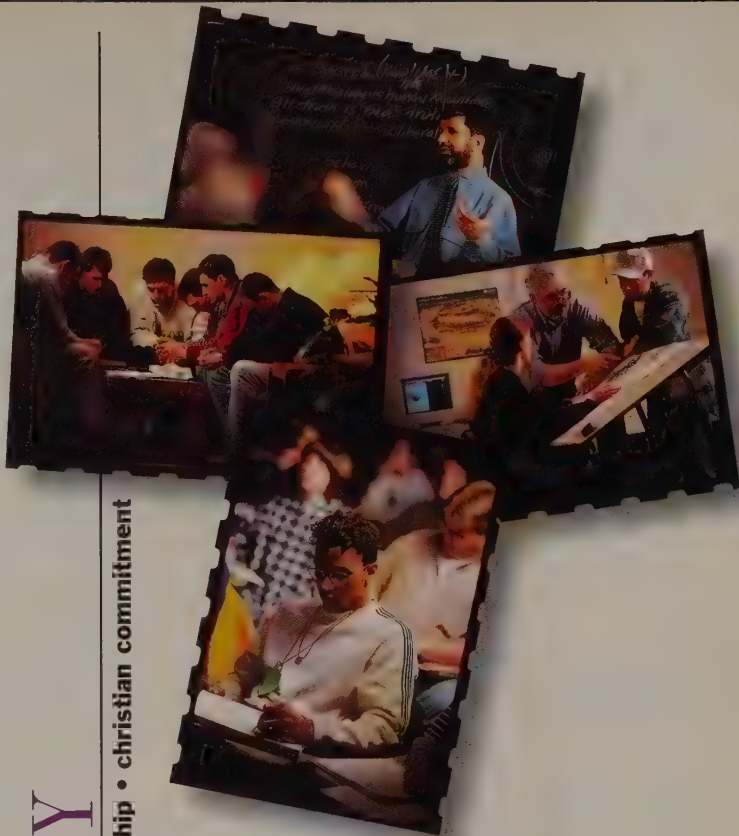
The survey also includes a major quantitative component designed in part to

determine whether students' faith has developed and matured during their time at college and, if so, to begin uncovering the main contributing factors. Following are some of the standard interview questions posed to graduating seniors in 1998:

- Have you had any experiences that altered your life course in any significant way?
- How did you come to decide on a particular major?
- When you think about your future, what makes you feel most uneasy?
- Has your involvement in religious activities changed in any significant way while at college? For example: church attendance, involvement with small groups, personal devotions, etc.
- What do your parents think of your religious beliefs? Are their beliefs different from yours in any significant ways? For example, do you differ over doctrine, mode or style of worship?
- Has there ever been a time when you questioned the validity of your religious beliefs? If so, what did you question? Did you resolve the questions, or are you still questioning some things?
- Have you done anything during your college years in support of any of your social or political views?
- Have your social or political views changed much while you have been in college? If so, what led to these changes? Can you think of ways in which your social or political views are different from those of your parents or close friends?
- What are some of your views on male/female gender roles? Have you always thought about these roles in this way? What are the sources of your views on gender? Are your views in this area any different from those of your parents?

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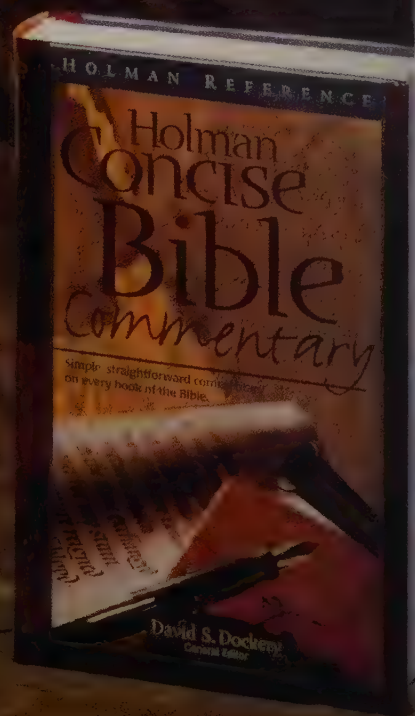
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(from page 96)

capital punishment, and a national health-care plan—they tend to hold more moderate or even liberal viewpoints. My hunch is that some of these students feel they are not allowed to label themselves anything other than "conservative."

Burwell adds that preliminary results might also suggest that, in general, "we overstate the impact of the college years. In a past era, he says, four years of college may have been a landmark, life-changing experience for young men and women. Today, it may be only one part of the larger formation process.

Assuming that is the case, Van Wicklin believes it constitutes a problem and poses a challenge for higher education, since colleges and universities are working with students at an influential time of life.

Both Burwell and Van Wicklin regard the freshman/senior comparison interviews as critical to the task of assessing the extent to which Christian schools are accomplishing their mission. A "snapshot" survey, for example, might reveal that students at Christian schools affirm biblical values to a much greater extent than their secular counterpart. However, such a result might speak more to the kinds of people Christian schools are attracting rather than to the kinds of students they are producing.

One of the things Van Wicklin and Burwell are examining most closely is the extent to which a student's faith has developed and changed during the college years. Sometimes, says Burwell, "changes can produce tensions at home." "By that, I'm not talking about young people becoming atheists or running off to be Buddhists. I'm referring more to doctrinal issues—to Episcopalians becoming Mennonites or vice versa."

These kinds of changes, according to Van Wicklin, can be a positive sign. "The goal of any good liberal arts institution is to get students to think critically and to develop their values within the context of an awareness of alternatives. That's the only way they will claim their faith as their own."

According to Van Wicklin, some students have all the "right answers" when it comes to their faith. Upon closer exam-

(Continued on page 102)

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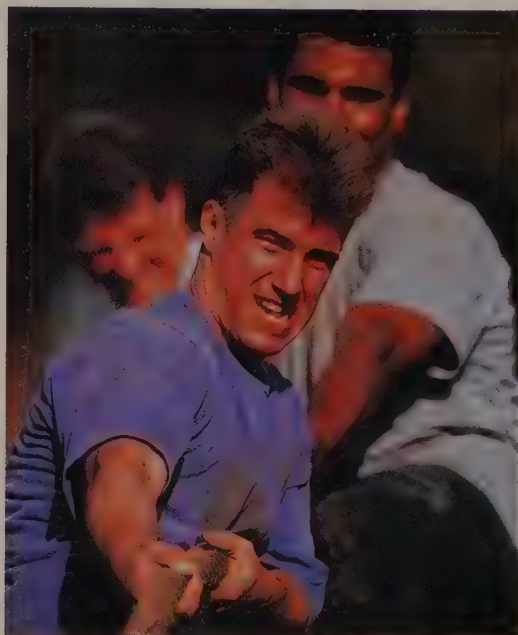
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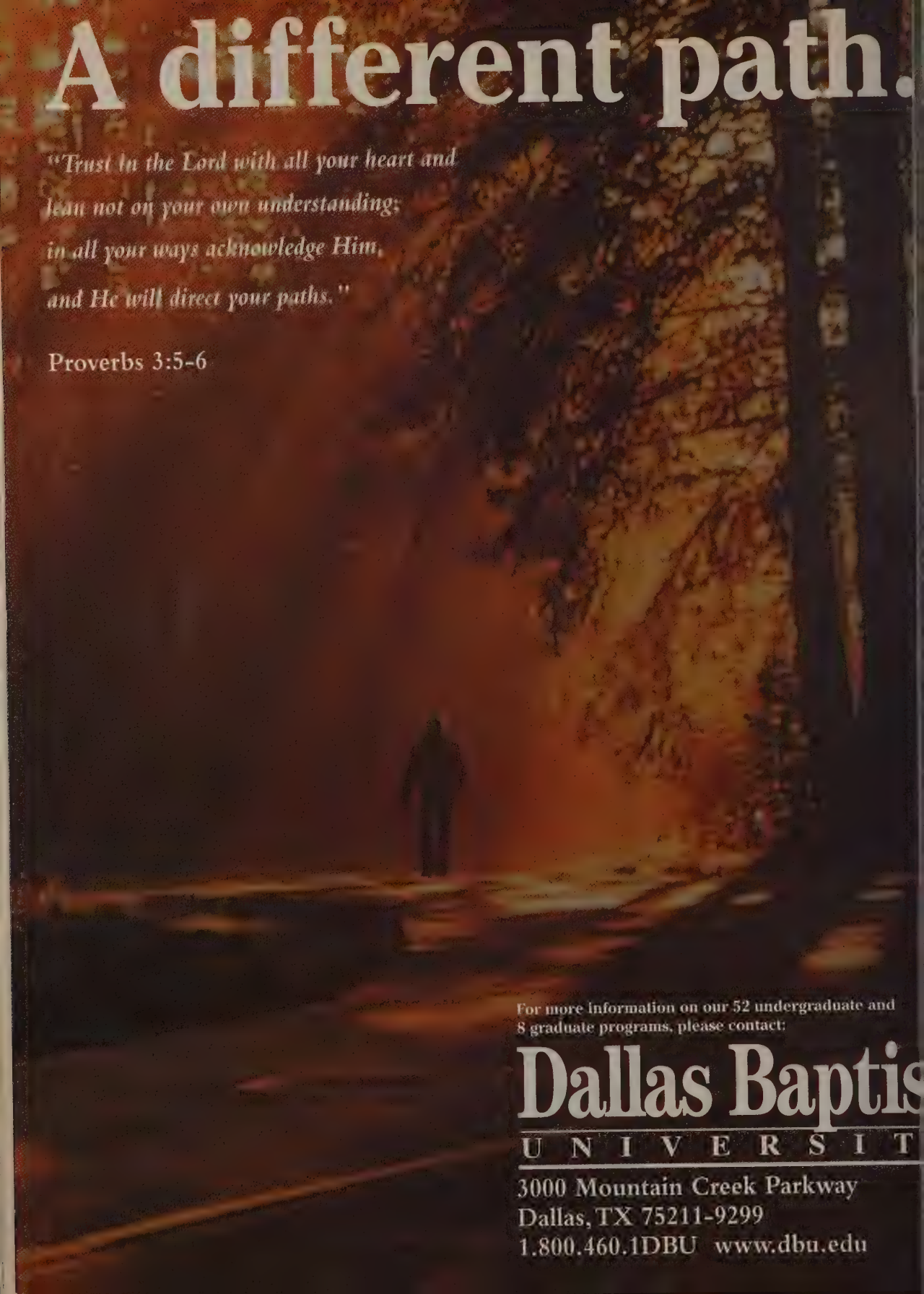
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Colleges That Take Values Seriously

(from page 102)

nation, however, it might be determined that they have merely adopted the faith and traditions of their parents without having done any critical reflection of the kind that indicates ownership of faith.

Van Wicklin hopes and believes that "Taking Values Seriously" will provide Christian colleges with information and insights that will enable them to move closer to having the kind of influence they want to have. "We don't expect to find magical answers or instant solutions," he says. "But we do think we will find evidence of relationships between students' positive faith development and the kinds of college experiences they have."

For example, perhaps the survey will suggest that a student who had at least two or three faculty mentors is more likely to develop a mature, responsible faith. Or perhaps there may be a relationship between mature faith and cross-cultural experiences or a particular field of study. Van Wicklin, Burwell, and others will be examining literally hundreds of variables in an effort to determine what lessons might be learned from "Taking Values Seriously" and from additional similar studies. Schools will have the opportunity to examine what they are doing in light of what appears to be working at Christian colleges in general and to make appropriate changes.

Launching pad for the future

Results of the survey might suggest that some Christian schools are doing a better job than others. But disclosure of any results, says Van Wicklin, will be handled in such a way that no particular school is either denigrated or elevated. "Our goal," he says, "is not to point any fingers, but to help everyone."

He adds that "Taking Values Seriously" has already begun serving as a launching pad for similar types of assessment projects within the Christian college movement. That, he believes, is a good sign that leaders who care about the mission of integrating faith and learning are not content with where they are, but instead want to move ever further down the path toward excellence.

By L. Katherine Robbin, a freelance writer in Philadelphia.

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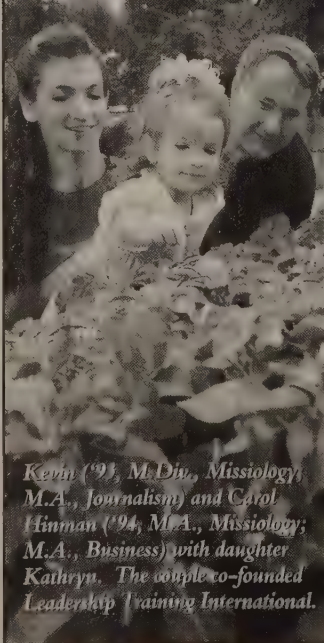
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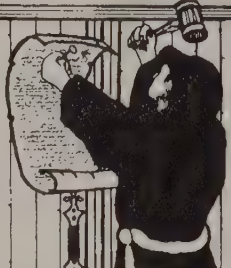
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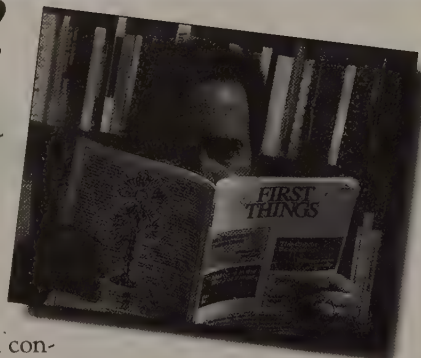
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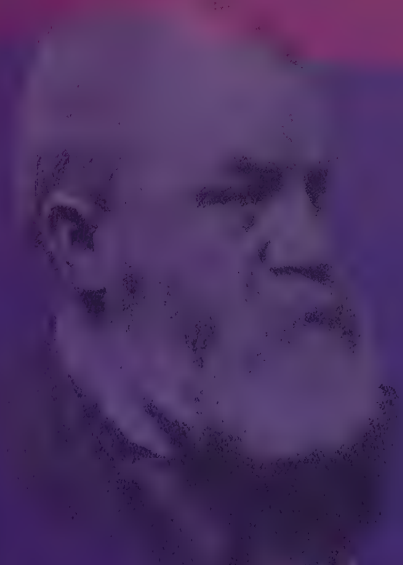
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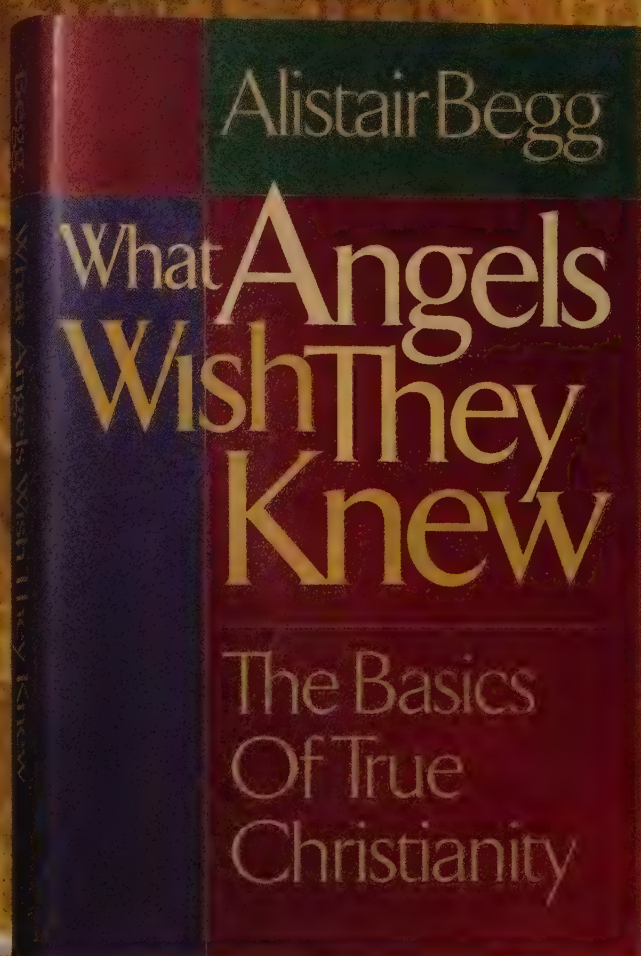
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- The dean of the Natural and Social Sciences will oversee the traditional natural and social science disciplines, including graduate programs in Education (M.A.T.) and Clinical Psychology (M.A. and Psy.D.; APA accredited).
- The dean of the Humanities and Theological Studies will oversee the traditional humanities, theological, and ministry disciplines, including graduate programs in Biblical and Theological Studies, Educational Ministries and Evangelism, and Missions and Intercultural Studies.

Wheaton College seeks inquiries from and nominations of candidates who were trained in one of the divisional disciplines and who, ideally, are accomplished as teachers, scholars, and administrators. Persons interested in either position should send a complete vita with a cover letter summarizing their qualifications and commitment to Christian higher education to the Director of Human Resources, Wheaton College, 501 College Avenue, Wheaton, IL 60187-5593. Suitable candidates will be asked to complete a more extensive application process. Wheaton College is an evangelical Christian liberal arts college whose faculty and staff affirm a statement of faith and adhere to lifestyle expectations. The college complies with federal and state guidelines for nondiscrimination in employment. Women and minority candidates are encouraged to apply.

MINISTER OF PASTORAL CARE

Fast-growing 4,700-member evangelical church is seeking Minister of Pastoral Care. Seminary degree preferred. Clear commitment to Christ and biblical truth required. Stephen ministry experience helpful. Competitive salary and benefits. Located in planned community with excellent schools and amenities north of Houston. Send résumé to Dr. Ed Robb, 3901 South Panther Creek Drive, The Woodlands, TX 77381.

TEACH IN JAPAN: Reach Asians for Christ. Teach in English. Several K-12 & ESL teacher openings. Mission school of 400; 2-year contracts. Must raise partial support. Write Dr. Bob Greninger, Okinawa Christian School, P.O. Box 14250, Gainesville, FL 32604; (1-800) 446-6423.

SEEKING DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR with personality and skills to build a development program, conduct annual campaign, and provide support for capital campaign. Benefits; salary negotiable. Call for job description and application: (626) 355-4242, x-226, Maranatha High School, Sierra Madre, CA.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

BELHAVEN COLLEGE, a Christian liberal arts college committed to the integration of faith and learning, seeks applicants in the following areas. Unless otherwise noted, all positions are for fall 1999. Candidates should possess the Ph.D. (or equivalent terminal degree), articulate a Christian world-view in their academic discipline and teaching, and desire to prepare students to serve Christ in their occupations, relationships, and the world of ideas.

- Dance
- Education (2 positions; 1 in January)
- U.S. History
- Psychology
- Sports Medicine
- Theatre

Send vita and supporting materials (including a 3-4 paragraph philosophy of Christian education and how you anchor your teaching discipline into a Christian world-view) to William P. Anderson, Jr., Vice Provost, Belhaven College, 1500 Peachtree Street, Jackson, MS 39202-1789.

DIRECTOR OF YOUTH MINISTRIES

Riverton Presbyterian Church of Lynchburg, Virginia, an evangelical and Reformed congregation (900+) of the Presbyterian Church (USA) is looking for a Director of Youth Ministries. Position includes directing a ministry to junior and senior high students which will nurture their faith and strengthen their commitment to Christ and his church, while supporting the authority of the family. Degree in youth ministries or similar field preferred. Direct reply to: Youth Search Committee, Riverton Presbyterian Church, P.O. Box 3017, Lynchburg, VA 24503.

FACULTY POSITIONS

Waynesburg College

Accounting: Teaching tax, advanced auditing, fraud investigation, accounting information systems; master's (or JD) required, CPA and experience in forensic accounting or fraud investigation preferred; primarily undergraduate courses with possibility of MBA teaching.

Education: Two or three positions; department chair and elementary education; administering and teaching in variety of content. Doctorate preferred; school experience required.

Graphics & Photography: Teach imaging, computer graphics, photography, and related areas. Master's required; doctorate preferred.

Physics: Teaching physics (nonmajors), some computer science or mathematics, advising pre-engineering students; doctorate preferred.

See home page at <http://waynesburg.edu>. All positions require commitment to Christian higher education, breadth of teaching skills, plus normal full-time faculty responsibilities. Send CV, copies of transcripts, letter addressing qualifications and philosophy of education, and three references to Richard Stanislaw, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Waynesburg College, Waynesburg, PA 15370 or rstanislaw@waynesburg.edu.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

EDUCATION

The School of Education at Trinity International University welcomes applications for a tenure-track position to begin Fall 1999. Responsibilities include teaching and coordinating courses in secondary math and science methods and overseeing the development of our expanding technology emphasis. The position could also include teaching general methods, foundations, or multicultural education and assisting with student teacher supervision. Qualifications include a terminal degree, public school experience, superior teaching skills, and an interest in working within diverse settings. Send curriculum vita by January 4, 1999, to: Dr. Jeanette L. Hsieh, TIU College of Arts and Sciences, 2065 Half Day Road, Deerfield, IL 60015. TIU is affiliated with the Evangelical Free Church of America. Faculty must subscribe to Trinity's Statement of Faith and Community Expectations. Trinity International University is an equal opportunity employer. Women and minority candidates are encouraged to apply.

PASTOR OF WORSHIP ARTS

Multigeneration, growing evangelical congregation of 600+ on the shores of Lake Michigan. Seeking full-time experienced person responsible for music, drama, & media ministries. Vocal/keyboard skills desired for traditional and contemporary worship. Send résumé to Forest Park Covenant Church, 3815 Henry St., Muskegon, MI 49441; fax: (616) 780-3873; E-mail: FPCovC@aol.com

PASTOR OF ADULT EDUCATION

Village Church of Gurnee, a fast-growing church of 1,300+ is committed to developing: an intentional process for discipleship, opportunities for spiritual gift discovery, various adult educational opportunities, and programs for leadership development. We are looking for an experienced pastor with an exceptional passion for developing mature Christians and effective leaders. He will build and lead teams of ministry directors who will develop these areas. Skills needed: Proven ministry experience; strong leader who is gifted in teaching and administration; solid theological understanding of Christian growth and ministry. M.Div. and five years ministry experience preferred. We are an evangelical church in a growing northern suburb of Chicago. Send résumé to Village Church of Gurnee, Box 210, 1319 N. Hunt Club Road, Gurnee, IL 60031.

CENTER CITY PHILADELPHIA Messianic Jewish Ministry is seeking exec. dir./pastor. This unique evangelistic outreach ministry under PC (USA) has been in existence for over 50 years. We prefer a Hebrew-Christian Minister to fill this position; however, all résumés are welcome. Submit résumé and letter of introduction to C.C.A.J., 1907 Chestnut St., Philadelphia, PA 19103, or call (215) 568-1030.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

ASSOCIATE PASTOR

Do you have a heart for building community, developing and leading ministry teams, equipping and shepherding adult leaders and workers in children and family ministries? Village Church of Gurnee, a fast-growing church of 1,300+, is looking for an experienced pastor to give overall leadership to our children's ministry directors and shepherd 160+ leaders and workers. We are an evangelical church in a growing Northern Illinois community that ministers to many young families. Skills needed: proven ministry experience; strong leader who is gifted in shepherding, team building, and teaching. M.Div. and five years ministry experience preferred. Send résumé to Village Church of Gurnee, 1319 N. Hunt Club Road, Box 310, Gurnee, IL 60031.

CHICAGO METROPOLITAN CENTER DIRECTOR

CMC is a study and internship program for students from a coalition of six Christian liberal arts colleges in Iowa (Central, Dordt, Northwestern), Michigan (Calvin, Hope), and Illinois (Trinity Christian). The position is full-time (12 months) beginning July 1, 1999. Responsibilities include coordinating staffing, budgets, education programs, and student recruitment. Preference will be given to candidates with doctorates, experience in teaching and experiential education, and a strong commitment to the Reformed Christian faith. Apply to Burton Rozema, VPAA, Trinity Christian College, 6601 West College Drive, Palos Heights, IL 60463; (708) 239-4760; E-mail: Burt.Rozema@trnity.edu. CMC encourages applications without regard to ethnic background, disability, gender, or national origin.

MINISTER OF OUTREACH

Large downtown church in the Reformed tradition is seeking a visionary Minister of Outreach with a passion for the lost. We are looking for a candidate able to minister to the poor and the powerful, and to equip the members of our regional church to engage in friendship evangelism. Ordained or unordained, male or female. For more information or to send your résumé, write to the Search Committee, LaGrave CRC, 107 LaGrave Ave. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49503, or call Dr. Mast at (616) 454-7204.

WRITER

Communications firm serving Christian ministries seeks a writer who believes in the power of words and knows how to use them—both to gain attention and get a response. Minimum two years experience in direct mail fundraising (or proof that you qualify without that experience). Good salary and benefits. Great place to live. Outstanding clients. Send résumé to: Creative Director, 19265 Powder Hill Place NE, Poulsbo, WA 98370.

MEMORIAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, 301 Interstate Park Dr., Montgomery, AL 36109, (334) 274-1018; fax: (334) 274-1046. Full-time director of music ministries for an active, Christ-centered church with a strong music tradition. Responsibilities include conducting the adult choir; overseeing children's, youth, and handbell choirs; coordinating a concert series; and developing new programs. Master's degree and four years of experience preferred. Salary negotiable. Applicant should submit résumé, statement of personal faith (250 words), and philosophy of sacred music (250 words) to include the five choral works that best exemplify the philosophy. Send résumé to Chairperson, Director of Music Ministries Search Committee, at the above address.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

DIRECTOR OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Emphasis on Children & Youth Ministry
Dynamic, growing church (PCUSA) of 500+ is seeking a full-time D.C.E. for expanding program for all age levels. We desire an energetic leader who loves children and can relate well to all ages. Master's degree and minimum of three years parish experience preferred. Generous compensation package. Join us in Kendall, Miami's upscale southwest suburb, for an exciting opportunity in ministry. Send résumé and cover letter to: Central Presbyterian Church, Attn: Dr. Kathryn Roach, CE Moderator, 12455 S.W. 104 Street, Miami, FL 33186; fax: (305) 598-1239.

WHEATON COLLEGE

Director for the Office of Christian Outreach
Wheaton College is accepting applications for the position of Director for the Office of Christian Outreach. This director is responsible for the supervision of all campus ministries, including student-run ministries of Student Missionary Project, Youth Hostel ministry, and National City Ministries. The director will provide leadership, guidance, and counsel for the student chairs, cabinet members, and students in ministries. An effective candidate will have a minimum of three years experience in some form of Christian ministry. An M.A. is preferred, but will consider applicant in process of completing a degree. Wheaton College is an evangelical Christian liberal arts college whose faculty and staff affirm a statement of faith and adhere to lifestyle expectations. The college complies with federal and state guidelines for nondiscrimination in employment. Women and minority applicants are encouraged to apply. Résumés can be submitted to the Director of Human Resources, Wheaton College, Wheaton, IL 60187.

DO YOU NOW, or have you in the past, sold institutional organs at the retail level? A major manufacturer of electronic institutional organs is seeking to fill an entry-level marketing position to work educating a nationwide group of dealers in proper demonstration techniques and modern marketing strategies. The following skills are vital to be considered for our selection process:

- A musical background in organ studies is required. The ideal candidate will be able to perform a variety of music, including contemporary Christian, gospel, and classical.
- Knowledge of MIDI and its applications would be a plus.
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- Relocation may be necessary.

Please send your résumé in confidence to: CT Classified Ads Box 217, 465 Gundersen Dr., Carol Stream, IL 60188.

SENIOR PASTOR

Winnetka Bible Church is a strong, vibrant faith community of 600 attendees located in the beautiful Chicago/North Shore suburb of Winnetka. We're looking for a deeply committed evangelical who has a big vision, a big heart, and a willingness to lead a talented staff and committed congregation. Our new pastor needs to communicate biblical truth effectively and be capable of thinking strategically and creatively about how a regional church should do ministry. Our staff is in place, programs are in full swing, the congregation is growing in the midst of our transition, and we're financially healthy. For more information, please contact: Ray Zeiss, Chair of the Pastoral Search Committee, by writing him at WBC, 555 Birch St., Winnetka, IL 60093; E-mail: crz528@nwu.edu. Confidentiality guaranteed.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

RESEARCH PSYCHOLOGY

The Department of Psychology of Greenville College, tenure-track position, Assistant Associate Professor (ABD considered, Ph.D. preferred). Prior college teaching experience required. Position includes student advisement and teaching Experimental Design, Learning Motivation, and Cognitive Psychology. Marriage and Family Therapy licensure (AAM Clinical Member) required. Greenville College is a Christian liberal arts college, 50 miles east of St. Louis. Wesleyan heritage; open community of care for persons of all faiths. Greenville College is an equal opportunity employer; a highly encourages persons of minority to apply. Salary and benefits commensurate with academic achievement and experience. Send curriculum vita and letters of recommendation to Jonathan S. Raymond, Ph.D., Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, Greenville College, P.O. Box 159, Greenville, IL 62246-0159. Must be received by December 16, 1998.

FULL TIME MINISTER OF YOUTH & YOUNG ADULTS

Evangelical, biblical, nonaffiliated Baptist church in the western suburbs of Chicago with established youth ministry eagerly seeking candidate with prior youth ministry experience, a degree related to youth ministry, skill to plan and implement programs and ability to work with staff in team ministry. Contact: Western Springs Baptist Church, Youth Search Committee Chairperson, 4475 W. 111th Rd., Western Springs, IL 60558.

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THE EASTERN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY is seeking two colleagues to join our uniquely diverse faculty and community to teach New Testament studies and New Testament Greek and the other Christian Theology and Ethics. These are full-time, open rank, tenure-track positions. The seminary is committed to its motto: "The Whole Gospel for the Whole World through the Whole Persons" and is located in the Philadelphia metropolitan area. The successful candidates will have a Ph.D./Th.D. in the respective fields and teaching experience. Commitment to Eastern Seminary's holistic evangelical stance and to the formation of leaders is required. Women and minorities are encouraged to apply. Send letter and vita to Dr. Eric H. Ohlmann, Academic Dean, Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 6 Lancaster Avenue, Wynnewood, PA 19086. E-mail: deansofc@ebts.edu; fax: (610) 683-3834 by January 31, 1999.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

UNIVERSITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (USA), a 3,800+ congregation in Seattle, Washington, is seeking two positions to lead Department of Urban and Global Mission. **Senior Director/Associate Pastor of Urban and Global Mission** should have a minimum of 10 years cross-cultural experience as an individual contributor and leader in urban and global mission ministry. This person will be senior member, communicator, leader, and pastor of the department. (This position will be selected by the congregation.) **Assistant Director/Associate Pastor of Urban and Global Mission** should have a minimum of 5 years of similar experience and will have an urban or global focus area that complements the senior director. Both candidates should have the following qualifications: deep personal love for Jesus Christ; ability to lead a department with a staff of 12, over 400 volunteers, and a substantial budget that supports over 70 career missionaries; proven team-building and pastoral skills with staff, missionaries and local, national and international partners; ability to articulate a vision of mission to equip, encourage, and work alongside volunteers and career missionaries; effective preacher and teacher of the Scriptures and biblical mission mandate; personal, hands-on, cross-cultural field and administrative ministry experience. Please submit résumé and references to: University Presbyterian Church, Attention: Christi Scoville, 4540 15th Ave. NE, Seattle, WA 98105; (206) 524-7300 or e-mail: christis@upc.org. Web page: www.upc.org

WHEATON COLLEGE

Faculty Positions

The following positions are available beginning August 1999.

- **Biology:** Assistant Professor, tenure-track; experience in field biology or terrestrial ecology.
- **Conservatory:** Assistant/Associate Professor of Voice, tenure-track; studio/class voice, vocal literature/pedagogy; soprano/tenor.
- **English:** Assistant Professor, tenure-track; concentration in 19th- & 20th-century American Literature; expository writing. Visiting Instructor/Assistant Professor; two positions—one concentration in American literature and one in classical literature.
- **Foreign Languages:** Visiting Assistant Professor of Spanish; native or near-native fluency in Spanish.
- **Mathematics/Computer Science:** Assistant or Associate Professor, tenure-track in computer sciences.
- **Psychology:** Assistant Professor, tenure-track; concentration in cognitive psychology.

Send letter of interest and curriculum vita to Office of the Provost, Wheaton College, Wheaton, IL 60187. Application deadline for most positions is December 15, 1998. Wheaton College is an evangelical Christian liberal arts college whose faculty and staff affirm a statement of faith and adhere to lifestyle expectations. The college complies with federal and state guidelines for nondiscrimination in employment. Women and minority candidates are encouraged to apply.

GRADUATING COLLEGE SENIORS are invited to apply for the 26th annual Pulliam Journalism Fellowships. Twenty journalism or liberal arts graduates in the August 1998-June 1999 class will receive ten-week summer internships. Stipend is \$5,250. Early-admissions application postmark deadline is Nov. 15, 1998. By Dec. 15, 1998, up to five early-admissions winners will be notified. All other entries must be postmarked by March 1, 1999. For an application packet, write: Russell B. Pulliam, Pulliam Fellowship Director, The Indianapolis News, P.O. Box 145, Indianapolis, IN 46206-0145.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S MINISTRY Christ Episcopal Church, a dynamic, growing church of 2,000 in metro Kansas City, is seeking a full-time Director of Children's Ministry. The church's vision is to "make disciples who make disciples for Jesus Christ." Working on a staff team of 13, the Director's ministry will be to raise up leaders to provide an exceptional, innovative, and creative evangelistic and discipleship ministry for children. Committed Christians (from any tradition) with energy, vision, and proven experience in children's ministry leadership are invited to apply. Fax, e-mail, or send résumé to: Alison Barfoot, Christ Church, 5500 W. 91st St., Overland Park, KS 66207; fax: (913) 648-0854; E-mail: AlisonBar@aol.com.

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JESUS DID NOT RETURN IN AD 70, a biblical refutation of preterist theology; 28 pp., \$3. A Clearer View of the Rapture, premillennial; 110 pp., softcover; \$6.00 postpaid. John E. Young, 6 Robert St., Rockaway, NJ 07866.

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MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES

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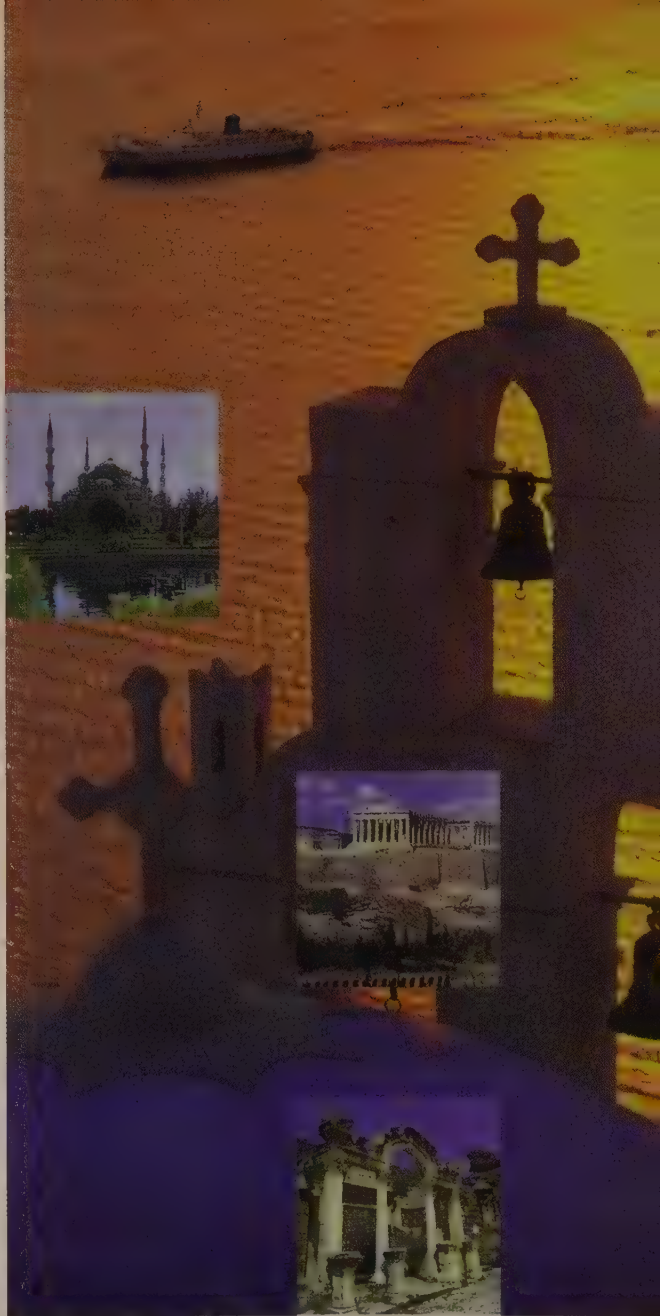
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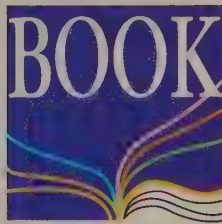
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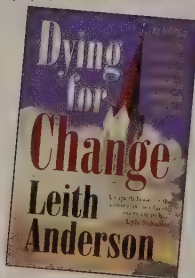
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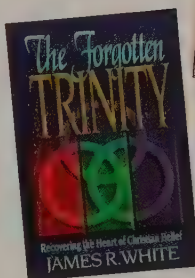
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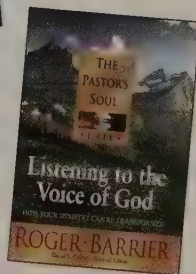
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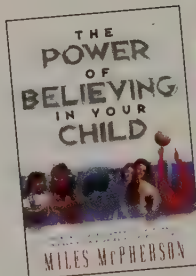
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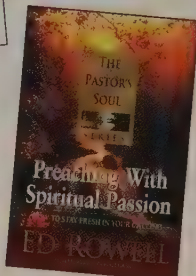
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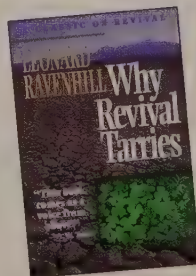
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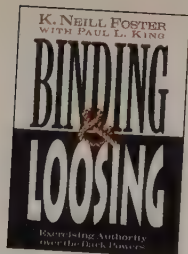
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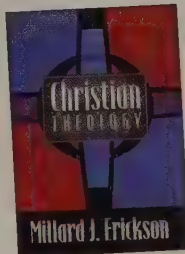
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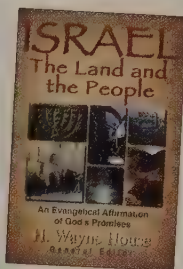
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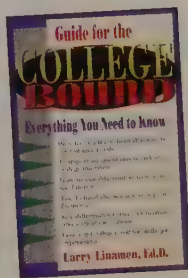
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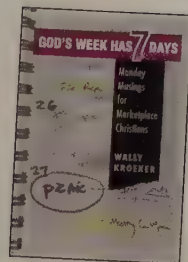
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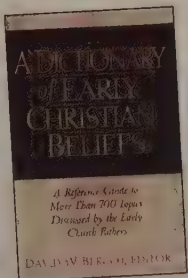


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Poster Boy for Postmodernism

**Strohmeyer
told police
he strangled
the little girl
by twisting
her neck
the way
he had seen
in movies.**

As we write, there is a growing clamor for President Clinton to leave the Oval Office; but across the country there is a clamor to throw someone else out—in this case, David Cash, a student at the University of California at Berkeley. The latter case, though hardly drawing the same attention, may nonetheless have even graver implications for our nation's future.

The controversy over Cash arises from a gruesome case last year in which a California teenager, Jeremy Strohmeyer, sexually molested and murdered a seven-year-old girl in a Las Vegas casino. Cash witnessed what his friend was doing but did not stop him and later agreed to keep quiet. Just weeks ago Strohmeyer pled guilty to sexual assault and murder. But failing to prevent a crime is not itself a crime, so Cash blithely finished high school and went on to Berkeley.

Today he remains defiantly unrepentant. "Were you appalled that a friend said he had killed a little girl?" the *Los Angeles Times* asked him. Cash answered: "I'm not going to get upset over someone else's life. I just worry about myself first." Seventy-five outraged citizens gathered outside Cash's dormitory with bullhorns, shouting, "Expel him!"

What most people overlook, however, is that Cash's attitude accords precisely with the postmodernist philosophy propagated by places like Berkeley.

The core of postmodernism is a rejection of universal truth claims and moral principles. And if there are no universal ideals linking us together, then logically all that's left are "tribes": identity groups based on race, ethnicity, gender, or whatever. That's why virtually every state university today has separate dorms for students who are black, Asian, Hispanic, homosexual, or any other group demanding a separate identity. No one is permitted to judge another group's actions or beliefs, because there is no recognition of ultimate truths binding on everyone.

These ideas percolate down from academia to shape our moral attitudes. On a radio talk show, Cash said, "It's a tragic event, okay. But the simple fact remains that I do not know this girl. The only person I knew in this event was Jeremy Strohmeyer." In other words, the victim was not a member of his "tribe," his identity group. Strohmeyer was. His only obligation, he concluded, was to his buddy.

Expel him from Berkeley? No: Make him its poster boy. Cash's moral indifference is the inevitable result of today's trendy campus ideology; his actions are postmodernist logic carried to its grotesque conclusion.

This murder is one more bone-chilling example of teens slaying in cold blood, without remorse or conscience. Over recent months, several children have

walked into schoolyards across the country and fired on their classmates—in Arkansas, Oregon, Kentucky, Mississippi, and Pennsylvania. The press and other pundits have cast about for explanations. President Clinton announced that we need stricter gun control but in almost every case, the guns were registered. Other explanations offered for crime are poverty or race; but these kids were middle class and white.

What is frightening is precisely how normal most of them seem. In New Jersey, Amy Grossburg and her boyfriend checked into a hotel room, gave birth, and killed the baby. Another teen, the "Prom Mom," gave birth in a restroom, dumped the baby in the trash, and returned to finish the dance. These were normal, ordinary teens—except that they murdered their babies, violating the most primal human instinct.

Reporters have raised all the conventional explanations except one. They could not bring themselves to use the dreaded "m-word": *morality*. The truth is that Americans are losing their moral recognition of the universal dignity of human life. Like Cash, they dehumanize their victims. In the sentencing of Amy Grossburg, the judge said he was troubled by "an egocentricity that blinded you to . . . the intrinsic value of the life of the child."

Where are the adults who are supposed to teach these kids "the intrinsic value" of human life? Adults who once gave firm moral direction—parents, pastors, teachers—too often buy the myth that they should refrain from teaching kids right from wrong but rather let them discover their own values. Other adults are busy producing and selling entertainment that glorifies violence, teaching kids exactly the wrong thing. Strohmeyer told police he strangled the little girl twisting her neck the way he had seen in movies. We are raising a generation of children conditioned to kill.

It's enough to make one despair of American civilization itself. But as Christians, we should resist temptation and instead turn social breakdown into opportunity to make a compelling case for biblical morality. One strategy for evangelism, Francis Schaeffer taught, is to press people to the logical conclusions of their basic presuppositions: to show people that their assumptions, if lived out consistently, would lead to destructive and inhumane consequences. Today people are beginning to recognize the soul-destroying consequences of postmodernism, and now is the time to press them to see the wisdom of biblical truth.

When kids kill kids, people can no longer tolerate the chaos created by moral autonomy.

The bill on postmodernism is coming due. Either we will pay its bloody price, or find our way back to the truths that make civilization possible.

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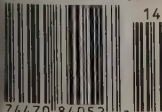
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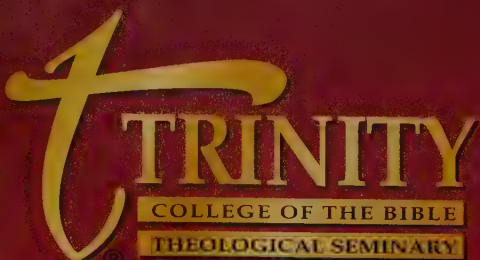
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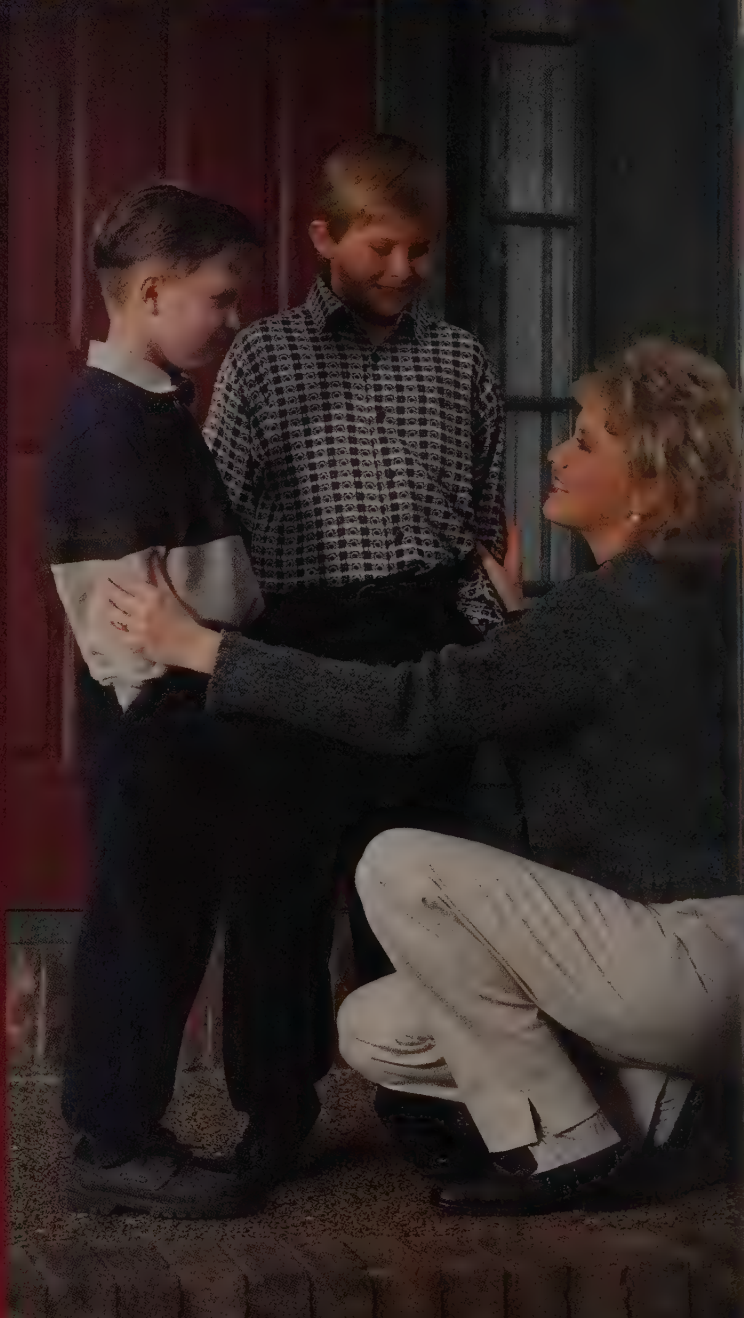
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A Magazine of Evangelical Conviction

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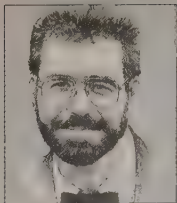
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David Neff,
Executive Editor

Ted's Excellent Adventure

INSIDE CT

Ted Olsen wasn't very impressed with John Whitehead the first time he saw him. It was 1994; Ted was a student at Wheaton College, and Whitehead was barnstorming with his *Religious Apartheid* video and indulging in over-the-top rhetoric comparing the ACLU to the Nazi storm troopers.

All that was before Whitehead became famous for championing Paula Jones's civil suit against the President. And it was before Whitehead made a number of changes. Change is part of what makes Whitehead interesting, and his upredictability has made it hard for him to form alliances with other Christian culture warriors. But then change makes for interesting journalism, so Ted took up the challenge of describing the John Whitehead of late 1998. (See "The Dragon Slayer," p. 36.)

While John Whitehead continues his legal battles for truth, justice, and the American way, his personal interests run not to case law but to the messages of popular culture. His desk is littered with hundreds of action figures, and his walls are covered with posters of the entertainment culture. Ted says that *Gadfly*, Whitehead's maverick magazine of pop culture analysis, is Whitehead's real passion, with the political and legal projects much lower on his personal agenda.

(Check out *Gadfly* on the Web at www.gadfly.org.)

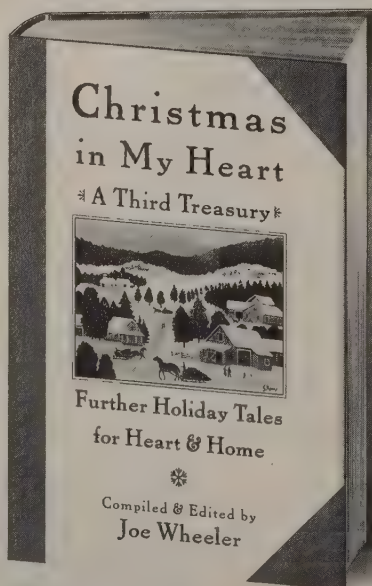
Like Whitehead, Ted is fascinated by pop culture. "Well," says Ted, "I'm 24 years old. Everyone my age is interested in pop culture." And like Whitehead, Ted would be happier if evangelicals just knew more of what was going on in his media-saturated world.

Ted's office is decorated with signed photographs of Muppetmeister Jim Henson and country-music mandarin Johnny Cash. After reading an online preview of the script for Gen-X filmmaker Kevin Smith's forthcoming movie *Dogma*, he wrote about it for CT's sister magazine BOOKS & CULTURE. In grade school Ted was known as Mork, after the Robin Williams character in the *Mork and Mindy* sitcom. And yes, he even wore Mork-style suspenders.

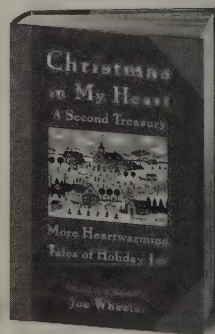
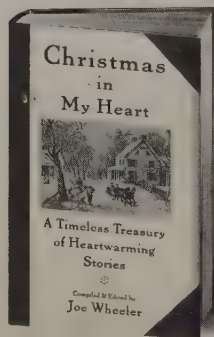
Having built his journalistic foundations as news editor of the *Wheaton College Record* and then as editorial resident in CT's news department, Ted is now assistant editor of CHRISTIAN HISTORY. When asked about his favorite issue of that magazine, Ted immediately says, "It was the first one I worked on—the David Livingstone issue. He was amazing, an enigma, fascinating—a pop culture hero of his time."

He is also excited about CH's coming issue on the conversion of the Vikings. Ted's heritage is half Norwegian and half Swedish, and after finishing his year at CT he went to Scandinavia to track down his relatives. One wonders: will we soon see Hagar the Horrible on the cover of CHRISTIAN HISTORY? **CT**

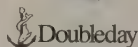
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Knowing the Father Better

✉ I just had to let you know that your October 26 issue was your best ever. I refer in particular to your multisided exposition of the Prodigal Son/Loving Father. I have a greater understanding of my Father because of your work.

*J. Kent and Sherri Patterson
San Antonio, Tex.*

✉ I've already marked Luke 15 in my favorite commentary with a note to always reread this issue before ever preaching on this parable again.

*David Roberts
Dublin, Tex.*

✉ Between the interpretations of Kenneth Bailey and Christopher Hall, I am with Hall. While Bailey's Middle Eastern viewpoint was interesting, I cannot agree with his attempt to separate any aspect of the returning prodigal's decision from the fact of his redemption. The returning prodigal may have been naïve, but it is not correct to conclude that he was not repentant. As Hall implies, to believe otherwise causes many real life (sin) problems. (If even repentance were not involved, then how much worse would the reaction of the older brother have been?)

The Bible makes clear that the decisions by us sinners and saints do matter. I disagree with those theologians who, in effect, say mankind has no free will in the face of God's sovereignty.

*Stephen R. Schulze
Kingsley, Pa.*

✉ I greatly appreciate Kenneth Bailey's fresh look at the Prodigal. More than anything, his study shined because it placed the story in its cultural and Old Testament context. It is often easy for us to read the Gospels (especially parables) as if they were written for late twentieth-century Westerners, but I was reminded that Scripture is something we come to in a posture of learning: we don't read our world-view into it, it reads us.

The shock of the outrageous (loving!) behavior of the father coupled with the manipulative, self-serving behavior of the younger son made me relate all the more with the older brother (as I think Jesus was intending his first audience do). Yes,

this story takes a richer meaning when we remember it was first written for biblically literate Palestinian Jews. Better knowing the parable's original meaning makes it more meaningful today. Thank you for the reminder.

*Rev. Kent Clayton
Sandia Presbyterian Church
Albuquerque, N.M.*

✉ Bailey's paper is very revealing. It comes from original study, not just a rehash of seminary classes.

Miller's interview of Miroslav Volf is most helpful in an age when so many seem to want "togetherness" at any price.

*Donald Jeffery
Hudson, Fla.*

✉ When I noticed that this issue centered on the Prodigal, I knew I needed to read it immediately because we have been dealing with that very situation. When I saw the article "The Missing Mother," I knew God was speaking to me, and I turned to it straightway.

What a blessing to my aching heart! I could identify with the author on practically every point: ministerial wife, early profession of faith for the prodigal, and the constant reminder of God to *really* entrust our son to Christ. To read an article written by a mother who has done everything she knows to do to safeguard the spiritual well-being of her child, and yet still sees rebellion, was very meaningful to me.

I have been struggling with casting off the mantle of false guilt the Enemy would direct against me, and Wendy Zoba's article has taken me further along in this process.

Stephanie Silva

Saying "The Older Brother Had a Point" (Barbara Brown Taylor) is tantamount to saying the Pharisees and scribes had a point when they carped at Jesus because he received sinners and ate with them. The triple parable Jesus then told was his answer to their unjust and ungodly criticism. The Pharisees and scribes are not pictured in the story of the shepherd and his straying sheep or in that of the woman and her lost coin, but they are unmistakably pictured in the elder son in the final part of the parable.

This young man's tone was bitter and

sarcastic, demonstrating that he had not the spirit of a son, but that of a slave. I believe Jesus hoped the Pharisees and scribes would get the point of his story. That is why he left it unfinished. The last we see of the elder son, he stands moping in the shadows, and his father stands at his side, pleading with him to enter the house and join in the family's feasting and joy. Did he relent and heed the pleading of his father? Did the Pharisees and scribes heed the pleading of Jesus?

*Paul C. Clarke
Grand Rapids, Mich.*

Clinton's Spirit of Remorse

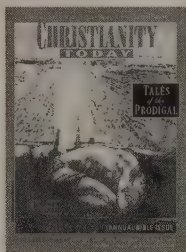
Regarding the editorial "The President's Small Group" [Oct. 26], as with other apologists for the President, the writer uses a greater level of immorality in the example of Henry Lyons in order to minimize Clinton's sin. He closes by saying, "But when leaders take responsibility for their sins, not only by expressing remorse but by engaging in accountability, restitution, and retreat, we must, like the angels in heaven, rejoice."

It would appear the spirit of remorse was only squeezed out of the man when he was confronted with no other political alternative. It would prove true repentance and depth of moral character if Bill Clinton would follow the prescribed course and retreat from the presidency. As with Henry Lyons and Jimmy Swaggart, the position, power, and money (millions of dollars in democratic fundraisers), will prove to be more important than true Christian character for this President. If political expediency continues to transform moral certitude into moral relevancy, then Clinton may represent a society soon to be subjected to the righteous judgment of Almighty God.

*Drew D. Montgomery
Council Grove, Kans.*

✉ I agree with your assessment of Pastor Lyons, but I wish you would go ahead and put the pressure on the President to resign as well. I doubt that his moral influence is less than that of Pastor Lyons just because one is in a Christian job and the other is secular.

The President could do a lot of good for the children and their education by calling the news media and having a Saturday children and teens speech. He could say, "See what immorality brings. It brings shame. It brings pain. It brings





'Truth is Essential'

There's a counterpoint to Henry Ford's oft-repeated maxim that history is, more or less, bunk. It flows from the pen of Miguel de Cervantes in *Don Quixote*. He regards history to be "a sacred kind of writing, because truth is essential to it, and where truth is, there God himself is..."

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James D. Bratt

Ph.D. from Yale; co-author of *Gathered at the River* (William B. Eerdmans, 1993); author of *Dutch Calvinism in Modern America* (Eerdmans, 1984); member of Advisory Board of Institute for the Study of American Evangelicals; awarded Fulbright Grant; expert on American intellectual and religious history; chair of Calvin's history department.



Bert de Vries

Ph.D. from Brandeis; expert in archaeology and world history; former director of the American Center of Oriental Research in Amman, Jordan; Albright Fellow of the American Schools of Oriental Research; directed reconstruction at Umm el-Jimal for the Department of Antiquities of Jordan; history professor at Calvin.



Ronald A. Wells

Ph.D. from Boston University; author of *History Through the Eyes of Faith: Western Civilization and the Kingdom of God* (Harper & Row, 1989); expert in Northern Ireland's history and sectarian conflict; director of the nationally known interdisciplinary Calvin Center for Christian Scholarship; professor of history at Calvin.

punishment. I am going to take my medicine like a 'big man,' and I am asking you not to follow my example."

Jed J. Snyder
Lexington, Mass.

In light of a certain Scripture, it is interesting to note the seventh point of Kenneth S. Kantzer's referenced 1987 article concerning the steps in an accountability and restoration process. That certain Scripture is Ezekiel 44:10-14. Clearly God has set forth what a defecting priest's second "genuine call" is to be: caretaking and maintenance work. Both God and his holy offerings were declared off-limits so they might bear the blame of their "detestable practices."

Sin always has it consequences.

Mrs. Robert W. Teague
York, Pa.

Head Coverings a Symbol

Regarding your article "Veils, Kisses, and Biblical Commands" [Directions, Oct. 26], I take exception to Craig Keener's interpretation of a woman's head covering. The entire passage deals with the hierarchy of authority that God has established. The reason given in 1 Corinthians 11:10 for a woman to have her head covered when she prays or prophesies is to have a symbolic representation that she accepts this authority, for the sake of the attending angels. Have angels ceased to exist that we no longer need to indicate to them our acceptance of this? For centuries and, to my knowledge, up through the fifties, women in most churches wore hats. This practice disappeared in the sixties, the time of rebellion and the rise of feminism. Is there any connection, I wonder?

As a teenager in the sixties, I abandoned the practice, with everyone else in my congregation. In my twenties, I suddenly felt the urge to begin wearing hats again, though they were sadly out of style. I didn't understand why for a long time, but in spite of catty remarks by some, I wasn't deterred. After a while, I understood. I was disciplining myself to be obedient to God in other areas of my life, and he was taking care of a situation of which I was, at that time, ignorant.

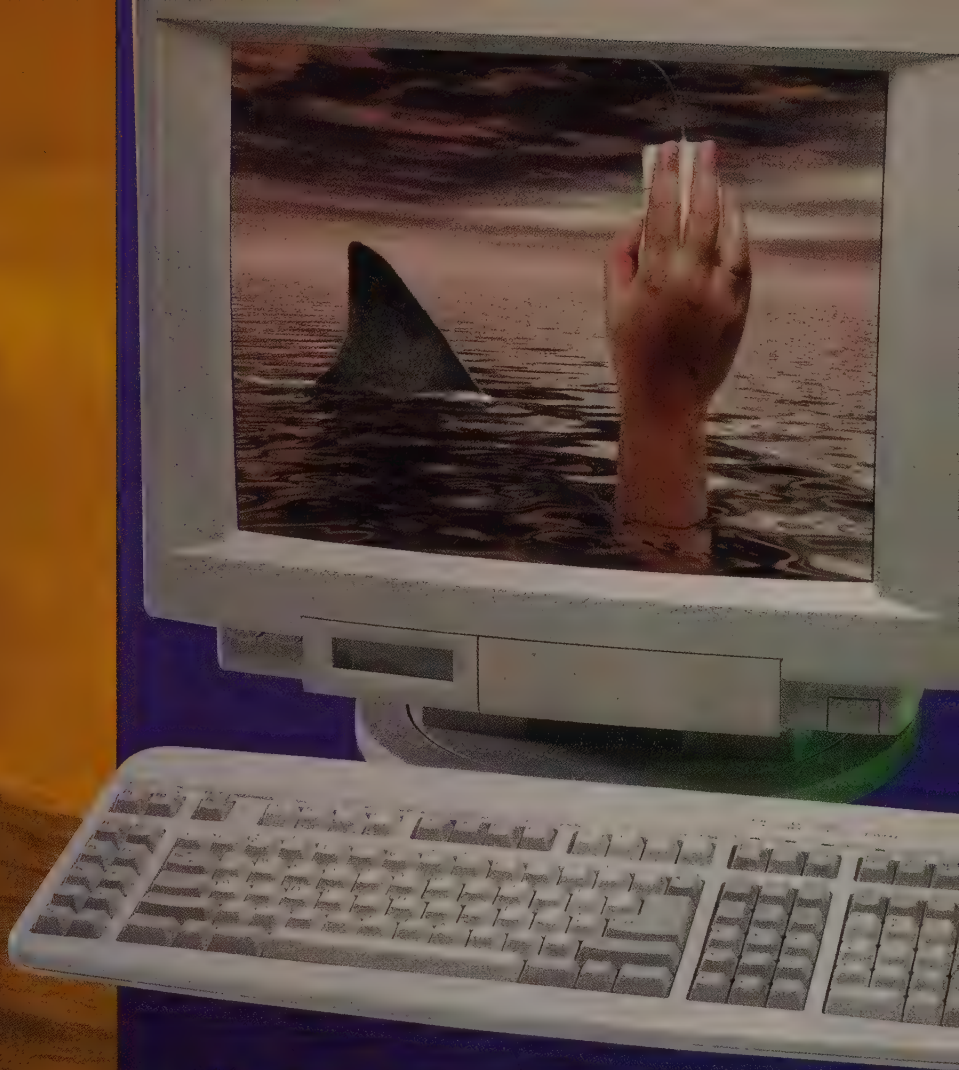
Mrs. Connie Schutta
Newburgh, N.Y.

The Cost of Forgiveness

The review of Wiesenthal's classic, *The Sunflower*, is both interesting and deeply thought-provoking [Books, Oct. 26]. The tension it creates, it seems to me, is boiled

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down to the issue of "cheap grace"—does forgiveness reduce or enhance thoughtless acts of violence? Interestingly, the same issue carries Rabbi Neusner's article on Israel's present-day holocaust of the eradication of thousands of unborn babies [Matters of Opinion].

The very nature of *grace* is that it is free, renewing, and uplifting to the one being forgiven after repentance. It is the one granting the forgiveness who pays! The price for Wiesenthal to pay was too great, and so all he could do was be silent. He could not deny himself, family, race, situation in order to forgive. Yet that is exactly what it cost God!

*Ted Feierabend
Madison, Wisc.*

Chinese House Churches

In the October 26 issue, the first sentence of an article on house churches reads: "A group of Christian house church leaders, who function without government registration, has issued . . ." [News: World Report]. Those two commas leave the impression that all house churches lack registration, which is not the fact. Thousands of house churches are registered and get along with the government. I am not sure if the error was the fault of CT or RNS, but it is misleading.

*Rev. Arne Sovik
Minneapolis, Minn.*

No Political Subtitles

On behalf of Palestinian Christians, I would like to thank you for your cover article "How Evangelicals Became Israel's Best Friend" [Oct. 5]. In the American evangelical world, our voice has been ignored for many years now, and I applaud your effort to hear us once again. We, Palestinian Christians, are caught between the terror of Islamic fundamentalism and the brutality of continual military occupation. Our hearts still cry for justice.

I have learned that though the plight of my people is a harsh one, Christ is strong enough to carry our sufferings, even if they were inflicted in his name. I pray that Americans would at last open their hearts to their brothers and sisters—the Arab church. I still pray for the peace of Jerusalem, but my prayers do not come with political subtitles anymore. Only God can lead us to true reconciliation between all peoples.

*Jessica Doolittle
Wheaton, Ill.*

✉ "How Evangelicals Became Israel's Best Friend" is objective, educational and

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well-written. Timothy Weber's treatment is fair to history and the Word of God.

Two things have concerned me about dispensationalism in the modern American church: (1) It has become such a "fad" to believe in one form or another of it that, to oppose it, places one in a situation similar to our place as nonevolutionists in the scientific world. There are many of us who are strong believers (and, we believe, honest students or scholars) who do not jump on the dispensational bandwagon. (2) Evangelical leaders, as Weber points out, are "making" events in the Middle East conform to their interpretations of Israel, the kingdom, eschatology, and so on. This is an alarming idea, and portends even worse things than the historical tension between the Arab and Israeli people. Thank you for including Dr. Weber's article—to many, an unpopular sketch of these matters.

Bob Mize
Colorado Springs, Colo.

I write to share my sense of dismay over the misuse of Scripture by dispensationalists and deep alarm over the negative effects this ideology has had in this country and in the Middle East. Their

misuse of Scripture is based on their convoluted attempts to force Christian theology to conform to the nationalistic and military aspirations of ancient Israel. Jesus was rejected because he would not be used for this purpose, and today dispensationalists essentially reject him again by making his ministry "parenthetical." I would read that to mean "irrelevant for our times, especially for Israel and the Middle East"!

The dark side of total support for Israel on the part of dispensationalist evangelicals has been the demoralization of the Christian churches among the Arabs in general and the Palestinians in particular. We have rejected our own people in the interest of political ideology based on theological bias. Close to 40 percent of Palestinians used to be Christians, now the number is down to 3 percent. No wonder Islam is rushing in to fill a vacuum we have created!

In their rush to read the signs and predict the future, dispensationalists have ignored the testimony of Jesus, and consequently also lost the spirit of prophecy.

Vartkes M. Kassouni
Presbytery of San Fernando
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☛ If Weber's purpose ever was to enlighten his dispensationalist readers, he sabotaged that strategy on the first page with language that only alienated those readers. He would have served us all better by presenting the history and experience of both sides and then asking if justice is best served by unquestioned support of Israel, instead of mocking beliefs held dear to these our brothers.

*Bill O'Byrne
St. Petersburg, Russia*

Weber says, "The most serious issue that grows out of the relationship between evangelicals and Israel is whether the connection has helped or hindered the peace process." I disagree. The most serious issue growing out of that relationship is the potential blunting of our evangelistic mandate to preach the gospel to all people, to the Jew first. Many evangelicals, under a mistaken notion of love for Israel, have made a conscious determination not to share the love of the Savior with my Jewish people. Regardless of their views on eschatology or politics, those evangelicals are party to an insidious form of anti-Semitism; they end up "loving" my people into a Christless eternity.

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*David Brickner
Executive Director
Jews for Jesus
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Our organization, First Fruits of Zion, was mentioned by name. You said "First Fruits of Zion Ministries . . . tries to get American Christians to live like Jews." However, the point made about FFOZ is exactly the *opposite* of what we are attempting to accomplish.

First, we do not solely minister to the American Christians. Our materials span the globe. Second, we certainly do not "try to get American Christians to live like Jews." Simply put, our goal is to encourage anyone to live according to the teachings of the entire Scriptures, not just the New Testament. Thus we are attempting to teach the body of Messiah at large the basic contents of the Torah (first five books of the Bible) and how to apply those teachings to their lives—as well as help them to more fully understand the Torah's only inspired commentary, the New Testament. In other words, we are striving to teach the body of Messiah to take hold of their rightful privilege to fully participate with God's covenants

with Israel. But we are not attempting to make Jewish people out of them. Their way of living out Israel's covenants may take a different form than that which the Jewish people have sought to do.

Ariel Berkowitz,
Director of Education
First Fruits of Zion
Jerusalem, Israel

cates that its framers understood "perish forever" in the traditional Christian sense of eternal, conscious punishment. Article 4 of the Confession describes "the second death" as "eternally suffer[ing] in Hell," while article 10 defines it as "eternal punishment in Hell."

Matt Pinson
Colquitt, Georgia

■ The Arkansas Institute of Holy Land Studies appreciates being mentioned; however, one correction needs to be made. Weber wrote that the Arkansas Institute of Holy Land Studies was unaccredited. This is not true. We are accredited by ACI—Accrediting Commission International, which accredits schools, colleges, and theological seminaries.

Gina Worsham

Thank God for alert readers. In editing Stanley Grenz's reply to a reader's question about annihilationism, the editors "helped" him out by supplying historical context drawn from a secondary work. On checking the General Baptist Confession of 1660 with our very own eyes, we see that we were misled and thus misled our readers. Our apologies to General Baptists everywhere and to Professor Grenz.

—Eds.

Oh Hell

The October 5, 1998, issue of CT ("Is Hell Forever?") stated that the General Baptist Confession of 1660 advocated annihilationism. One would assume this is based on article 22 of the Confession, which quotes Job 20:7 as saying that the wicked will perish forever. However, a thorough reading of the rest of the Confession indi-

Brief letters are welcome. They may be edited for space and clarity and must include the writer's name and address if intended for publication. Due to the volume of mail, we cannot respond personally to individual letters. Write to Eutychus, CHRISTIANITY TODAY, 465 Gundersen Drive, Carol Stream, IL 60188; fax: 630/260-0114. E-mail: ctedit@aol.com (✉).

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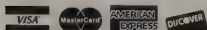


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SALVATION ARMY

Did Somebody Say \$80 Million?

'Tis the season for Salvation Army bell-ringers, but in San Diego, the donation kettles already appear to be full.

Joan Kroc, 70, heiress to the McDonald's fast-food fortune, has donated \$80 million to the San Diego division of the Salvation Army. The donation is the largest ever received by the 133-year-old organization and the philanthropist's largest charitable gift.

The contribution will finance the design and construction of the 12-acre Ray and Joan Kroc Community Center, which will include a gymnasium, ball fields, ice-skating rink, swimming pool,

performing arts center, and English- and Spanish-speaking worship centers. Construction is scheduled to begin in spring.

The donation also creates a \$40 million endowment to underwrite future facilities maintenance and program management.

The center will offer childcare, programs for the elderly, and special classes using a state-of-the-art computer-only library.

Prompted by a visit last year to some of the city's poorest neighborhoods, Kroc



Kids deserve a break today: Kroc greets a San Diego youngster; the proposed center (left).

told the Salvation Army she wanted to help the city's children. Even with the contribution, bell-ringers will be out in full force this Christmas in

San Diego, where the agency has 26 other programs that cost \$31 million annually to support.

By Christine J. Gardner.



Fruits of the ministry: The Gordianis in the warehouse.

Technology Aids Food Ministry's Growth

A Southern California congregation is applying an elaborate screening process to its high-volume food-distribution operation, making National Food Foundation one of the most innovative food banks in the country.

Lay leaders Lou and Lucy Gordiani started the project five years ago in the basement of Covina Assembly of God, a congregation of 1,800. National Food Foundation is now housed in a 22,000-square-foot donated warehouse where

nearly \$2 million worth of food, clothes, and toiletries are stored. As the regional hub for 18 other churches and organizations, the ministry feeds 525 families each month.

To guard against fraud, the Gordianis developed a strict identification system. Applicants are interviewed and, if accepted into the program, given a laminated card bearing their photograph. Only the pictured person can receive food. One Saturday a month the recipient attends a chapel service, then goes through the warehouse with a shopping cart, leaving with hundreds of dollars' worth of groceries. Food is distributed according to family size.

Jalene Enterrios, a single mother, was new to Covina Assembly when she lost her job nearly two years ago. A native of Puerto Rico, she had

not been in the country long enough to qualify for government unemployment benefits. "It was quite scary," she says. "I was a fairly new Christian and just learning to lean on God for provision."

Enterrios received food for eight months, then began volunteering. She now speaks in the chapel services. "It's truly amazing how the ministry touches people," she says. "Volunteers minister more than just with food."

At least 300 people have become Christians through the ministry, Lucy Gordiani says. The food bank operates on a very modest budget. All food and labor are donated, and the city council donated a 28-foot truck for transporting pallets of food. "The more we give, the more the Lord gives us," Lucy Gordiani says.

By Joel Kilpatrick.

UNITED METHODISTS

Same-Sex Ceremony Leads to Charge

Chicago United Methodist minister Gregory Dell could lose his job if a January church trial convicts him of presiding over a same-sex union ceremony. On September 19, Dell performed a "holy union" ceremony for Keith Eccarius, 41, and Karl Reinhardt, 33, despite an August 11 ruling by the United Methodist Judicial Council that "ceremonies that celebrate homosexual unions shall not be conducted by our ministers and shall not be conducted by our churches" (CT, Oct. 5, 1998, p. 18).

Joseph Sprague, bishop of the Northern Illinois Conference, filed a complaint against Dell on October 12.

This year's acquittal of Jimmy Creech on a similar charge

(CT, June 15, 1998, p. 15) has sharply intensified debate among United Methodists about homosexuality. Dell told CT that he has been performing same-sex union services for 17 years. "If someone says to me you can perform marriage ceremonies, but you've got to exclude people of the same sex, then I violate the integrity of my ministry," Dell says. "The very joy of ministry is because it takes seriously the wonder of diversity."

Sprague told CT that Dell has a "very enviable record as a faithful pastor and is deeply committed to the ministry and to the people he serves." While he supports Dell and disagrees with the ban on same-sex ceremonies, Sprague says he must



No fence sitter: Dell outside his Broadway United Methodist Church.

also "support the law of the church." Nearly one-third of the 185 members at Dell's Broadway United Methodist Church are homosexual.

Evangelical groups have welcomed the filing of the charge against Dell. "We trust that as the case goes to trial, the Northern Illinois Conference will provide a sentence for Dell commensurate with the gravity of the violation," says Jim Heindinger, publisher of the evan-

gelical magazine *Good News*.

Meanwhile, 67 clergy have announced they will celebrate a same-sex union next year at Saint Mark's United Methodist Church in Sacramento, California. Jeanne Barnett, lay leader of the California-Nevada Annual Conference, and Ellie Charlton, a member of the conference board of trustees, plan to formalize their 15-year relationship.

By Mary Cagney.

RACE RELATIONS

Perkins Keeps Son's Ministry Alive

The John M. Perkins Foundation for Reconciliation and Development will keep the Reconcilers Fellowship race-relations ministry open, with a new emphasis on youth.

The ministry was cofounded by John Perkins's late son Spencer with Chris Rice. After the death of his 43-year-old ministry partner (CT, March 2, 1998, p. 73), Rice decided to close the Jackson, Mississippi-based Reconcilers Fellowship and its six-acre Antioch Community (CT, Oct. 5, 1998, p. 15).

But the foundation headed by John Perkins purchased the property and buildings for \$125,000. Perkins, 68, wants to build a park and playground that will include basketball courts and baseball, soccer, and football fields for youth. In addition, the 11-bedroom Antioch House will



New partners: Welchlin (right) rode his bicycle 1,135 miles to Jackson.

be converted into a retreat center. Total cost is estimated to be \$250,000.

Rice, 38, is headed to seminary but supports the new venture. Perkins has enlisted the support of 21-year-old Kass T. Welchlin of Minneapolis to assist in fundraising and youth outreach. CT

SOUTHERN BAPTISTS

Seminary Faculty Must Sign Pledge

Faculty members at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth will be required to sign a pledge to teach in accordance with the updated "Baptist Faith and Message." The statement, amended by the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) in June, directs wives to "submit graciously" to their husbands.

Faculty who can no longer subscribe to the SBC's articles of faith are expected to "voluntarily sever relations with the institution," says President Ken Hemphill, citing the faculty manual.

Two professors have announced they will leave the seminary rather than sign the statement. Alan Brehm, professor of New Testament, is resigning because of a "crisis of conscience over the direction of the Southern Baptist Convention and over recent

events at Southwestern." He called the requirement to endorse the revised pledge a "clarifying event." Dan Kent, professor of Old Testament, is retiring and says the pledge is a factor in his decision.

The SBC-controlled seminary has long required entering faculty to sign the articles of faith, which have not changed since 1963. Faculty are not required to re-sign the statement each year. But some professors disagree with the amendment's biblical interpretation and contend that the statement has been changed since they were hired and granted tenure.

The seminary's trustees have added a phrase to the bylaws to indicate that the Baptist Faith and Message, which is the school's statement of faith, "may be amended from time to time." CT

Child Online Protection Act Challenged

Even though the American Civil Liberties Union immediately filed suit to block its implementation, the Child Online Protection Act (COPA) is constitutionally sound, according to its legal advocates.

Congress passed COPA October 21 as part of a federal spending bill. The ACLU, joined by 16 other groups, filed suit the next day, saying COPA is akin to censoring free speech.

Under the bill, commercial operators of pornographic Web sites must keep "harmful to minors" material from children. Viewers would need to supply a credit card number or personal identification number before any images are displayed. Currently, most pornographic sites offer free teaser cover pages available to anyone able to access the site (CT, Feb. 9, 1998, p. 84).

Last year, the Supreme

Court nullified the indecency provisions of the Communications Decency Act, finding them too broad, insufficiently defined, and incapable of reasonable compliance. "COPA does not suffer from these constitutional deficiencies," says Bruce A. Taylor, president of the National Law Center for Children and Families in Fairfax, Virginia.

"This bill applies only to the World Wide Web and excludes other Internet, Usenet, e-mail, BBS, chat, and online services," Taylor says. Nor would COPA apply to serious works of art or information such as the Starr Report.

"This has been needed for years," says Paul McGady, general counsel of Morality in Media in New York. "Children will be protected from commercial smut on the Internet, and there's a lot of it."

By John W. Kennedy.

In Brief

◆ **Bob Jones University** in Greenville, South Carolina, has announced it will arrest homosexual graduates who set foot on campus. In October, alumnus Wayne Mouritzen, a 60-year-old retired pastor, received a letter from the fundamentalist school's dean of students saying "as long as you are living as a homosexual, you, of course, would not be welcome on the campus and would be arrested for trespassing if you did visit." The ban does not apply to the campus art museum, which could lose its tax-exempt status for such action. The Internal Revenue Service revoked the university's tax-exempt status in 1970 because of its ban on interracial dating.

◆ **Norma McCorvey**, the "Jane Roe" of the 1973 Supreme Court decision *Roe v. Wade* that legalized abortion, has become a Roman Catholic. McCorvey, 51, was confirmed at a parish near her Dallas home in August. She earlier crossed over to the pro-life cause and was baptized by Operation Rescue director Flip Benham (CT, Sept. 11, 1995, p. 70), then joined the speaking circuit (CT, June 17, 1996, p. 62).

◆ Even though the **U.S. Supreme Court** struck down a Colorado constitutional amendment curbing homosexual rights (CT, June 17, 1996, p. 68), justices in October let stand a Cincinnati law barring special preferences and protections for homosexuals. Lawyers defending the city say the court's move should encourage other municipalities to pass similar legislation. Cincinnati voters approved an amendment to the city's charter in 1993 and a federal appeals court upheld it in 1995. The Supreme Court indicated that the Cincinnati amendment differs from the Colorado



McCorvey

law in that it prevents homosexuals from obtaining special employment and housing privileges.

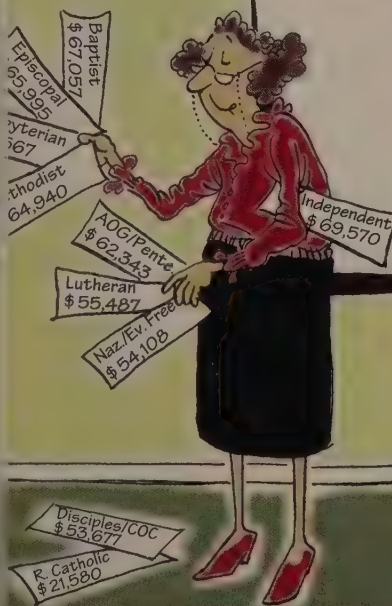
◆ **National Friends Insurance Trust** and Village Missions are to receive more than \$7 million in restitution under a plea bargain with **Terri Beebe**, a staff member with Harmon and Associates in Camano, Washington. Beebe, 41, pleaded guilty in September to conspiracy to commit mail fraud, wire fraud, and embezzlement from a health-care benefit program. Beebe is the son-in-law of Philip Harmon, who is serving an eight-year federal prison term for conspiracy and tax fraud (CT, July 13, 1998, p. 24).

◆ **Elizabeth O'Connor**, 77, died October 17 in Washington, D.C. She wrote several influential books on church renewal and community service, including *Call to Commitment* and *Journey Inward, Journey Outward*.

◆ **God's Property**, a Dallas-based choir, is suing gospel star **Kirk Franklin** and B-Rite Music for an "onerous and one-sided" contract. Franklin allegedly persuaded choir founder Linda Searight to sign. The choir is also suing the Los Angeles record company to recoup royalties from sales of *God's Property* from Kirk Franklin's *Nu Nation*. The 1997 album sold 2.7 million copies worldwide to become the highest-charting gospel album in history. (CT)

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Source: National Association of Church Business Administration, 1997.

Republicans, Religious Right Stunned by Voter Rebuke

The great expectations of conservatives for increasing their hold over Congress sustained a stunning blow November 3. Republicans lost five seats in the House of Representatives, and in January will hold only a slim 223-to-217 majority. Republicans retained their 55-to-45 edge in the Senate.

The GOP, citing political fallout from President Clinton's sex scandal with Monica Lewinsky (CT, Oct. 26, 1998, p. 80), had high hopes of picking up as many as 40 congressional seats. But an unexpected voter backlash in the wake of Independent Counsel Kenneth Starr's report to Congress contributed to the Republicans' worst showing in 64 years by a party not holding the presidency. Not since 1934 had the President's party picked up congressional seats in an off-year election.

Despite an unprecedented push to get out the vote by the Christian Coalition, including rides to the polls, many in the Religious Right simply stayed home. The turnout of voters identifying with the Religious Right dropped 10 to 20 percent from the last election, according to numerous surveys. Further, a Christian Coalition exit poll showed the support of "religious conservatives" for Republicans dropped to 54 percent from the 1994 level of 66 percent.

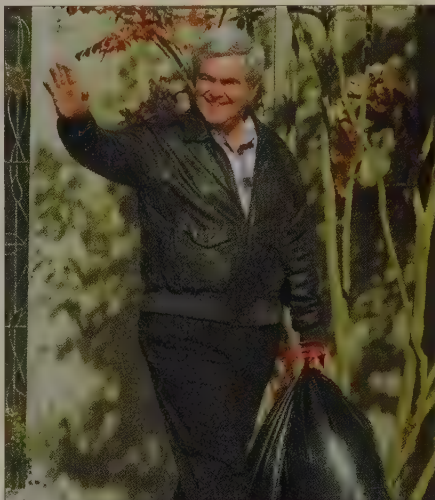
"Evangelicals have good reason to be cynical about the GOP," says sociologist Christian Smith, author of the new book *American Evangelicalism: Embattled and Thriving* (University of Chicago Press). If the GOP does not move any of the Christian Right's issues through Congress, Smith says, the movement loses steam and its leaders lose credibility with their rank and file.

The poor showing and subsequent grumbling among Republican lawmakers spurred Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich—who had made repeated and bold predictions of congressional gains—to resign his post.

Republican governors still hold a 31-to-19 advantage, one less than before the election. Two high-profile incumbent governors supported by the Christian Right went down to defeat: Alabama's Fob James, who made a spirited defense for posting the Ten Commandments in

public-school classrooms, and South Carolina's David Beasley, who had taken a stand against gambling.

State ballot measures resulted in a mixed bag for religious conservatives. By a two-to-one margin, voters in Alaska and Hawaii took a strong stand in favor of limiting marriage to one man and one woman. However, the conservatives' battle against gambling received a



So long, Newt: Gingrich takes out trash from his Georgia home November 7 after his decision.

major setback, with voters in California, Alabama, South Carolina, and Missouri decisively favoring the expansion of legalized gambling.

FALL FROM GRACE: Four years ago, Gingrich orchestrated the Republican takeover of Congress, in which the GOP picked up a whopping 53 seats in the House and eight in the Senate.

But times have changed. Christian Coalition president Randy Tate lamented that the Republicans had no clear vision for the 1998 election. "Democrats had an agenda, and some agenda will beat no agenda every time."

Focus on the Family founder James Dobson blamed Republicans for losing nerve to pass key legislation. "They caved in on everything of importance to the pro-family and pro-life community," Dobson said.

Last spring, the House GOP created a new coalition with Religious Right groups. At a summit in May, GOP leaders

formed the "Values Action Team" (VAT) in response to criticisms by Dobson that GOP leadership had failed to move pro-family issues through Congress.

Since then, VAT has brought together representatives of the Republican House leadership, members of Congress, and grassroots Religious Right organizations to coordinate lobbying strategy to push "values legislation" through Congress. The coalition has championed bills to stop partial birth abortion, give marriage tax-penalty relief, and redirect education dollars away from the bureaucracy.

VAT chair Joe Pitts, a House representative from Pennsylvania, calls the organization an example of an "inside-outside coalition" in which there are inside members of Congress linked to outside coalitions. "It helps them to target their pressure and gives outside groups timely information so that they can lobby," Pitts told CT.

VAT did not become an instant hit with GOP leadership, particularly Gingrich, but Dobson's threats caused the House leader to look for ideas to placate the Religious Right. Several members of VAT are considered rising stars of the Religious Right. Pitts says Tom Delay, the third-ranking Republican in the House, made VAT "happen when the crisis with Dobson came."

Dissatisfied with Gingrich's leadership on the "values" issues, several VAT members, including Steve Largent of Oklahoma, played key roles in Gingrich's postelection demise.

CONNECTING WITH BLACKS:

Before the November election, Pitts hoped that his "inside-outside coalition" strategy would have wider application in connecting the Republicans with blacks. He, Largent, and others started a Renewal Alliance to "work unashamedly with faith-based community development leaders." Newly elected Florida governor Jeb Bush also pursued a strategy of reaching out to African-American voters.

Since the Great Depression, upwards of 90 percent of blacks have voted Democratic in some national elections. However, a recent survey by the New York Theological Seminary and Columbia University shows that only 65 percent of African-American church leaders now identify themselves as Democrats. Yet Republican attacks on Clinton seemed to many African Americans as an unfair attack on a leader who had reached out to their leaders, and they voted Democratic in this election.

By Tony Carnes.

*Being spiritually
formed for a*

Perilous Ministry

SOME TIME AGO, I heard about an ordination service where the two preachers presented contrasting views of the ministry. The first preacher was jovial *bon vivant*, and he encouraged the young minister to lay aside all fears and plunge forward into his new career with gusto. He contended: "Ministry is a skill to be learned, a technique to be mastered." The other preacher was an older pastor, and he shocked the congregation by what he said. To the young ordinand, he shared one single verse from the Bible: "It is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God!"



Timothy George

The old pastor was right. The ministry is a perilous business. "Nothing is so deadening to the divine," George MacDonald wrote, "as an habitual dealing with the outsidés of holy things." Because ministers of the Gospel regularly traffic in matters of eternal moment—birth and death, baptism and marriage, Word and sacrament—it is easy to cultivate a "professional" persona without being grasped by the awesome realities we are called to mediate.

Martin Luther set forth a three-fold pattern of spiritual formation that applies to all Christians. *Oratio* (prayer). *Meditatio* (meditation). *Tentatio* (trial).

ORATIO. Faithful, persistent prayer is the basis of all theological work and the heartbeat of every vital ministry. The pastor's study should have at least two open windows: One facing out toward the world, the

world of suffering and sin for which Christ died; the other a skylight open toward heaven, toward the One in whose Name we serve.

MEDITATIO. As ministers of the divine Word, we are called to a life of meditation. This means that the Holy Scriptures must become more than a sourcebook of sermons or a collection of ancient documents to be studied historically and critically. We meditate on the Bible in the company of the people of God through the ages, gleaned wisdom from all the saints.

TENTATIO. Luther did not learn this third mark all at once, he says, but followed where trials and temptations led. Sometimes we struggle for our footing in the awful swellings of the Jordan, but we do so in the confidence that through such testing we are being called to know how right, how true, how sweet, how lovely, how mighty, how comforting is God's Word, wisdom above all wisdom.

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PAKISTAN

Islamic Law Proposal Raises Tensions

The National Assembly, Pakistan's lower house of Parliament, passed a constitutional amendment October 9 that would give the government sweeping powers to impose full-fledged Islamic law based on the Qur'an. But several factors may prevent the two-thirds majority needed for passage in the Senate, the upper chamber.

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif proposed the amendment in August as a way to consolidate power among fundamentalists within his ruling Muslim League party. The new legislation would require the government to enforce prayers five times daily, collect annual tithes, and abolish civil laws not conforming to the Qur'an and

other teachings of Muhammad.

Sharif says the amendment is needed to "create a truly Islamic system" in Pakistan. But former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto warns that its passage could result in the same strict Islamic regime as the Taliban in neighboring Afghanistan.

Existing blasphemy laws in Pakistan have been used against Christians, who represent 2 percent of the nation's 142 million people. More than 100 Christians have been charged under the blasphemy laws, which require the death penalty for insults to Muhammad.

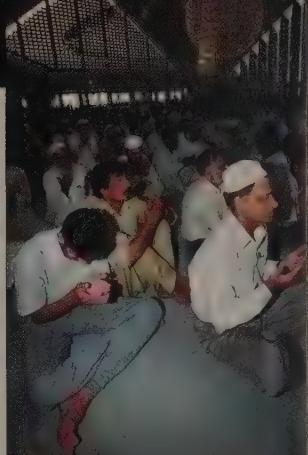
The National Assembly, which includes a two-thirds majority of Sharif's Muslim League party, adopted the

measure by a 151-to-16 vote. In the Senate, only 25 percent of the members are part of the Muslim League party, although there have been reports of attempts to "buy" votes.

Steven Snyder, president of the Washington, D.C.-based International Christian Concern, believes the United States plays a key role in keeping the pressure on Pakistan, which has been under economic sanctions since testing nuclear bombs earlier this year.

"Pakistan has turned away from her founding principles, which declared freedom of worship for all faiths," Snyder says. "Unless there is strong international condemnation of Pakistan's present course, it will be only a matter of time until all Pakistan is embroiled in turmoil and bloodshed."

Accusations of corruption against Sharif and Pakistan's



Praying for shari'ah: Muslims pray at an Islamabad mosque while Parliament debates the amendment.

shaky economic standing may derail the law. Sharif allegedly took kickbacks for political influence and siphoned millions of dollars from loans on which his companies defaulted. The country is close to economic ruin and in desperate need of an International Monetary Fund bailout. CT

HURRICANE MITCH

Relief Hindered by Devastation

Christian aid agencies mobilized quickly to assist victims of one of Central America's worst natural disasters, while survivors face the twin threat of starvation and disease. Floods and mudslides associated with Hurricane Mitch destroyed roads and bridges, hampering efforts to reach isolated villages in Honduras and Nicaragua with food and medicine.

"Seventy percent of the infrastructure in the entire country is gone," says Chet Thomas, director of Proyecto Aldea Global (PAG), a Christian aid agency based in Tegucigalpa, Honduras. Groups used boats, planes, and four-wheel drive vehicles to reach stranded survivors.

Thomas says the region has no drinking water, and cholera and typhoid outbreaks are imminent. PAG, an affiliate of Mercy Corps International of

Portland, Oregon, is purchasing piping to repair community water systems. Thomas expects it will be at least 15 years until the country recovers.

In addition to emergency food rations, PAG and other agencies such as World Relief are helping farmers replant crops. "If no one plants right now, we won't have any corn or beans until next September," Thomas says. "That's too long to wait."

Thomas wants to help survivors rebuild their lives so they will not be trapped by dependency on foreign aid. "We're pushing to get people going, even though they've been knocked down many times. We trust the Lord will give us the strength," he says.

Entire villages disappeared when Hurricane Mitch brought 180-mile-per-hour winds and dumped several feet of rain on



Eye of the storm: Salvadoran refugees escape rising waters on an army helicopter (above) while a Honduran mother flees a flood with her baby.

some aid agencies had fewer emergency funds available due to commitments to other crises. World Vision, which had used reserve funds for aid in Kosovo and Hurricane Georges relief in the Caribbean, is seeking to raise \$5 million in private donations to help in Central America. "We are in dire need of relief supplies," says World Vision's Ralph Merriam.

By Christine J. Gardner.

Evangelicals Seek to Refocus WCC

The World Council of Churches (WCC) has strayed far from its historical roots and needs to reaffirm unity in Jesus Christ as the basis for ecumenism, according to a group of evangelicals from North American mainline churches.

The WCC is about to chart its future, and evangelicals' voices must be heard, says Thomas Oden, chair of Project EC-Z (Evangelical Challenge—Zimbabwe) of the Association of Church Renewal (ACR), representing 4.5 million evangelical mainliners. ACR is issuing its appeal at the WCC's Jubilee Assembly in Harare, Zimbabwe, December 3–14.

"We want to announce our presence and seek to bring the WCC into far greater accountability to the one body of Christ," says Oden, a United Methodist theologian. Evangelicals are a significant part of the WCC, but their views have been overshadowed by the liberal minority in control, he says.

The Zimbabwe declaration is in response to a WCC document that aspires to "macroecumenism," which would allow non-Christian faiths to join.

The declaration calls for churches in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Eastern Europe

to lead the WCC renewal movement. The 50 million-member Russian Orthodox Church, the largest of the WCC's 330 members, is demanding a "total reconstruction" of the organization. Evangelicals see parallels with the Lambeth Conference of Anglican Bishops, where liberal North American bishops were outnumbered by conservative Two-Thirds World bishops (CT, Sept. 7, 1998, p. 32).

Parker Williamson, editor of the *Presbyterian Layman* and member of the Project EC-Z steering committee, says North American mainline denominations are showing signs of a declining membership and "watered-down gospel." North American Christians need to shed their cultural bias and see the gospel through the eyes of Christians in the Two-Thirds World, many of them products of North American missionary efforts, Williamson says. "We need their vision to correct our accommodation of the gospel. It's sort of a reverse thrust," he says.

Along with the Zimbabwe declaration, ACR is releasing seven position papers on topics including homosexuality, syncretism, and feminism. [CT]

In Brief

◆ A plane carrying short-term missions volunteers with Caddo Mills, Texas-based **Living Water Teaching International** crashed into a mountain in western Guatemala November 1, killing 11 people and injuring 7. Rain from Hurricane Mitch may have contributed to the crash. The volunteers were returning from a medical outreach in Playa Grande. Mission founder James Zirkle, 57, and his son, James II, 30, one of the aircraft's pilots, both died in the accident.

◆ Graham Hutt, a British yachtsman convicted of smuggling Bibles in **Morocco** (CT, Aug. 10, 1998, p. 27), sailed out of the country October 6 in his yacht, which had been impounded four months earlier. Hutt was allowed to keep the yacht after paying a \$10,000 customs duty fee, but charges of smuggling are still pending.

◆ The Supreme Court of Khakassia has ordered the closure of the **Evangelical Lutheran Mission** in Tuim in the Russian republic. The mission has been subjected to several court cases during the past year in an attempt to stop its activities. Witnesses reported that judges, under pressure from local secret police, repeatedly tried to intimidate them during a two-day hearing.

◆ **Daniel Manase Zindo**, 54, acting archbishop of Sudan, died in a car crash October 20 en route to Kampala, Uganda, to set up a regional office for the Episcopal Church of Sudan. His wife was murdered last year.

◆ Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew presided over a pan-Orthodox convention in October that mended a rift between rival factions in the **Bulgarian Orthodox Church**. More than 30 Orthodox leaders acknowledged Patriarch Maxim as the legitimate head of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, and former followers of Patriarch Pimen agreed to end the schism.

◆ South Africa's Constitutional Court struck down the country's **sodomy laws** October 9. The laws classified sodomy, along with rape and murder, as an offense punishable by life imprisonment. [CT]



Zirkles: Father, son killed.

LIVING WATER TEACHING INTERNATIONAL

INDIA

Missionary Expulsions Demanded

The Hindu nationalist Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) wants all foreign missionaries working in India to leave the country because of "forcible conversions."

Even though the Indian government stopped issuing missionary visas to Christians in 1964, VHP general secretary Acharya Giriraj Kishore says missionaries will be "requested" to return to their

homelands. "We do not want Hindus to be converted against their wishes," he says. Kishore also accuses foreign missionaries of being involved in insurgency in northeastern states.

In September, Surendra Kumar Jain, the national governor of the Bajrang Dal, the youth wing of the VHP, claimed Christians worked against national interests and

did not have the moral right to stay in India.

"We will compel them to leave India by virtually launching a quit-India movement against them," says Jain, who objects to the divine-healing camps of Christian missionaries.

In a sharp rebuke, the president of the Maharashtra unit of the All India Catholic Union, Dolphy De Souza, accused the Bajrang Dal of building a venomous environment against Christians and other minority religious

groups. There are an estimated 300 Americans from U.S.-based Protestant missions groups in India.

Meanwhile, Hindu fundamentalists have carried out more than 30 attacks against Christians in the western India state of Gujarat since March.

On October 30, around 40 delegates to the Alpha Missionary Movement were forced out of their lodgings and beaten with sticks, belts, chains, and fists by members of the group Bajrang Dal.

Compass Direct News Service.

Heroic Ministry Efforts Calm Post-Civil War Tensions

Evangelical leader T. Edward Kofi has had an eight-year string of tragedies since the outbreak of civil war in Liberia. He escaped to Sierra Leone after soldiers targeted him for elimination. Three of his seven adopted children have been murdered in the fighting. His oldest son drowned. Rebels captured his oldest daughter and held her hostage for 18 months. He sustained fractured vertebrae in a plane crash. Rebels fatally shot his mother in the back. Armed soldiers looted his home and commandeered his ministry headquarters.

The Joblike list of violence and health-related afflictions goes on, but the 44-year-old Kofi is not looking back. Instead, he is energetically supervising African Christian Fellowship International (ACFI), an independent indigenous ministry he founded in 1986. Kofi oversees the work of 705 full-time volunteer pastors, teachers, doctors, and nurses who evangelize tribes, aid refugees, plant churches, help orphans, and establish schools. ACFI has started 200 congregations, not only in Liberia, but in Sierra Leone, Ghana, Guinea, and Côte d'Ivoire.

The work has persisted despite the tumultuous civil war that left 200,000 dead and 1 million displaced. The mayhem culminated with the destruction of the capital Monrovia—including churches and missions—by warring factions two years ago (CT, June 17, 1996, p. 60). Although rebel-turned-president Charles Taylor has restored some semblance of order, "there still is tremendous insecurity," Kofi says.

MINISTERING AMID CHAOS:

In 1990, Kofi's hardships escalated when he attempted to rescue young children—some of them conscripts—caught in the war zone in northern Liberia. Kofi had planted several churches in the region and then-president Samuel Doe—later killed by a rebel leader—placed him on a hit list. He went into exile in Sierra Leone.

Kofi is no longer on the hit list. In fact,

in September the money-strapped government turned over a hospital to ACFI in River Cess, 90 miles southeast of Monrovia. ACFI also is constructing a 50-bed hospital in Baffu Bay, 130 miles southeast of Monrovia. The ministry operates five clinics in the nation, treating 500 patients daily with volunteer staff.

Besides meeting medical needs, ACFI feeds and educates 25,000 children, nearly two-thirds of them refugees and most of the rest orphans. Some had been recruited during the



Learning grounds: Children at a displacement camp north of Monrovia.

civil war, where they became addicted to drugs and had to kill—sometimes their own parents.

"This is a generation of children that has been without hope," Kofi says. "The only life they've known is anguish and grief." ACFI is trying to change that. The ministry has established six orphanages to provide meals, schooling, medical care, and religious instruction.

Kofi identifies with the orphans. For six years, starting at age six, he lived on the streets of Monrovia as a gang member. He became a Christian at age twelve through a Baffu Bay mission station founded by American businessman, inventor, and missionary R. G. LeTourneau. At the compound, he learned to read, and he learned about the Lord.

Now, with help from more than 300 volunteer Christian educators, ACFI is oper-

ating 50 tuition-free schools. The government also has given ACFI 500 acres at Baffu Bay, where the ministry will open a university next year. Kofi is recruiting American Christian professors to train nationals.

OVERSEAS ASSISTANCE: Among those U.S. groups helping is the non-denominational Fellowship Bible Church of Tacoma, Washington, which has sent everything from vehicles to medical supplies. Families in the congregation have adopted 11 orphans, and church leaders have conducted four leadership-training seminars in thatched-wall, tin-roof buildings on topics such as evangelism and moral purity.

"I deeply respect the commitment of these people who have suffered so much for Christ," says pastor Bruce Stabbert. "They are so hungry for encouragement from the Scriptures."

ACFI maintains a U.S. office in Harrisburg, Oregon (541-995-2252), and for now relies entirely on American generosity to keep going.

"We don't want to be dependent on foreign support," Kofi says. "We want to get to the point of being self-sufficient, but for now it is not possible."

Christian Aid Ministries (CAM) of Berlin, Ohio, ships a monthly container of food and clothing for the ACFI orphans. "Because of the war, education is especially difficult," says CAM program administrator Mark Yoder, who has been to Liberia five times since the 1996 anarchy. "But we are commanded to care for the widows and orphans."

Although Christian missionaries, who resettled former slaves, founded Liberia more than 150 years ago, indigenous occult practices now dominate the country's religious makeup. Fewer than 10 percent of Liberians are Christian; twice as many are Muslim, especially in the north.

Yoder is impressed that ACFI outreach workers continue in their calling: they travel to isolated villages, live in refugee camps, and identify with the poverty-stricken and hungry.

Fellowship Bible Church wants to ship tractors and fishing boats to speed self-sufficiency. "Few people are working, because they don't have the means to make a living," Stabbert says. "They have the land, but they just need help to get rolling."

By John W. Kennedy.



Kofi

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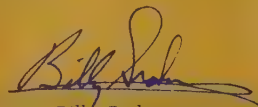
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Nonprofits Tap New Donors with Internet Fundraising

Seth Goldberg, a New York executive with a medical malpractice insurance company, is a self-described Internet "news junkie." He had followed reports of the North Korean famine with great concern. So when an October 1997 North Korea news story he read on the Yahoo Web site linked him to the World Vision (wv) Web site, Goldberg decided to give \$5,000 for relief efforts with a few strokes of his keyboard. "That made the difference to me, that I was able to get enough information to come to a decision," he says. "It was a very intelligent, easy way [to donate]."

Confronted with donor attrition and the increasing cost of direct mail, Christian nonprofits are turning to technology, especially the Internet, to attract new donors such as Goldberg.

World Vision U.S. (www.worldvision.org), which has had a Web site since April 1997, created an emergency campaign on its site for Sudan, with facts,

photos, and video clips of relief work. In July, nearly 170 people donated \$70,000 to World Vision through its Web site, about 10 percent of the total amount the agency raised.

The four-year-old Web site of Food for the Hungry (www.fh.org) already has become the group's second-largest source of new child sponsors, nearly doubling to 7 percent over 12 months and generating annual income near \$190,000.

Web sites with .org in the domain name (typically used by nonprofits) have grown from a few hundred in 1992 to 115,000, according to Network Solutions, Inc., the company that registers new Web sites. Most of those that accept online donations use secure sites with encryption technology. But not all organizations have been successful in recouping the cost of Web site creation and maintenance. The Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA) added a donation page to its two-year-old Web site (www.billygraham.org) in

August, but has received few online gifts. The BGEA, though, believes the purpose of the site is evangelism, not fundraising.

NO FAST MONEY: Those looking for quick financial returns from the Web will be disappointed, industry experts say. Tom McCabe, CEO of KMA, a direct response agency based in Dallas, advises clients, including World Vision, American Bible Society, Concerned Women for America (CWA), and Trans World Radio (TWR), to invest in a Web presence as an information tool to reach a younger, technology-savvy audience.

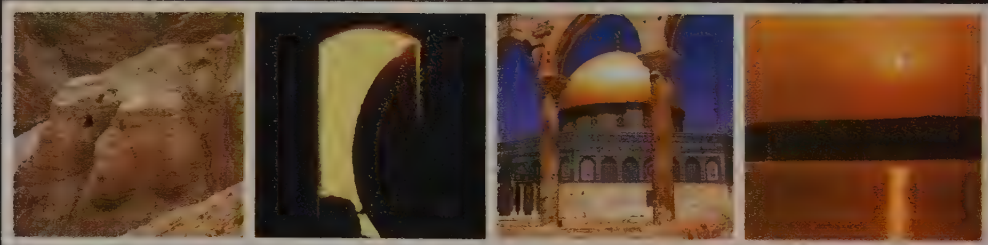
Brian Kluth, president of the Christian Stewardship Association (CSA), says organizations that clearly communicate ministry goals using the Internet could see an increase in donations through traditional means.

The 182-year-old American Bible Society (www.americanbible.org), with donors on the average in their sixties, launched its Web site last year with daily Scripture readings and a catalog of Bibles and Bible products to try to attract younger donors.

CWA (www.cwfa.org) uses its site as a lobbying tool to inform constituents about pending legislation and link them online

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with members of Congress. The site also sells resources such as books, cassettes, and bumper stickers.

For organizations without traditional products to sell, "virtual" gifts such as goats or medical checkups for poor families purchased in someone's honor provide direct donations to the organizations and Christmas cards to the gift recipients (CT, Oct. 26, 1998, p. 14).

World Concern (www.worldconcern.org), which has had a Web version of its Global Gift Guide since 1996, raised more than 7 percent of its total 1997 catalog income from online donations, up from less than 1 percent the previous year.

GOSPEL STUMBLING BLOCK? Not everyone is thrilled about the potential of the Web for fundraising. Robby Richardson, director of the three-year-old Gospel Communications Network (GCN), believes Internet fundraising could be a "stumbling block for the gospel." GCN (www.gospelcom.net), which is part of Gospel Films, is a network of 112 Christian nonprofit Web sites. GCN covers the \$1 million per year total maintenance costs for the organizations in exchange for their adherence to GCN's doctrinal statement and guidelines of no political

activity and no fundraising. "We didn't want to minister with one hand and ask for donations with the other," Richardson says.

TWR, which uses GCN's Internet service, would like to use the Web to raise money for missionary support but cannot afford the high cost of maintaining its own Web site, says spokesperson Rich Greene. But the organization (www.gospelcom.net/twr) has received 25 Web inquiries from potential missionary candidates.

E-MAIL APPEALS: The passive nature of the Web means it does not pose a direct threat to traditional fundraising methods such as direct mail, industry experts say, but many are convinced the Web will increase in popularity for charitable giving as electronic commerce continues to grow.

Some organizations are considering blending the directness of mail and the immediacy of the Internet to send requests for donations via e-mail. WV Internet programming manager Larry Short says WV already has collected 5,000 e-mail addresses on its Web site and is discussing an e-mail appeal strategy. The plan may include renting lists of e-mail addresses, a

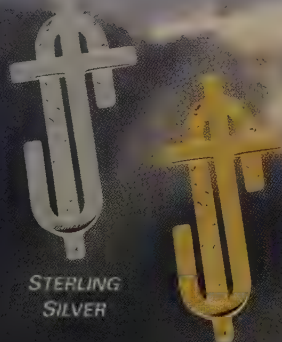
controversial new practice among some Christian nonprofits, even those that regularly rent lists for direct-mail appeals. But Tom Watkins, who has collected thousands of e-mail addresses as TWR's director of donor services, sees e-mail appeals as a matter of financial stewardship. "Our donors recognize it as an economical way to communicate," he says.

CREATING COMMUNITY: Short sees the Web as building virtual communities. "I know the technology has the ability to increase global relationships." He points to WV's online guestbook during the height of its Sudan campaign where supporters could write notes of encouragement to workers in Sudan. Short predicts a new form of child sponsorship that will use an extranet to link a community of sponsors with a community of children through posted messages, photos, and video.

Organizations need to focus on the interactive, relational aspects of the medium, says CSA's Kluth, who sees the fundraising pendulum swinging back from direct mail to relationship-building. But fundraising methods are not as important as ministry. "Trust the Master, not the methods," he says.

By Christine J. Gardner.

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Homeless Overwhelm Shelters

Four months after Russia's economy began its latest tailspin, 10,000 people are living on the streets of Moscow. Sandra Reid, the Salvation Army's chief of social services for Moscow's 9 million people, sees her budgetary resources fully stretched, even though the Russian winter is yet to hit with full force.

Priorities for her office's care for needy Russians are first the homeless, then pen-

sioners and prisoners. "Refugees and the homeless are the most disadvantaged people," Reid says.

Although Moscow has 10,000 homeless, the city-operated shelters can accommodate only 1,200 a night. And those shelters accept only people who can produce documents proving Moscow residency. Most of the city's homeless live in underground transit passages or sleep in

waiting areas of train stations. Russia's recent attempts to reform its state-run economy have led to sharp drops in the value of its currency along with many other economic woes.

GOING TO THE NEEDY: Salvation Army employee Vasili Alexeiev supervises a program to help care for the physical and spiritual needs of Moscow's homeless. Hot borscht and bread are served from the back of a van each afternoon near the city's two largest train stations, where the Salvation Army feeds about 200 homeless a day. Once a week he distributes warm clothing. Alexeiev began feeding the homeless in 1990, the year the Salvation Army began working in Russia.

Late in the afternoon, Alexeiev tries to form relationships with the homeless, handing out soap and socks. Because of increasing restrictions on freedom of religion (CT, Oct. 26, 1998, p. 24), he is forbidden to distribute Christian literature.

An important piece of the Salvation Army's work among the homeless is to help them restore necessary personal documents. Without proper papers that verify identity and residency, they are cut off from receiving any government assistance.

Viktor, Leda, and Luba participate in the Salvation Army's feeding program. All in their fifties, the three share sleeping quarters in an abandoned construction shed under a bridge. They curl up together on a makeshift bed in a feeble attempt to keep warm as winter sets in.

Leda collects discarded beer bottles from trash containers and redeems them for small change to supplement her food supply. She lost her official identification documents in a fire and thus has not received a pension in three years.

The Salvation Army conducts church services in five locations in Moscow where additional spiritual and material assistance is given. Welcoming the destitute to church leads to problems of its own. The Salvation Army must rent meeting facilities, and wherever there is an increasing number of destitute people, building administrators are more apt to evict.

DIRE TIME FOR ELDERLY: The most desperate of Russia's elderly are also aided by the Salvation Army. The current minimum pension, which was about \$50 before the economic crisis, is now around \$19. The official poverty line is set at \$37 a month. Pensioners with no family to assist them receive barely enough money to keep from starving. And in many cases, pensions have not been paid for months.

The financial stresses rocked the Salvation Army's budget and cut into its

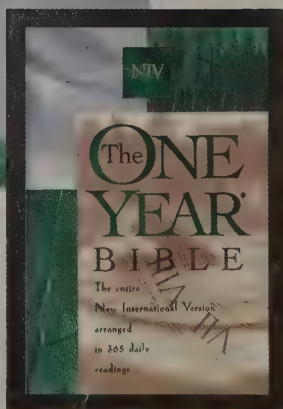
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ability to help the needy. Food intended for distribution as humanitarian aid is purchased in bulk to hold down costs, although costs have tripled.

Currently, Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States receive the highest percentage of the Salvation Army's missions budget worldwide, according to spokesperson Jennifer Fagerstrom. Three months ago, the Salvation Army intensified its work to develop financial support within Russia. "Russia must start supporting Russia," Fagerstrom says.

Charitable giving is not yet an established practice in Russia. And Russians are still wary of releasing their money



ministry: The Salvation Army feeds the homeless near Kursky train station in Moscow.

after being burned by financial scams in the early 1990s.

The Moscow city government appears to quietly consent to the Army's work. Salvation Army soup kitchens are the only ones that have operated without problems since the fall of communism, Fagerstrom says. On the other hand, the Salvation Army has received no breaks from the government in advancing its work. The organization pays the same high rents as noncharitable works. "Let's face it," Reid says. "People here want money."

Desperate times also have led to Salvation Army workers being robbed at gunpoint. An additional barrier to the work is the official Russian Orthodox Church position, which considers most other churches to be false faiths. But Fagerstrom adds that, even though the Orthodox hierarchy lists the Salvation Army as a cult, some Orthodox priests work with the group.

By Beverly Nickles in Moscow.

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Dr. Craig Koester is Associate Professor of New Testament at Luther Seminary in St. Paul. A noted scholar and teacher, he is the author of *Symbolism in the Gospel of John* (1995); *A Beginner's Guide to Reading the Bible* (1991); and *The Dwelling of God* (1989).

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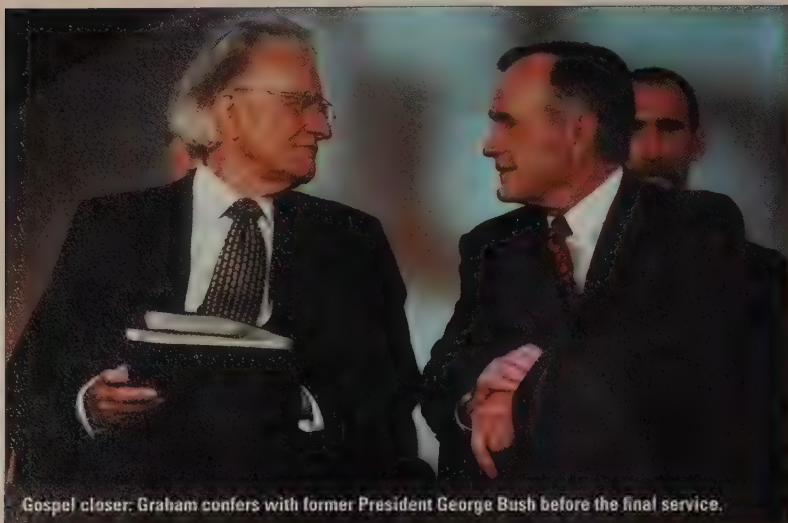
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Gospel closer: Graham confers with former President George Bush before the final service.

Graham Journeys to Cyberspace

As John Glenn prepared to become the oldest man launched into space, Billy Graham may have become the oldest evangelist to preach in cyberspace. On October 24, during his only U.S. crusade this year, Graham boldly took his message where evangel-

ists have rarely gone live before: the Internet.

While Graham preached in person to more than 74,000 in Tampa, Florida, on that Saturday night, another 6,257 simultaneously logged onto computers to hear his presentation of the gospel. The

Internet event included music by dc Talk and Jars of Clay in a "Concert for the NeXt Generation," the traditional youth night of Graham's four-day crusade.

INNOVATIVE OCTOGENARIAN: During the 1990s, Graham, who turned 80 in November, has strived to keep pace with technological advances. In Tampa, video cameras shot the event and uplinked the video from the crusade to a satellite that beamed the signal to a Webcast server in Virginia, where the video was converted to a computer-friendly format and presented in real time on the Internet.

Although the video aspect of real-time Internet presentations is not yet perfected, and Graham's movements seemed somewhat stilted and awkward, the clear digital audio feed put Internet crusade "attendees" right into the action. Digital still photos were also loaded during the entire crusade onto the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association's Web site, which received more than 43,000 visits the week before the crusade.

PREACHING ROOTS: For Graham, the crusade took place in familiar territory. Tampa is the city where the evangelist first preached 60 years ago while attending Tampa's Florida Bible Institute.

"I began preaching here in Florida in front of 30 to 40 people," Graham said. "Now, for the first time, the Internet is being used for evangelizing. My hope is that it will reach additional thousands of people in the years to come. The Internet is only the beginning of what is on the way."

Graham recalled revival meetings he held. "I had prepared four different sermons to preach if I was ever called to preach," Graham said about his beginnings in Tampa Bay. "[That first time] I preached all four of them in about the first eight to ten minutes, I was so nervous. I still get nervous before I preach."

Graham, whose movements are slowed by Parkinson's disease, describes himself as old and tired. But during each of the four nights, Graham never faltered when preaching. The final night of the crusade drew the largest crowd, as more than 78,000 filled the stadium and two overflow lots outside.

More than 1,000 churches from 70 denominations came together in preparation for the crusade. Attendance exceeded organizers' expectations. Audiences averaged 64,500 each night, with an average of 4,900 people becoming Christians each night. Graham previously held crusades in Tampa in 1953 and 1979.

By Natalie Nichols Gillespie in Tampa.

A large, dark, artistic image of a person's face, possibly a woman, with text overlaid. The image is in a high-contrast, almost black and white style, with the person's face partially obscured by shadows and their hand near their face.

For we don't even know
what we should pray for,
nor how we should pray.
But the Holy Spirit
prays for us with
groanings that cannot
be expressed in words.

ROMANS 8:26

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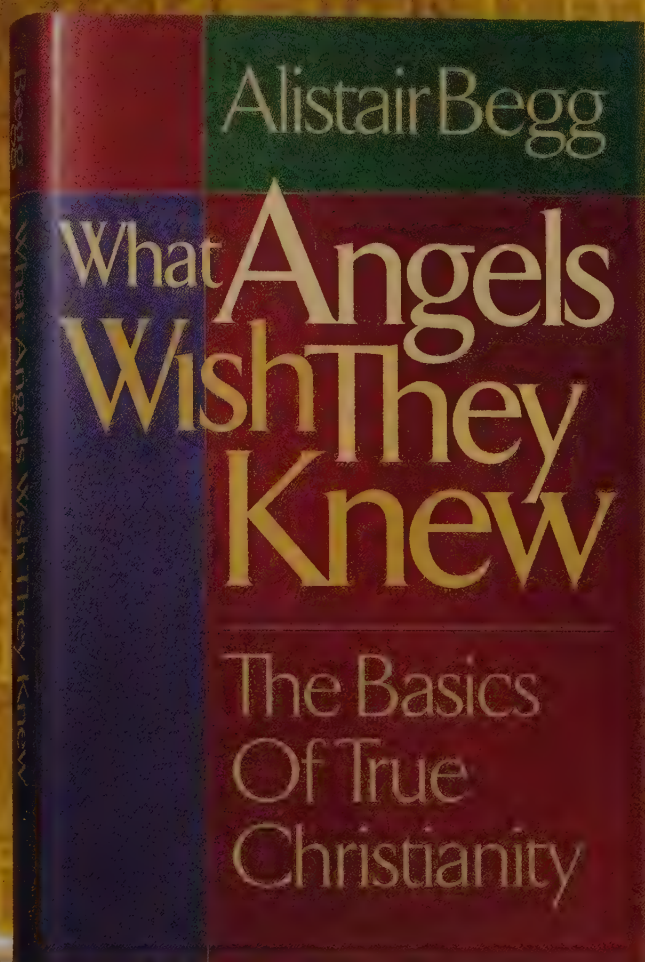

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Preparing for the Brave New Millennium

We might be ready for the Rapture, but are we prepared for babies engineered for perfection?



A year from now, readers may already have reached their limit in what promises to be a nonstop year-long barrage of chatter in anticipation of the new millennium. We would like to get in a word before you are thoroughly jaded.

It is not given to humans to know the future, but as long we are mindful of our limited vision we can construct probable scenarios. Here is a forecast for the twenty-first century: More than any previous era, the century to come will demonstrate the awesome extent to which God has granted to his creatures the power to create, to manipulate, and to destroy.

We are made in God's image and likeness; we are, as J. R. R. Tolkien said, "sub-creators." That theme has long been a staple of Christian anthropology—so, we say, J. S. Bach was imitating his Maker when he composed great cantatas, and so is every artist and architect and storyteller, every human maker, whether or not he acknowledges the source of his gift.

But in the century to come, "sub-creator" will take on a new intensity. We are likely to see, within the next hundred years, the cloning of human beings. We are likely to see artificial intelligences that are not merely—merely!—supremely good at specialized tasks such as chess or blackjack but rather are able to interact intelligently with the blooming, buzzing, category-crossing Real World. We are certain to see widespread and diverse approaches to

genetic enhancement, not only of potatoes, but also of people; human enhancement via neural implants is also likely. We are certain to see reproduction divorced from the human setting in which it has always taken place; many children, to be sure, will enter this world the old-fashioned way, but many others will not (see "Biotech Babies," p. 54).

None of this should startle anyone who has read a newspaper in the last year. All of these prospects and many more have been duly reported and analyzed. Occasionally a group of academics will gather to discuss the ethics of cloning or the new reproductive technologies. Some good books by Christian scholars have addressed these questions and related ones. But what has not gotten started yet is a sustained conversation within the church about the Brave New World we are about to enter: a world rich with new possibilities for good and evil.

In the world of the twenty-first century, age-old assumptions about what it means to be human will be proclaimed obsolete. On the one hand, humans will be able to exercise a control over their own making that encroaches on what have always been regarded as divine prerogatives. (Not a few scientists are saying, *Listen, we are as gods; we'd better get on with it.*) On the other hand, so we will be told, the development of ever more intelligent machines will give the lie to notions of human specialness. After all, as the MIT artificial-intelligence guru Marvin Minsky likes to say, we are just machines made out of meat.

How will Christians respond to such developments? One scenario calls for a wholesale rejection of science and all its works. This is a favorite of science-fiction writers such as the novelist William Gibson, who often gives Christians distinctly unflattering bit parts as Luddite terrorist fundamentalists. That would surely be a tragically mistaken response. We need more Christians on the frontlines of research—like Francis Collins, who directs the Human Genome Project—and we need thoughtful, informed critiques, not apocalyptic rants.

Another scenario, one that is starting to be played out in some quarters, is blandly accommodationist, refusing to recognize the extent to which the vast and far-flung networks of science and the biotech industry are already moving willy-nilly into that Brave New World. Sometimes reality *is* apocalyptic.

Neither of these responses will do. To begin

with, we must affirm that, disturbing as they are, these prospects do not undercut our faith. Cloning, artificial intelligence, genetic enhancement: all these are evidence of our nature as subcreators. They suggest that we have not previously realized how deep in us the image of God goes.

And, yes, all these prospects reveal our God-given freedom, the implications of which theologians and artists need to wrestle with more than ever before. The God who gave us the freedom to create cities and cathedrals has not prevented us from enslaving other human beings, raping and murdering, annihilating our fellow subcreators with the ruthless efficiency of the gas chambers or with the intimacy of a Hutu mob beating their Tutsi neighbors and former friends to

death. God has also given us the freedom to sit in the kingdom of our living room with a second helping of fat-free ice cream and the TV droning on while the world about us comes apart. Yet we may not opt out of the responsibilities that creative power brings.

Will God permit human creativity to bring forth the Brave New World that seems to be taking shape? Will he see a second Tower of Babel rising and once again sow confusion among the arrogant builders? We don't know. But until Christ returns, we must use our powers as he has called us to. We are in part responsible for the way that world will look. We need to begin preparing for it now—not with the desperate tactics of survivalists but with the equanimity modeled by Jesus, wise as serpents, gentle as doves. **CT**

Who Killed Matthew Shepard?

When Dr. Barnett Slepian was gunned down by an apparent anti-abortion extremist, the murderer was hailed as a hero by Donald Spitz, a founder of Pro-life Virginia. Thankfully, Spitz's reaction does not represent the mainstream pro-life movement. More people listened to Bob and Paul Schenck of the National Clergy Council, some of the organizers of the "Spring of Life" abortion protest in 1992 in Buffalo, who admonished "all people of conscience to defend life peacefully," and they called Slepian's murder "wrong, sinful and cowardly."

Media savants in high places (the *New York Times*, the CBS Evening News) were quick to blame the pro-life movement for fostering crazies who act out their opposition to abortion violently. But such scapegoating lacked credibility: most Americans recognize that pro-life forces have moderated their rhetoric and tactics. We no longer simply protest abortion; we also serve women with problem pregnancies and provide care and services to the babies who enter the world through them.

The situation was different in response to the killing of Matthew Shepard. The brutal murder of this gay university student was immediately politicized, despite his father's plea not to "use Matt as part of an agenda." On the one side, representatives of Fred Phelps's church in Topeka, Kansas, picketed Shepard's funeral brandishing signs that read, "No Fags in Heaven" and "No Tears for Queers."

On the other side, spokespersons for gay liberation were quick to accuse the so-called Religious Right of creating the hostile environment in which hate crimes against gays flourish. Their surreal thesis indicted anyone who publicly condemns homosexuality as playing a part in Matthew Shepherd's death. Gay activists cited as Exhibit A the recent "truth in love" advertising campaign, which claimed that a change of sexual orientation is possible and produced ex-gays to prove it.

It is not enough simply to point out the inconsistencies in these accusations. We need to wrestle with the fact that many people found them credible. Just as we did in the pro-life movement, we must find ways

to communicate that our motives arise from love, not hate, that our vision is not fear, but hope.

First, we should use this occasion to plumb the depths of our own souls, individually and corporately, to see if we harbor any hatred toward those who have a same-sex orientation. Human nature being what it is, we can too easily cross the line between hating the sin and hating the sinner.

Second, as we are doing in the abortion debate, we need to seek out forums for trying to reach mutual understanding over why we hold to our positions on homosexuality. Not enough traditional Christians have engaged in dialog with people on the other side over the implications of sanctioning same-sex behavior.

Third, Christians must demonstrate the same degree of compassion toward homosexuals as toward women with unwanted fetuses. A few churches have reached out heroically to those suffering from AIDS while maintaining their witness against gay sex. We need more such action.

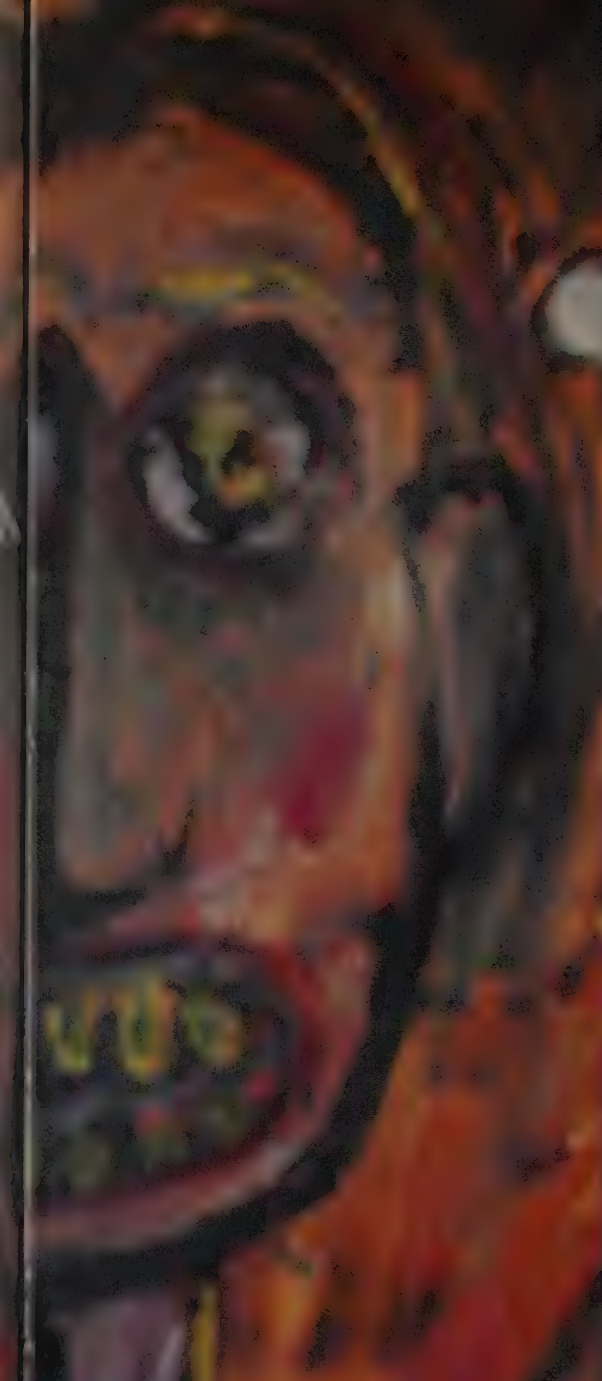
We can learn a lesson from the early church. First-century pagans were bound by sexual addictions, the magic arts, a quest for material things, and hostility toward people of other cultures, tribes, or nations. The early Christian community demonstrated a joyous freedom from such bondage. Despite restraints on evangelistic proclamation, people were drawn to the faith because of the attractiveness of the corporate and individual lives of the Christian community itself.

It was not possible for the early church to wage a public-opinion campaign against the forms of bondage in their own culture. But they knew they weren't fighting against flesh and blood; the battle was spiritual, against the principalities and powers, against "the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places" (Eph. 6:12). They knew that using carnal weapons for a spiritual war spells defeat from the start. Spiritual wars are spiritually won. **CT**

**Human nature
being what
it is, we can
too easily cross
the line between
hating the sin
and hating
the sinner.**



THE
Dragon S



He fights for religious liberty, defends the civil rights of homosexuals, and funded Paula Jones's case against the President—the enigmatic **John Wayne Whitehead**.

Is this what Paul meant when he said to be all things to all men? Four years ago, John Whitehead warned fellow Christians—in speeches, articles, books, and videos—that their religion was under attack by Nazi-like secularism. He called it “religious apartheid.”

“From the removal of crosses and nativity scenes, to the prohibition of individual prayer in schools, religion is being systematically separated from American society,” he wrote in a June 1994 editorial for *Rutherford* magazine, the house organ for his Rutherford Institute in Charlottesville, Virginia. Elsewhere he ominously informed us that “Clinton is quickly constructing a despotic government and a new society of intolerance to traditional values.”

Today Whitehead says he likes Clinton and, if it weren't for the President's position on abortion, would vote for him. “No modern President has done more for religious rights than Clinton.” He has also publicly called on conservative Christians to stop using homophobic rhetoric. In 1996 he criticized Colorado's Amendment 2 (an amendment prohibiting state and local governments from passing laws that ban discrimination against homosexuals), which Focus on the Family strongly supported. In 1997 he opposed the Religious Freedom Restoration Act and is critical of the current Religious Freedom Amendment. His magazine has even run positive reviews of several violent and disturbing films, including *The Last Temptation of Christ* (“a sympathetic and reverent treatment of Christianity's origin”).

With just this evidence, one would be tempted to conclude that a captain of the Religious Right has had a leftward political conversion. But before this into the enigma. When First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton talked about a right-wing conspiracy to bring down her husband, many people saw John Whitehead and the Rutherford Institute sitting at the center of the web.

The Rutherford Institute is currently involved in 230 legal cases; but since last November, one case dominated all others. It alone changed the Rutherford Institute's moniker as media reports from “a religious liberties group” (*USA Today*, 1995) to “the conservative legal foundation paying Paula Jones' legal bills in her sexual misconduct case against President Clinton” (*Nation Magazine*, 1998).

That Whitehead would ally himself with such a controversial case alarmed plenty of past supporters who were eager to support religious liberties but not a political vendetta. Other supporters have been turned off by the other changes the 52-year-old Whitehead (and thus his organization) has been undergoing.

John Wayne Whitehead almost seems to be deliberately marginalizing his supporters. If so, it wouldn't be the first time. In the 16 years since he founded his pioneering religious-liberty

TED OLSEN

ayer

ministry, the Rutherford Institute, Whitehead has been arguing for Christians to engage "secular" culture. He pursued lawsuits to fight religious discrimination eight years before Pat Robertson founded his American Center for Law and Justice—back when Christians were quoting Paul's disdain for "ungodly" courts (1 Cor. 4:3; 6:1–11). He told evangelicals to be politically active six years before Robertson ran for President—when many conservative Christians still rejected politics as dirty. And now he is enjoining Christians to engage the most pervasive instrument of secular culture—popular culture—by encouraging Christians to produce art, film, and television—and this in a day when "engaging popular culture" for many evangelicals means boycotting Disney.

So is John Whitehead once again two steps ahead of the curve, or is he just unstable?

Soldier, hippie, prophecy zealot

While many conservative leaders point to the 1960s as the beginning of America's moral downfall, John Whitehead looks back with fond remembrance. His office is covered with sixties' icons: the Beatles, Bob Dylan, the Beat Poets. A lava lamp illuminates his desk. He says he was a sixties radical; he doesn't regret it; and yes, he inhaled.

Ironically, he "got radicalized," not in the context of the college campus, but in the army. He signed up after college eager to fight against communism in Vietnam, but a congenital back defect kept him stateside. Stationed at Fort Hood, Texas, as a supply officer, he says, "All I could see was a lot of incompetence. It was just this big killing machine that demanded a total lack of freedom."

Lieutenant Whitehead registered a formal complaint when a captain made a joke about the killing of four Kent State students the day before. Whitehead participated in antiwar protests whenever he could, and a peace symbol adorned his windshield. Every time he drove to the base, his superiors made him scrape his newest one off with a razor blade.

Whitehead eventually got out of the military alive and entered the University of Arkansas law school, where he became a stereotypical left-wing radical. He grew his hair long (it's still long for a 52-year-old) and continued to participate in demonstrations. He also began his writing career, working for the underground student newspaper, *The Grapevine*. Among those he interviewed while on the paper was a young University of Arkansas law professor running for Congress: Bill Clinton (who lost that election). The hot topic of the interview? Whether then-embattled Richard Nixon should be impeached over Watergate.

Later that year, Whitehead received his law degree and began work at a prosperous law firm. He was a young idealistic lawyer angry about injustice. But a brief trip to J. C. Penney changed his life forever.

Before college, Whitehead had never read a book from cover to cover. As a freshman he read Ian Fleming's James Bond thriller *Goldfinger* and was hooked on books. He especially loves science fiction, on the screen or on paper (it doesn't even have to be good science fiction; he loved the 1996 Tim Burton film flop *Mars Attacks*). So when he saw what he was sure was a bestselling science fiction book at J. C. Penney ("Eight Million Copies Sold!"), he bought it and devoured it. The book was Hal Lindsey's *The Late Great Planet Earth*.

"It spooked me right into heaven," he recalls. "The thing that got me was that actual prophecy had come true. I couldn't stop reading after that."

Left, right, left

Today Whitehead isn't sure if he thought being a lawyer was a bad career, or just a bad career for him. But after he converted he knew God didn't want him to be a lawyer. God wanted him to be a preacher. Whitehead gave away his clients to other lawyers, and he and his wife, Carol, packed their belongings (and \$300) into a 1965 Dodge and headed out to Hal Lindsey's Light and Power House seminary in Los Angeles.

About six months after he enrolled, an elementary teacher approached Whitehead for legal help. She had worn a crucifix to her classroom, and when a student asked what it was, she was reprimanded for answering his question and threatened with losing her job. Whitehead explained the teacher's rights to the principal, and he backed down from his threats.

After that success, several more friends, acquaintances, and friends of friends began asking Whitehead for legal help. On the side, working for free with other legal organizations and law firms (his wife worked as a legal secretary for one), Whitehead did what he could. In the process, he made peace with the fact that he was a Christian and a lawyer.

But others did not make peace with him. He was told by some believers that Christian involvement in the courts was unbiblical. "Religious people had mostly withdrawn and were not participating in their culture," he says. "Some of it was due to fear of discrimination; for others it was a conscious choice."

Whitehead combated the attitude through penning articles for Christian magazines and publishing his first book, *The Separation Illusion: A Lawyer Examines the First Amendment*. The courts, he says, were an integral part of American democracy; to avoid any lawsuits was to cede the battleground: "Once you say you're not going to be involved in that part of culture, you create a vacuum, and other voices are going to fill it up."

Whitehead also sketched out proposals for an organization that would try such cases without charging the clients. Church leaders and lawyers cautiously backed the idea in theory, Whitehead says, but knew it would never work. The conservative Christian world was simply too antilawsuit to gain any kind of financial support.

In 1979, the Whiteheads moved east, and John began practicing again in the Washington, D.C., area. Before long, he could not afford the rent for his office and was forced to move his practice into his basement. Still, he took pro bono religious-liberty cases. One case, defending a family arrested for home schooling their children, cost Whitehead \$25,000 of his own money. But he won the case. He was broke but now convinced that he was on the right track.

"A friend of mine offered to pay our house payment for a year; still, I knew the path I was on was no mistake," he says.

One year into the Reagan presidency, John Whitehead published his *The Second American Revolution*. In essence a repackaging of *The Separation Illusion*, the book utilized militaristic imagery, righteous indignation, and "fighting words." But the times had changed since the book's first incarnation. Evangelicals were now warming to the idea of political involvement. Jerry Falwell, who would be one of Whitehead's closest allies for years, founded his Moral Majority in 1979. Pat Robertson was gaining influence through his television empire. James Dobson founded Focus on the Family in 1977 and created his more political Family Research Council in 1982. Conservative evangelicals had been credited with electing Reagan. By 1982 evangelicals had caught up to Whitehead's notion that it was okay, perhaps even necessary, for



Whitehead says he likes Clinton and, if it weren't for the President's position on abortion, would vote for him.

conservative Christians to be involved in the political process.

"He has definitely contributed to a higher visibility of the issues," says Stephen T. McFarland, director of the Center for Law and Religious Freedom for the Christian Legal Society (CLS). "And he helped to stiffen the backbone for believers when it came to getting involved." Still, McFarland's CLS has been around for 36 years, and he doesn't think Whitehead singlehandedly brought Christians into the courtroom.

The Second American Revolution sold over 100,000 copies, making Whitehead a minor celebrity in the Christian media, regularly appearing on radio programs such as Dobson's. Whitehead's office phone began ringing with Christians claiming they were suffering religious discrimination. They'd kept silent for years, they said, but now knew they could do something about it.

Whitehead suddenly found himself with enough money, enough cases, and enough interested lawyers to create his organization, the Rutherford Institute, named for Samuel Rutherford, a Scottish Presbyterian minister in the early 1600s who, in his book *Lex Rex*, "resisted the idea of divine right of kings." (Rutherford also wrote a treatise supporting religious persecution. Says Whitehead: "Nobody's perfect.")

After his conversion, Whitehead became as extremely right wing as he had been left wing. "I swung to the other side. I thought I had to," he explains. "I became a Christian from being a Marxist, so I still believed the one central idea that Christianity has this political thing tied to it."

One friend in particular convinced him that Christianity had specific political implications—Rousas John (R. J.) Rushdoony, the father of American Reconstructionism (also known as Theonomy). Rushdoony, who helped found the Rutherford Institute, sat on the group's board for a number of years and wrote the introduction to *The Separation Illusion*. As a Reconstructionist,

Rushdoony believed U.S. laws should reflect biblical teachings, which meant supporting the death penalty for sinners such as abortionists, homosexuals, and "incorrigible sons."

It is an association that to this day Whitehead can't shake. Ask Religious Right watchdog groups such as Americans United for the Separation of Church and State or the Institute for First Amendment Studies about Whitehead, and Rushdoony's name will be one of the first things you'll hear. But even if Rushdoony were to be excised permanently from Rutherford's history, there are enough quotes from Whitehead himself in his early years with the Rutherford Institute to make the watchdogs nervous:

- "Courts must place themselves under the authority of God's law."
- "All of civil affairs and government, including law, should be based upon principles found in the Bible."
- "Take the initiative. Sue rather than wait to be sued. That's where we've been weak. We've always been on the defensive. We need to frame the issue and pick the court."
- "Public schools are . . . satanic imitations of the true God's institutional church."

John Whitehead argued that America is a Christian nation and that the Constitution was written to protect the right of states to uphold Christianity through law.

Now, he says, he doesn't really believe those things anymore. In fact, he says he is surprised that leaders of the Religious Right still do. He recently attended a meeting of Christians he had not seen in several years (he won't say how long or what group) and says, "I was surprised at how dated everything appeared. It seemed that there was no evolution of thought, no real evaluation of things."

"I'm not a Darwinian," he explains, "but I believe that peo-

ple's brains evolve. There are things today you believe that you won't ten years from now."

Or, as Whitehead's hero would say, "The times, they are a-changin'." Whitehead places Bob Dylan second only to Jesus on his heroes list; the Beatles come in third. He and Dylan, he says, have walked the same path from radical progressive, to politically conservative Christian, and halfway back again. "If you look at *Slow Train Coming*, which Dylan recorded shortly after his conversion, there's a lot of political stuff on there. But as Dylan rethought things, he realized this is not what Jesus is all about." Whitehead believes Dylan is still a Christian but, as not every Dylan song is about Jesus anymore, neither is every Rutherford lawsuit about Christian liberty.

Whitehead's "evolution of thought" began when he started having second thoughts about his earlier hero's notion of *Lex Rex*, where law is king: "I kept coming back across this concept where the adulteress is brought to Jesus and he lets her go. You know, that was capital punishment, and he lets her off. The way Christ looked at people was not in terms of the law but was in terms of the fact that they were human beings. Human beings can be above the law at some point, if you look at it from Christ's compassionate viewpoint."

That idea—that the law was not ultimate, that the gospel transcends the law—changed the way Whitehead saw some issues, especially regarding homosexuals and non-Christians.

"We didn't change our basic beliefs, but we did change how we approached subjects. For example, we're now making clear that gays have rights. They pay taxes. They're American citizens. Are we going to allow discrimination against them in this day and age in America?" He argues for the broad interpretation of the antidiscrimination laws that already exist and has never argued strongly for any new protection.

Whitehead says many of his past fundraising letters were homophobic in that they viewed homosexuals as the enemy, and he regrets sending them. He has made public announcements saying so not only to the *Washington Post* but also to the *Washington Blade*, D.C.'s homosexual newspaper. That has angered conservative critics (including Family Research Institute president Gary Bauer).

"Not only was I wrong, but a great majority of evangelicals are out to lunch on the subject," he told the *Post*.

Alexis Crow, chief counsel for the Rutherford Institute, told the *Blade*, "Other Christian groups spout all these words like 'God is love; hate the sin but love the sinner,' and . . . when [we] make a move to do that . . . we get attacked. Come on hypocrites, get on the bandwagon!"

Whitehead is unapologetic. "Christians have lost their witness to the gay community," he says. "The people at the *Blade* are just amazed that we would hold this view, that we would protect their rights. They think that Christians are out to do them in." He pauses. "Actually, there is a large Christian element that *would* do them in and yells at me over the issue. There's a word for that. It's called *homophobia*."

"The Rutherford Institute is being punished by some in the Christian community for not doing the popular thing and for standing true to its principles," Whitehead wrote in a March fundraising letter. "A number of Christian, pro-family groups



Whitehead places Bob Dylan second only to Jesus on his heroes list.

are working in concert to blackball the Rutherford Institute and spread false gossip about our work."

Whitehead is making a conscious effort now to make the Rutherford Institute known more as a *civil*-rights organization rather than simply a *religious*-rights one. This means making sure it is not known as merely a Christian-rights organization. He says that while Rutherford doesn't actively seek cases, they are taking more related to religious discrimination against non-Christians. In their monthly litigation report they mention several:

- A Jewish inmate in Arizona was denied kosher meals.
- An Orthodox Jew air force chaplain was required to wear regulation headgear instead of the traditional yarmulke.
- A Muslim father had his children taken from him even after he was found innocent of abuse.
- Native Americans were charged with felonious possession of raptor parts, even though they were using them in a religious ceremony.
- A Hindu religious leader was forced to serve jury duty.

In fact, this report does not explicitly identify *any* of the litigants as Christians, save one case where Amish hunters were punished for refusing to display hunter orange on their buggies.

That is not to say Whitehead's organization isn't defending Christians against discrimination. In fact, Whitehead says an overwhelming majority of their cases are about Christian religious freedom. Still, he sees helping non-Christians as part of Rutherford's ministry.

"We're working to help this pretty highly placed Tibetan [nun] who works with the Dalai Lama," says Whitehead. "When she came here, we talked about Christianity. She knows and I know I'm not going to be a Buddhist and she's probably not going to be a Christian. But the point is she takes it as it is. It's not a Buddhist lawyer helping her; it's a Christian lawyer. And we're for real. We're practicing what Christ preached. That's where the satisfaction is: that she could come to us knowing who we are."

Whitehead leans back in his chair and pats his leather-bound Bible lying on the shelf behind his desk. "I've got my Bible back here," he says, "but I'm not going to bring it out for everyone

who comes in here and say, 'Oh, let's read John 3:16 together.' We're service oriented. We preach by acting."

Crow, who has been with Rutherford since 1989, says Whitehead hasn't changed as much as he says he has. "He has always worked for the underdog," she says. "And today homosexuals are an underdog. What I see as the difference between 1990 and now is that John has the confidence in himself to go with his instincts and not so much by the conventional wisdom of what it is to be a contemporary Christian in America. He's always been a particular way, but never felt he could reach out in the way we are now."

But Whitehead gives another reason why he's no longer decrying America's fast track to hell in a handbasket: the country is actually better off than it was.

"You could write a book like *Religious Apartheid* today [a 1994 book and film in which he likened the ACLU and government officials to Nazis], but you'd be straining it." Christians, he says, are now more free.

"Everything in *Religious Apartheid* was footnoted. It was happening. To us, at that time, it looked like that. Then Clinton got in and there was a significant shift in the way he viewed things. In my view, Clinton stopped appealing to the private-interest groups and decided to set a legacy. He tried to promote Christian teachers in schools and Christian rights in the workplace. And everything else started shifting. The President had a lot to do with that. It was his State Department that recognized Christians are being persecuted in China. Bush and Reagan never did that. Other than the partial-birth abortion thing, I'm with that group that says he's doing a good job as President."

He qualifies that last statement. This is, after all, the man who approved hundreds of thousands of dollars of his organization's money for the Paula Jones case. "As President," he reiterates. "His private life is another matter."

Why Paula Jones?

When asked about the Jones case, Whitehead leans back in his chair a good 45 degrees, placing his hands behind his head. He looks like he's going to take a nap while he answers "the Jones questions." He even closes his eyes, opening them only to hear the questions he knows are coming: Why did you take the case when you're known for religious-liberty cases? Didn't this make you appear to have a vendetta against the President? What did you hope to gain from this case?

Milton Berle used to tell reporters, "That's a lousy question; ask me another." If he was unsatisfied with that one, he'd grab any notes out of the reporter's hand and flip through questions until he found one he liked. John Whitehead, a Southerner, is too polite for that, so he'll just nap.

For the record, here are the answers: (1) He took Jones's case because "we believed her" (he also believes Anita Hill, whom he lectured with at Oral Roberts University Law School and who babysat for his kids) and because sexual harassment is a "human-rights issue"; (2) he believes the case may actually help eradicate rumors of a vendetta because reporters will now ask his opinion instead of guessing at it based on his earlier writings; (3) in terms of what he has to gain, he says, "The press hasn't historically cared about religious-liberty cases, but they read our press releases now."

Time to wake up.

Whitehead says he hoped publicity from the case would result in a higher public profile and more support for the Rutherford Institute. Instead, he estimates that the case has cost the organiza-

tion \$400,000 of that in legal expenses—and hundreds of thousands more in lost donations. Hundreds upon hundreds of letters poured in from angry supporters. Moody Broadcasting network and other radio stations dropped his program *Freedom Under Fire*. Donations dropped so substantially that the organization recently had to lay off seven of its sixty employees, close its Washington office, and rely on its reserve funds. More than two years after taking the case, it's suddenly over—with an \$850,000 settlement and no apology.

The postlawyer

It is obvious that Whitehead's passion long ago moved beyond the Paula Jones case. When talking to him, one gets the sense that his real excitement may have moved beyond the legal world altogether. Whitehead hasn't actually argued a case in years. He spends his office hours managing, being interviewed, "setting vision," and writing. Lots and lots of writing. He has written 15 books by now and produced as many videos to go with them, but he is still looking for a publisher for his latest project.

Too bad; he considers it his masterpiece. There are no Nazis breaking down doors to enforce tolerance in this one. There are not even any courtrooms or mentions of Supreme Court decisions. This one is about art. This one is about popular culture.

Grasping for the Wind, the title of Whitehead's video series and book, is, on the surface, about "humanity's search for meaning." But it's no Francis-Schaefferesque jeremiad on the fall of Western culture. He may start at Rembrandt's *Adoration of the Shepherds* and end up at the punk group the Sex Pistols, but he leaves the viewer/reader feeling as though neither ideal satisfies (or damns).

That Whitehead really likes—loves—pop culture may be somewhat hard to pick up from the video series, but it is clear from his office. Except for one small corner papered with diplomas, the office is a wall-to-wall shrine to late-twentieth-century entertainment. There is a John Wayne autograph next to an inflated, four-foot Godzilla. A Superman action figure stands guard on a table next to the alien from *Alien*. On Whitehead's desk, a *Jurassic Park* dinosaur carries the torso of some poor, dismembered action figure in its mouth.

Whitehead is convinced Jesus was not just a pop culture phenomenon of his day, but a pop culture participant. "We're supposed to enjoy the good things in life like Jesus did. He drank wine with people, had a good time, told jokes, and was a normal human being. There can't be an automatic litmus test to these things. You can't say a movie is automatically bad just because it has nudity in it or violence."

Whitehead—who insists that all Christians should at least watch each year's nominations for the best picture Oscar—gets visibly irritated when people criticize all movies as evil. Before he became a Christian, one of the first things Christians told him to cut out was his film viewing. For a man who was used to watching three or four movies a day when he was on vacation, it wasn't easy. But at the Light and Power House, where he and his fellow students would sit around and discuss the religious aspects of Woody Allen films, he became convinced Christians were doing themselves a disservice by disengaging from the culture.

If Whitehead has a crusade today, it's to involve Christians in popular culture. Like his efforts in other avenues, he does not want to see Christians cede the battle because they don't like the battleground. Movies, television, music, and art are the language of the people. If Christians cannot speak that language,

he says, it doesn't matter what they say—they won't be heard.

"We're told to be salt in a world where people can't name the vice president, but they can name everyone on TV," he says. "And for salt to work, it has to be on something. It can't just sit there." But like his crusade 20 years ago to engage Christians in legal culture, it has not been an easy case to make. When he tried to use his *Rutherford* magazine to this end, with subjects like "The X-Files and the Return of Metaphysical Horror," conservative readers rebelled.

"Your sugar-coated coverage of the Beatles was one-sided," complained one reader. "If I wanted to patronize the secular media, I would have read *Time*."

"Everyone agrees that the origin of rock music is found in rebellion . . . against authority, against morality, and against God," wrote another. "To justify communicating the message of the Gospel with the carnal rock/rap sound is a lie."

Faced with two mutually exclusive facts —Whitehead wanted his readers to hear his message; his readers didn't—Whitehead relaunched the magazine as a separate publication supported by subscriptions, not donations to the organization. Donors now got the *Rutherford Institute Litigation Report*, purged of all pop culture. The magazine, rechristened *Gadfly*, was purged of all Rutherford Institute references.

"If you picked up *Gadfly* magazine without knowing who published it, you'd be perplexed," wrote a glowing review in the *Washington Post*. "If you picked up *Gadfly* knowing that it's published by the Rutherford Institute . . . you'd be even more perplexed. . . . It's a cultural magazine that fits no identifiable ideology. It's odd, eccentric, and eclectic."

Indeed. But though about half of the magazine's writers are not Christians, Whitehead would disagree that the magazine has "no identifiable ideology." "We're not afraid to address Christian topics, but it's within the context of the magazine. We did an issue called 'Does Fame Kill?' and included a sidebar on 'Did Fame Kill Jesus?' We don't sneak it in there. It's always relevant. I wrote a piece on Francis Bacon [an existential expressionist painter known for his gruesome paintings and sadomasochistic homosexuality], but if you read the article closely, it's about Christ and Bacon's view of Christ. But it's honest. There's no sneak."

Still, most conservative evangelicals are going to be uncomfortable spending a few hours with a magazine that's often dark and bloody. Whether Christians will eventually follow Whitehead down his road of pop cultural immersion remains to be seen. Actually his case for what Christians will gain by going down this road remains to be seen. So far, *Gadfly* has only 10,000 subscribers. Many Christian critics predict it is not going to make it.

But he has heard that before. Back when he told Christians they had to get involved in the courts. Back when he told Christians they had to get involved in politics. Back when he wrote, "Getting involved in politics will eventually mean Christians running for office. This will include attending and eventually taking control of party conventions where grass-roots decisions are made." Back a decade before Pat Robertson's Christian Coalition, or even before Jerry Falwell's Moral Majority.

Is John Wayne Whitehead our future?

C1

Ted Olsen is assistant editor of *CHRISTIAN HISTORY* magazine.

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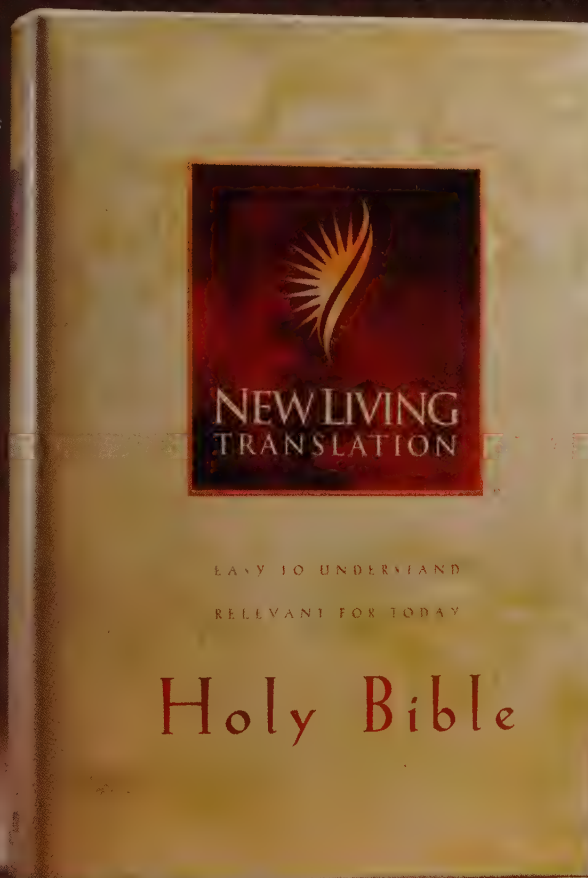
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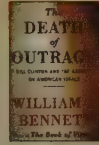
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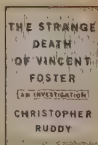
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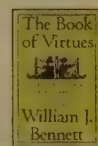
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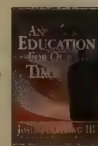
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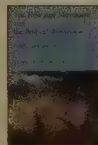


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Walking Bewildered in the Light

*The world grows terrible and white,
And blinding white the breaking day;
We walk bewildered in the light,
For something is too large for sight,
And something much too plain to say.*

*The Child that was ere worlds begun
(. . . We need but walk a little way,
We need but see a latch undone . . .)
The Child that played with moon and sun
Is playing with a little hay.*

—G. K. CHESTERTON, FROM "THE WISE MEN" IN
A MOTLEY WISDOM (NIGEL FORDE)





God's Great News

At Christmas time God cups his hands over his mouth, as it were, and shouts at the top of his voice, so that with all the din going on around them, human beings might hear what he has to say: "Listen! I've got great news that will bring you glorious joy!"

—STUART AND JILL BRISCOE IN
MEET HIM AT THE MANGER

Walking with the Shepherds

Send, O God, into the darkness of this troubled world, the light of your Son: let the star of your hope touch the minds of all people with the bright beams of mercy and truth; and so direct our steps that we may always walk in the way revealed to us, as the shepherds of Bethlehem walked with joy to the manger where he dwelt who now and ever reigns in our hearts, Jesus Christ our Lord.

—JOHN WALLACE SUTER IN *THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS: PRAYERS OF THE FAMOUS* (ED. HORTON DAVIES)

The Gift Unspeakable

*Again they play, the children with their toys,
Gay parties draw the older girls and boys;
Regathered families hail the festive day,
And jovial revellers their gifts display:
How strange!—how almost inconceivable,
So few receive Heaven's "Gift Unspeakable!"*

*Yet none the less, as carol strains resound,
Adoring hearts will everywhere be found;
The throne-room of the soul they will prepare,
To give the Saviour-King new welcome there:
And He will see, and say, with gentle smile,
"The nails and thorny-crown were all worthwhile."*

—J. SIDLOW BAXTER FROM "ANOTHER CHRISTMAS" IN
SOURCEBOOK OF POETRY (COMP. AL BRYANT)

ART CREDITS: (PREVIOUS PAGE) ERICH LESSING/ART RESOURCE. *THE SHEPHERDS FOLLOW THE STAR TO BETHLEHEM*, BY OCTAVE PENGUILLY-L'HARIDON. (THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE, STARTING WITH TOP LEFT) SUPERSTOCK / ANGEL ANNOUNCING THE BIRTH OF CHRIST TO SHEPHERDS BY ROBERT LEINWEBER; DETAIL FROM *CHRISTMAS DAY* BY WARD SMITH; SUPERSTOCK / DETAIL FROM *THE NATIVITY* BY JULIUS GARI MELCHERS; *I HAVE COME* BY COREY WILKENSEN.

When I Give Birth to Christ

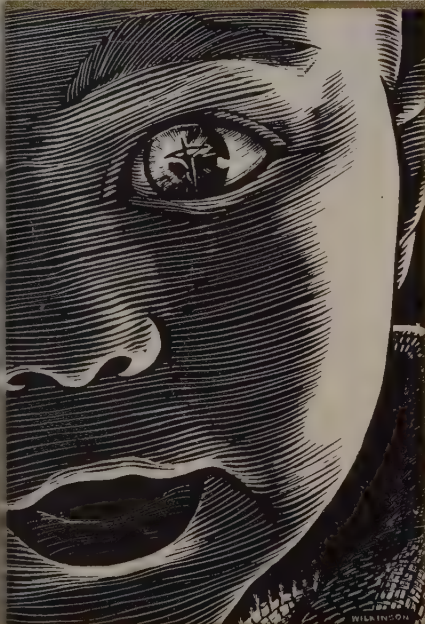
We are all meant to be mothers of God. What good is it to me if this eternal birth of the divine Son takes place unceasingly but does not take place within myself? And, what good is it to me if Mary is full of grace if I am not also full of grace? What good is it to me for the Creator to give birth to his Son if I do not also give birth to him in my time and my culture? This, then, is the fullness of time: When the Son of God is begotten in us.

—MEISTER ECKHART, QUOTED IN *GOSPEL MEDICINE* (BARBARA BROWN TAYLOR)

Greet the New Day

And so at this Christmas time I greet you. Not quite as the world sends greetings, but with the prayer that now and forever the day breaks and the shadows flee away.

—FRA GIOVANNI, QUOTED IN *THINK ON THESE THINGS*



Birthday Presents

Who started the rumour that one needs a lot of money to remember, to rejoice, to celebrate the birthday of the one who chose to become poor for us?

—A WORKER AMONG THE POOR
IN MEXICO IN A *PROCESSION OF PRAYERS*
(COMP. JOHN CARDEN)

O Holy Night

*This [Christmas] night bestowed peace on the whole world;
so, let no one threaten;*

*this is the night of the Most Gentle One—
let no one be cruel;*

*this is the night of the Most Humble One—
let no one be proud.*

*Now is the day of joy—
let us not revenge;*

*now is the day of good will—
let us not be mean-spirited.*

In this day of peace let us not be conquered by anger . . .

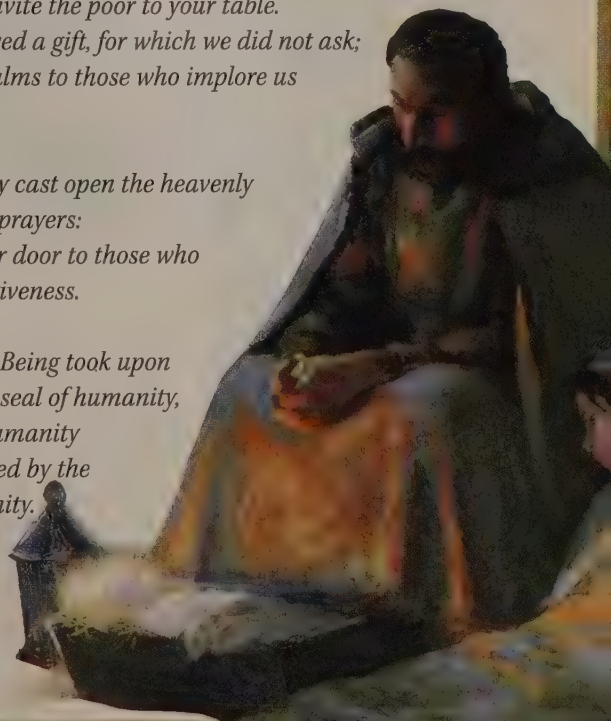
*Today the Bountiful impoverished Himself for our sake;
so, rich one, invite the poor to your table.*

*Today we received a gift, for which we did not ask;
so let us give alms to those who implore us
and beg.*

*This present day cast open the heavenly
door to our prayers:
let us open our door to those who
ask our forgiveness.*

*Now the Divine Being took upon
Himself the seal of humanity,
in order for humanity
to be adorned by the
seal of Divinity.*

—SAINT ISAAC
OF SYRIA; 7TH C.
"CHRISTMAS
SERMON"



AFTER THE REVOLUTION

Kordell Richardson's mother, a devout Baptist, taught her children never to accept a handout. But when Richardson separated from her husband more than 20 years ago she faced a dilemma. She suffered from asthma, had two young girls at home, and a third was on the way.

A neighbor encouraged Richardson, of Battle Creek, Michigan, to apply for welfare assistance, and she began receiving a monthly stipend through Aid for Families

with Dependent Children (AFDC).

"They helped me all right—they helped me get in such a big mess," Richardson recalls.

"There was nothing else I could do at that time," she says. "I was pregnant, I couldn't work."

From the start, Richardson says she strived to become self-sufficient. She found a babysitter for her girls and took piecemeal jobs. "Every time I would make a little money, thinking I could safely get off welfare, I got dragged back into it." Richardson tried numerous government-conceived strategies to wean her family from public aid. "It was a dead-end situation," she says. "They always had some program, but it didn't last long enough for

you to really benefit, or it closed down."

In 1995, Richardson moved to Lansing, Michigan, where she qualified to rent an apartment at a government-subsidized rate of \$8 a month. Her Section 8 caseworker, Mary Ann Harkema, directed the local affiliate of Love in the Name of Christ (Love INC), a community clearinghouse of area churches that links laypeople with neighbors in need.

Harkema encouraged Richardson to obtain work experience through volunteer opportunities. Eventually Richardson landed a paying job, but she told Harkema, "I'll go crazy 'cause I'm going to have some money now, and I'm going to spend, spend, spend." Harkema introduced Richardson to Quality Living, a Love INC 36-week, biblically based life skills class conducted by South Church of the Nazarene in Lansing. She went from welfare to being a homeowner in two years. Richardson, baptized in October, is now a budget counselor in the program at South Church.

"If they can get a handle on a budget, they can get in control of something in their lives," Harkema says. The Lansing Love INC, one of about 100 affiliates nationwide, helps support the Quality Living program in a dozen area churches. In all, 125 families in Lansing have gone

through the program, which places churches in a mentoring relationship with families transitioning from welfare to work. Only 10 percent have dropped out.

"True compassion is living with someone, loving, and being close to someone during their ups and downs over a long period of time," Harkema says.

Richardson knows that South Church's help enabled her to break free from welfare. "They didn't just say, *OK, this is how you do it*," she says. "They were my friends."

WILL CHURCHES FILL THE BREACH?

Richardson's metamorphosis has come in the midst of an upheaval in the federal welfare system. Two years ago, Congress passed legislation that ended welfare as America has known it since the New Deal (CT, April 7, 1997, p. 46).

Welfare-reform legislation has been a tremendous success if measured solely by reduction in the number of welfare cases. But when it comes to reducing the number of people trying to escape a lifestyle of poverty, reform has a ways to go. And willing churches have a historic opportunity to help poor people across the board, meeting their spiritual needs as well as their need to earn a living.

The radical overhaul of the system has been based partly on the assumption that

ART MOORE



Conservatives won the welfare debate. Are churches stepping up to the challenge?

faith-based assistance to the poor could not only provide a buffer, but help transform lives far more effectively than the government ever could.

"Society is saying in a way it hasn't for decades that we need help from people of faith," says Evangelicals for Social Action (ESA) president Ron Sider.

The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act of 1996 replaced AFDC—by then an entitlement to one out of seven American families—with block grants to the states called Temporary Assistance to Needy Families. States are given the freedom and responsibility to

design their own programs within certain limited federal guidelines, one being that adults receiving benefits must get a job within two years of receiving aid.

Across the country, caseloads are down, and churches and ministries have taken the lead in many areas in moving people from welfare to work (CT, Sept. 7, 1998, p. 21). But many weaned from welfare rolls still are without jobs.

In Oregon, caseloads have fallen from 42,700 four years ago to 19,300. Some of that decline may be due to a robust economy, analysts say, but studies indicate that welfare reform is likely the major factor.



One to one: Robert Jones, a Presbyterian pastor in South Carolina, counsels a young mother and her daughter.

Many critics of welfare reform note the decline in welfare recipients, but claim that there has also been a dramatic increase in homelessness. The U.S. Conference of Mayors a year ago indicated that homelessness had risen 12 percent, in part because of welfare reform.

"A lot of those families that are leaving welfare are not necessarily leaving because they found a job," says Wendell Primus, director of income security for the federal government's Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. Surveys indicate that only 30 to 60 percent of the families who have left welfare are actually earning money, Primus says.

"The feds have never required the states to do much more than say, *By how many has your caseload been reduced?*" says Anita Beaty, director of the Atlanta Task Force on Homelessness. "That's the goal—reduce the caseload, reduce the caseload." A true gauge of welfare reform is, rather, how many people are attaining a living wage, Beaty says.

FINDING WORK IS KEY: Finding a job, any job, is the first step toward self-sufficiency, says Lisa Van Riper, executive director of Putting Families First (PFF), a privately financed foundation that places South Carolina welfare families in mentoring relationships with churches and other community groups.

Established in 1996 when Gov. David Beasley authorized the use of \$200,000 of his private inaugural funds, PFF has contributed to a 40 percent reduction in South Carolina's welfare role. Around 28,000 welfare families have been required to move toward employment within two years. Fewer than 400 have been terminated for lack of a job, says Van Riper.

"We have 27,600 people in South Carolina who have gotten jobs," Van Riper says. "Our ultimate goal is restoration of a living wage, but it starts with the restoration of a personal work ethic and responsibility—if you have those two, you will get to a living wage." Through PFF's direction, churches form a partnership team to mentor a family for one year, helping meet material, emotional, and spiritual needs, and encouraging them through a two-year transition to build a résumé and enhance job skills.

Van Riper says PFF finds that for people to reach a point where they can trade in their benefits for a job, it takes at least \$9 an hour, which is more than many entry-level jobs pay. "If they will pay in their monthly stipend check, we counter with health care, transportation, and food

stamps, and they can still stay in Section 8 housing," she says. "We don't just pull the rug out and say, *Hey, you've got an entry-level wage; bye.*"

CHARITABLE CHOICE DEBATE: The government's new welfare-to-work emphasis largely complements the philosophy of the Denver Rescue Mission. The 106-year-old mission has a six-month to two-year spiritually based program for women, New Life Rehabilitation, that includes counseling, training in basic life skills, and academic and vocational education.

The program enabled Lynn Harrington, who had been on welfare for five years, to obtain a high-school equivalency degree and qualify to become a medical assistant.

"Without welfare reform I might still be sitting on my butt and not doing anything with my life," Harrington says.

Of special interest to faith-based organizations is the "charitable choice" provision of the federal welfare reform law (CT, Dec. 11, 1995, p. 65), authored by U.S. Sen. John Ashcroft (R-Mo.). It encourages states to contract with faith-based organizations to provide federally financed welfare services while protecting their religious character.

Whether because of lack of knowledge, confusion, or apprehensions about the law, few religious organizations have taken advantage of it, says Joe Loconte, a welfare reform expert at the Heritage Foundation in Washington, D.C. Many are concerned that charitable choice will lead to significant dependence of the church upon the state.

"The great strength of Ashcroft's legislation is that it codifies this respect for the religious convictions of faith-based agencies and it recognizes in law that the religious dimension to life—what these groups bring—is important and significant," Loconte says. "But I think that as groups begin to get significantly involved in government money, then they're going to run into trouble." Opponents of charitable choice, such as Washington, D.C.-based Americans United for Separation of Church and State, say that it violates the Establishment Clause. But charitable choice is embraced by a broad stream of evangelicals, from the Family Research Council (FRC) to ESA.

Charitable choice's primary strength, says ESA's Sider, is that it allows faith-based organizations to hire people according to its own standards and beliefs—a major sticking point for Americans United, which contends that this amounts to federally

financed employment discrimination.

"One of the main things that charitable choice has done is it has helped to build relationships between the [government] human services community and the faith community, even if the faith community is choosing not to formally partner," says FRC director of community outreach Deanna Carlson.

Sider believes that faith-based organizations should not fear a relationship with the government. "It's neurotic to think that we're going to be swept in by the secular forces if we go the route of charitable choice," Sider says.

FAITH PLAYS A ROLE: A close church-state relationship has been crucial to the success of Michigan's welfare reform, which began five years ago under Gov. John Engler. In 1996, Good Samaritan Ministries (GSM) in Holland, Michigan, contracted with a state program aimed at no unemployment, Project Zero.

Through the help of GSM and other faith-based groups, Ottawa County last year became the first in the nation to move every able-bodied welfare recipient into a job.

While GSM receives government funding, the churches it mobilizes, trains, and supports do not. GSM's network of more than 90 churches represents a broad array of Christian beliefs, from Pentecostal to Roman Catholic.

GSM director Janet DeYoung says, "We try to help churches be sensitive to where families are in their spiritual journey, to listen to the questions that they are asking."

Betty Williams, director of the Women's Christian Life program at the Los Angeles Union Rescue Mission, says her clients must be willing to receive Bible instruction and attend church, because it is essential to the program.

"If we received government funding we would not be able to do that," Williams says. "Those women who make serious changes reinforce what the Bible says—change happens on the inside." The charitable choice provision, in fact, states explicitly that funds going directly to religious organizations cannot be used for sectarian worship, instruction, or proselytizing. Efforts are under way in Congress to give taxpayers credits or special deductions for contributing directly to a group of their choice that is helping fight poverty.

TAKING THE FIRST STEP: "For a church to get involved helping people make the transition off of welfare, you don't need a government contract," says Kevin Hunter, director of Vision North-

west, a domestic ministry of World Vision in Federal Way, Washington. "The need is not for the technical services—the state does a pretty good job providing those. What they need is a relationship, somebody to help walk them through the rocky road, up and over the barriers and down through the valleys of the setbacks and the emotional damage."

Last year, a Denver homeless shelter evicted Janice Hannon and her two sons after they had used their maximum 30 days. They moved to a \$190-a-week hotel frequented by prostitutes and drug addicts. Though she worked both a day and a night job seven days a week, Janice could not come up with enough cash to pay for a deposit and advance rent on an apartment.

On weekends she left then 12-year-old Ryan and 5-year-old Scotty alone, instructing them to push a chair up against the door for added security.

Hannon unsuccessfully sought help from several agencies in an effort to obtain enough money for an apartment. Finally, Hannon learned about Pros with a Purpose, which recruits church groups to adopt homeless, working families with children under 16. The organization, which this year came under the direction of the Denver Rescue Mission, paid the first month's rent and security deposit for an apartment.

"The manager knew we were coming from a motel and didn't do a credit check—he knew we wouldn't pass," Hannon says. Members of the church team came over each month to help with her budget. "I would still be homeless if not for them."

Del Maxfield, president of the Denver Rescue Mission, warns that many of the people to whom his group ministers face enormous and complex problems that cannot be addressed simply through informal relationships and short-term programs. Both church and government officials sometimes have difficulty understanding that, he says.

A belief that persists in ministry to the poor is that "if you could sweep all the street guys in off the street into a chapel and give them a good message and have them all come forward to the altar, it would mean the end of homelessness," Maxfield says. "That is the single biggest spiritual myth that ever happened in our work."

"These folks walk back out the doors and face some of the most difficult, practical, social, political, and every other kind of problem on the face of the earth," Maxfield says. "And if we say, *Here you have Christ, and you can walk out the door and your prob-*

lems are solved; what we've done is just given them a piece of paper armor."

In 1987, the Denver Rescue Mission designed the first five-phase, two-year program in the nation. "It was almost unheard of that you would keep anybody beyond a maximum of 120 days," Maxfield says.

NATIONAL SUMMIT IN FEBRUARY:

How will churches respond to a call for help by government that essentially amounts to reclaiming its historic role in

Increasingly, socially conservative churches are dialoguing with their more liberal colleagues on ministry to the poor and finding a basis for agreement and cooperation.

"The heart is there to help their neighbor," the FRC's Carlson says of conservative evangelical churches. "On the practical side, they need some assistance in creating an infrastructure where they can actually help the poor, whereas the liberal churches seem to have that infrastructure, but maybe the heart isn't there as much as it used to be."

In February, church leaders will have a fresh opportunity to examine ways to debate additional welfare reform measures. Call to Renewal, the Washington, D.C.-based organization directed by Sojourners head Jim Wallis, will convene the



On the job: Mary Ann Harkema (left) helped Beth Bryant through Quality Living classes. Bryant (below) is now a budget counselor in the same program.

social ministry? "We're so trapped in our materialism and our self-centered narcissism that not many of us will do it," Sider says.

Maxfield agrees. "We can't get churches to respond," he says, despite the mission's \$9 million budget and outreach to thousands of people.

He finds much more success in recruiting individual Christians to ministries such as Pros with a Purpose, which has pulled together 100 groups from churches since the beginning of the year.

"The vast majority of churches are doing very, very little and just beginning to say, *Yeah, we've got to do something*," Sider says. "And they don't know how to do it; so one of the most important things right now is work with local congregations."

ESA is launching Network 935, a program to provide tools for local churches that want to combine evangelism with social concern.

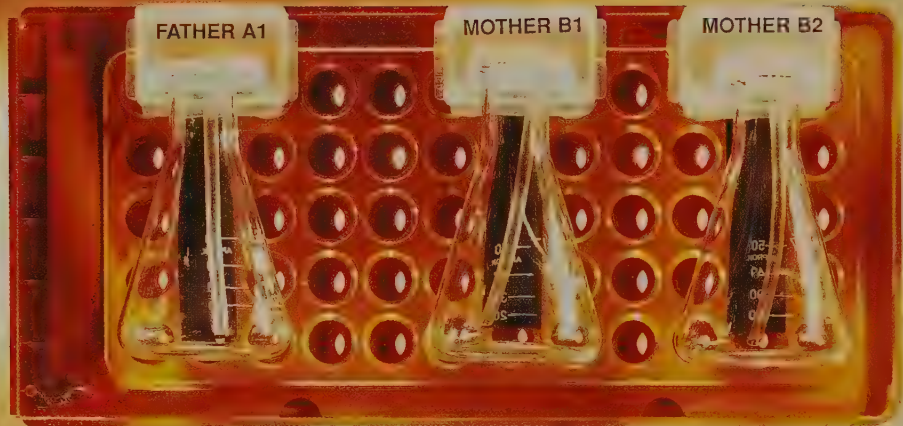


National Summit on the Churches and Welfare Reform February 1-3. Participants will include the National Council of Churches, the National Association of Evangelicals, the U.S. Catholic Conference, the FRC, and World Vision.

Sider says, "The conservatives are sort of getting what they wanted on welfare reform and are now realizing that it's more in the court of churches and volunteer organizations: We asked for it; we had better put up or shut up." 

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DETECTIVE

DETECTIVE

DETECTIVE

BIOTECH BABIES

How far should Christian couples go
in the quest for a child of their own?

It is probably natural to want a child of one's own. Is it also good? Perhaps if it is truly natural, in accord with our created nature, it must also be good. But the seemingly innocent desire to have "a child of one's own," combined with the high-tech possibilities of modern medicine and the ever-present pursuit of commercial gain, has fashioned a world in which we regularly create moral conundrums that are beyond our ability not only to solve but even to name. The things we are willing to do tell a story—a story about the point of having children.

Consider the following cases, all roughly adapted from "real life," chosen almost at random:

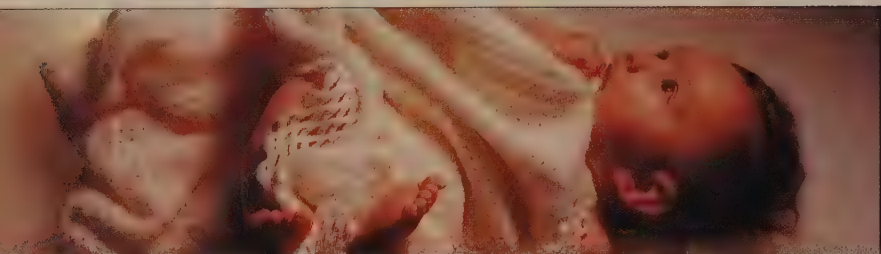
- A woman unable to have a child "of her own" had her ovum fertilized with her husband's sperm in the laboratory. The resulting embryo was then implanted in the womb of the woman's mother, who, having carried the pregnancy to term, gave birth to her own "grandchild."
- A husband and wife who thought they wanted a child "of their own" contracted for the conception of a child who would be conceived from sperm and ovum that came from anonymous donors and who

would then be gestated in the womb of a hired surrogate. Shortly before the child was born, the husband and wife who had wanted this child divorced. A judge felt compelled to rule that the baby girl actually had no legal parents at all.

- A woman undergoing infertility treatment in order to have a child "of her own" conceived triplets. For medical reasons she was advised that it would be safest if she were to undergo "fetal reduction"—that is, reduce by abortion the number of fetuses she was carrying to one. She did, but weeks later, having undergone amniocentesis, she learned that the one remaining fetus had a genetic anomaly. She therefore aborted that fetus as well.

- An infertile married couple desiring a child "of their own" underwent in vitro fertilization (IVF) and conceived a child. Four-and-a-half months into the pregnancy they learned from amniocentesis that the child they had wanted so badly and worked so hard to make had Down's syndrome. Having learned that, they decided to abort.

- An infertile married couple sought in vitro fertilization in hopes of producing a child "of their



CHRISTIANITY BUT WE MUST CHILDREN

own." Before undergoing the procedure, the couple signed an agreement saying that the resulting embryos could not be used without the consent of both parties and that, should they divorce, ownership of the embryos would be decided either in a property settlement or through a court decision. Nine attempts to implant embryos fertilized in the laboratory failed to result in a pregnancy that could be carried to term. Four embryos were implanted in a surrogate, the woman's older sister, but that procedure also failed. Shortly thereafter the couple divorced and the woman sought a court order giving her sole custody of the embryos so that she could try again to have a child "of her own." Given the prior agreement the couple had made, the court ruled that the woman could not do this without the consent of her former husband.

- A young woman about to undergo chemotherapy for leukemia but hoping nevertheless some day to have a child "of her own" had her ova harvested and fertilized with donor sperm before treatment—and the resulting embryos frozen. After she died of leukemia at age 28, her parents sought a surrogate who would agree to gestate the embryos. In this search they used the Internet and an appearance on the Oprah Winfrey show, intending that their son and daughter-in-law would raise the child if the pregnancy could be successfully carried to term.

- A 63-year-old woman, wanting a child "of her own" had implanted into her hormonally primed uterus an embryo made in the laboratory from her husband's sperm and an ovum from a younger donor. She then completed the pregnancy and gave birth to a child.

Such cases could be multiplied almost without end, and we may sometimes find it hard to remember or believe that the first "test tube baby" was born only 20 years ago, in 1978. Two decades later we live in a world in which a woman can give birth to her own "grandchild"; in which a child can have as many as five "parents" (the donors of sperm and ovum, the surrogate who carries the child during pregnancy, and the two "rearing parents"); in which people can "have children" posthumously; in which parents can go to great trouble and expense to conceive a child whom they then abort if prenatal diagnosis shows that the child is "defective" in some way; in which quite soon it may be possible to give birth to identical twins born years apart; and in which it may soon be possible for a woman without ovaries to receive an ovary transplant from an aborted fetus, making that fetus the biological mother of her child. And none of this comes cheaply. A recent report of the New York State Task Force on Life and the Law notes that "[c]onservative estimates place the cost of a successful delivery via IVF at more than \$40,000."

Taken together these cases display the story we have begun to tell each other about the meaning of children. The story line is, roughly, as follows: Because having children is something many people want for their lives to be full and complete, and because it is such a fundamental aspect of human life, we ought

to use our skills to help them achieve that desired fulfillment. Indeed, having children is an entitlement to which there are few limits. Of course, we ought not exercise this right in a way that directly harms children, but in many cases, after all, the children would not even exist were it not for the use of new reproductive technologies. If the suffering that infertility brings can be relieved, and if children are not harmed, then high-tech reproductive medicine is a good thing. This is the story that, more and more, we tell ourselves in this society.

Is there a different image of the child, an image that tells a different story about what it means to have children? Christians should hope so, and they should search for it. The poet Galway Kinnell, in a wonderful poem titled "After Making Love We Hear Footsteps," provides such an image: The child is, he writes, a "blessing love gives again into our arms." What makes this a better image than that emerging from the examples with which I began? What story of the meaning of a child underlies this image? One way to think about such questions is to reflect upon the desire to have "a child of one's own." This desire, which is simultaneously quite natural and problematic, needs examination.

THE STORY CHRISTIANS TELL

Christians have a story to tell, a story we regularly teach to our children—of an infertile woman who deeply desired a child of her own, how her wish was granted, and what she then did. It is the story of Hannah, her husband Elkanah, and their son Samuel (1 Sam. 1–2). Why did Hannah want a child of her own? In part, it seems, it was because she suffered the scorn of Peninnah, Elkanah's other wife, who had children. But that only presses the question a step further. Why should this be an occasion for scorn? What is so important about having a child? Why do people care so deeply?

Sometimes today, when we ask such questions, answers of the following sort come back: "I desire the experience of pregnancy and childbirth." "I want the experience of child rearing." "Having a child is an important part of defining who I am." No doubt there is some truth about us buried in such answers. There are deep psychological, and even biological, imperatives at work in the impulse to give birth. But such answers, which make of the child a means of meeting our needs, cannot be satisfactory. To think that way is already to begin to think of children as products made to satisfy some of our desires. And, of course, if and when the product turns out not really to satisfy us, we may be hard pressed to muster the kind of unconditional love children require if they are to flourish. That we do, nevertheless, often learn to love our children unconditionally suggests that the experience of child rearing teaches us about something more important than our own identity.

There are, though, deeper and better reasons for having children. We would make a little moral progress were we to say, "I

UNDERSTAND THE DEEP DESIRE TO HAVE CHILDREN. ALSO CONSTANTLY REMIND OURSELVES THAT THEY ARE NOT OUR POSSESSION; THEY ARE GIFTS OF GOD

want a child because I want a link to future generations." Surely that was part of Hannah's desire. In her world the link between the generations may have had greater economic importance than it now does, but even in our world it is of considerable human significance. We are not angels or free spirits who can choose to be whatever we wish; rather, we are embodied creatures, located in a particular time and place. In part, at least, it is lines of kinship and descent that identify us, even though we never choose our particular location. To learn to affirm and give thanks for our place in the world is part of growing up—and, more important, part of learning how to receive the mysterious gift of life. It is, therefore, quite natural that we should want to give life even as we have received it. That takes us some considerable way beyond the narcissism of wanting a child simply as a means to fulfilling ourselves.

But it does not take us quite far enough, for it continues to think simply of a child of my own, still part of the project by which I make my way in the world. We get much closer to a satisfactory understanding if we think of a child of our own. Elkanah is already a father, but he and Hannah together—as one flesh—are not parents. Even in so ancient a story as this one, there are hints that this too is part of the reason for wanting a child. We are specifically told that Elkanah loved Hannah. He himself tells her that she is more to him than ten sons. Their love-giving has not yet been life-giving, however. It is natural that they should want a child, for that child would be the sign that the love by which they give themselves to each other is creative and fruitful.

Indeed, this last step—in which they seek a child not of his own or her own but of their own—begins to take them still further. It presses almost toward elimination of that little word *own*. In the passion of sexual love a man and woman step out of themselves, so to speak, and give themselves to each other. That is why we speak of sexual *ecstasy*—a word that means precisely standing outside oneself. No matter how much they may desire a child as the fruit of their love, in the act of love itself they must set aside all such projects and desires. They are not any longer making a baby of their own. They are giving themselves in love. And the child, if a child is conceived, is not then the product of their willed creation. The child is a gift and a mystery, springing from their embrace—a blessing love gives into their arms. They could and should, if they think the matter through, quite rightly say that they had received this child as a gift of God, as the biblical writer says of Hannah: "The LORD remembered her."

Samuel is neither Elkanah's "own," nor Hannah's "own," nor even "their own." He is "God's own"—asked of the Lord and given by the Lord. He is not, therefore, simply Hannah's or Elkanah's to hold onto; rather, he must be offered back to God, as Hannah does. Lent to the Lord, for as long as he lives.

Christians, then, do not underestimate the sheer human significance of biological ties. We understand the deep desire to have children. But we must also constantly remind ourselves that children are not our possession; they are gifts of God. They exist

not simply to fulfill us but as the sign that, by God's continued blessing, self-giving love is creative and fruitful. And what if the Lord does not "remember" us as he remembered Hannah? That is reason for sadness, but it is not reason to take up the "project" of making a child. The couple who cannot have children may adopt children who need a home and parents, or they may find other ways in which their union can, as a union, turn outward and be fruitful.

LIVING OUR STORY

If this is how Christians understand the meaning of the presence of children, how shall we evaluate the vast array of new reproductive technologies—not, for the moment, as a matter of public policy, but simply as possibilities within our own lives?

The first thing to note is that many of the new techniques involve parties other than husband and wife in the reproductive process. (This is usually the case because the couple is infertile. There are also circumstances, however, in which fertile couples might turn to assisted reproduction techniques—for example, if one of the spouses carries a serious recessive genetic disorder. The moral issues remain essentially the same, however.) Artificial insemination and in vitro fertilization very often involve sperm and egg from anonymous donors, and there is an irony here that we should not ignore. If what infertile couples want is a child "of their own" in the genetic sense, techniques using donated gametes will not provide it. They are, in a sense, deceiving themselves. In the name of having a child of their own, they fail, in fact, to honor the importance of biological connection, of kinship and descent.

Imagine a case in which a married couple seeks donor insemination because of the husband's infertility. Someone might say, of course, that the child whom they produce is at least genetically related to the mother—it is her own, even if not also his own in the same sense. And for Christians that is exactly the cause for worry. The child is to be theirs, not hers or his. The deliberate and willed asymmetry of relation—so unlike the mutual asymmetry that exists in adoption—is precisely the problem. This child is no longer the fruit of their one-flesh union. Its genetic connection to the mother or the opportunity it provides for her to experience pregnancy and childbirth are her individual projects. Even if her husband also desires that connection and wants her to have the experience, he shares this project only in thought, not in the body. The child cannot be the fruit of an embrace in which husband and wife step outside themselves, their aims and projects, and receive a child as a gift, a sign that the Lord has remembered them.

If we imagine the opposite sort of case—in which the ovum rather than the sperm is donated, or, even more, in which the child is gestated by a surrogate—the same concerns will be in play. In addition, however, something disturbing happens to the relation of mother and child. Fatherhood, paternity, has always

been a somewhat detached and "intellectualized" relation during pregnancy. Paternity is not obvious. It can be disputed. Fathers must think themselves into relation with the child in the womb. Not so with maternity. A pregnant woman need not think herself into relation with the child—she experiences that bond constantly. But once more than one "mother"—genetic and gestational—has become part of the process, maternity also becomes a disputable fact, and we have the court cases all around us to prove it.

Moreover, Christian spouses who set foot on what was once a back road but has now become an interstate highway of assisted reproduction should know how difficult it may be to find an exit ramp once they have begun this journey. They are not really seeking to correct a medical problem but to bypass it. To bypass it in order to satisfy a deep and very important desire—to have a child. But if it is the couple's desire that is being treated, we need to remember that they may not simply desire a child. They probably also desire, for example, a healthy child. And new reproductive technologies more and more commonly involve genetic diagnosis of the newly formed embryo before it is implanted in the uterus. The pressure to discard embryos who do not meet desired specifications—and to try again—may be almost impossible to resist. Spouses who undertake this journey are likely to have invested many dollars and years—not to say tears—along the way. It is only human to want the best possible result. Understandable as that is, however, it is no longer quite the same kind of unconditional love for a child who is not our product but God's gift.

I can think of one possible exception to the claim that Christians ought not participate in new reproductive technologies that involve sperm or ovum from third parties. Rather than using either sperm donation alone or egg donation alone, a couple might "adopt," gestate, and rear a donated embryo. In such a case, unlike sperm or egg donation, the child will not be genetically linked to either parent. Although this very fact may cause concern to some who think of reproductive medicine as providing new ways to get a child "of one's own," from the Christian perspective it is preferable. We might think of it as adoption that occurs before rather than after the child's birth. The relation of husband and wife to the child is symmetrical, and they do not deceive themselves into supposing that this is in any genetic sense a child of their own.

Unfortunately—at least in our society at the present time—embryo donation is not likely really to be analogous to adoption. There are already, in fact, a few clinics that sell embryos to infertile couples who want a child. Sometimes the embryos are custom made—allowing prospective parents to choose a combination of sperm and egg donors that best satisfies them. Other times the embryos are extras that were made for an infertile couple who achieved a pregnancy without using them. Christians could, of course, understand themselves to be rescuing such children—who as spare embryos can only be implanted in a womb, used for research, frozen and stored indefinitely, or discarded. But if we are looking for needy children to rescue, they are, alas, all around us in our foster-care system. Prebirth embryo adoption is not likely to signal similar attempts at rescue. It is far more likely to be one more way of exercising quality control, of finding the child whom we want—rather than loving the child we have been given.

In short, many of the new reproductive technologies will involve the use of third parties. In doing so, they break the connection between love-giving and life-giving in marriage. That is not just a minor nuance, for it is this connection that teaches us to think of the child as a gift, that keeps us from thinking of

children as our project, as existing for the sake of satisfying our desires. It is no accident, then, that these technologies usually encourage genetic diagnosis—whether before implantation or after—of the "fitness" of the embryo or the fetus. If we understand the child as our project, if we accept that kind of responsibility, then we may inevitably find that "quality control" seems like an obvious—perhaps even imperative—part of the process. This is a journey we ought not even begin.

But what if no third parties are involved? There are certainly some circumstances in which an infertile couple might make use of new reproductive technologies while using only their own sperm and ova. Women may take drugs to influence ovulation. This may be combined with assisted insemination—when the sperm are placed directly in the vagina, cervix, or even uterus—if the man's sperm count is low. Either or both of these may often be part of an in vitro fertilization procedure in which both sperm and ovum are externalized and fertilization takes place in the laboratory. It is even possible now, within the IVF procedure, to inject a single sperm into the ovum.

Even when no third parties are involved there are serious moral concerns in the use of new reproductive technologies. The couple will be encouraged to "screen" the embryos formed in the laboratory, to consider whether a particular embryo is really the child they desire. If more embryos are produced than are implanted in the woman's uterus, they will have to ask themselves what should be done with the extras. Even apart from any IVF procedure, the use of ovulation-enhancing drugs alone means that the possibility of multiple fetuses—triplets and even higher-order multiple births—is greatly increased, and such pregnancies involve significant risks for the children conceived. They are much more likely to be born prematurely and to have low birthweight, and they may suffer lifelong complications as a result. Multiple fetuses also mean that the couple will have to deal with recommendations of "fetal reduction." In general, and even entirely apart from the use of donated sperm or eggs, it becomes increasingly difficult to think of the child as a gift and not a product. These are simply some of the hazards of the road they are traveling.

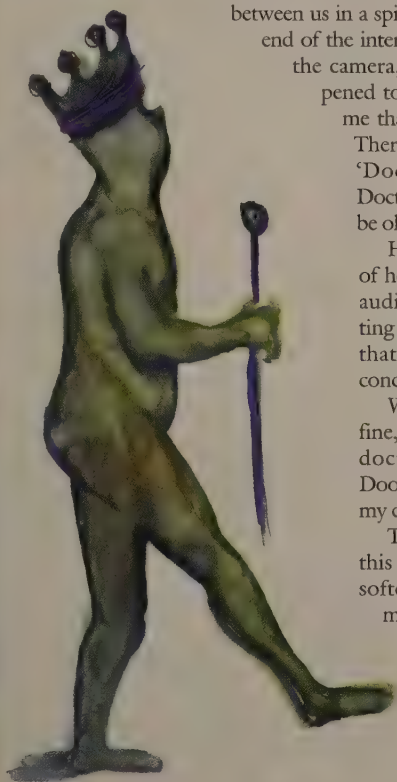
When we remember again the number of needy children who go unadopted precisely because of their needs, when we consider the degree to which new reproductive technologies have—in a very short time—begun to teach our society to think of reproduction as a right to which everyone is entitled, when we ponder the implications of these technologies for our society's understanding of children, we must ask whether Christians should not call a halt—at least for themselves. We do not have a story that teaches us to think of children as our entitlement or our possession. Indeed, the story we tell goes even beyond that of Hannah, Elkanah, and Samuel. For knowing as we do that God has already provided The Child, we can free ourselves of the feverish need to have a child of our own, whatever the cost. Perhaps the greatest service we can perform for our own children and for the world into which they will be born is to live in such a way that we remind ourselves and others that each child is indeed not our product, our project, or our possession, but a "blessing" that "love gives again into our arms." 

Gilbert Meilaender holds the board of directors chair in Christian ethics at Valparaiso University. A second edition of his book The Taste for the Other: The Social and Ethical Thought of C. S. Lewis has just been released by Eerdmans.

Spinning the Truth

Diane M. Komp

Why we find
a multitude
of ways to
avoid telling
painful truth.



Some years ago I cared for a nine-year-old boy with a deadly brain tumor. I have never known a child with that tumor to survive more than a year. One of my partners had the difficult task of telling his parents the diagnosis and prognosis. This doctor had told them the whole truth and nothing but. I know his style—patient, thorough, compassionate.

Young Kyle went through radiation treatments. With that and the help of steroids, most of his symptoms went away. About a month after the treatment ended, I repeated the MRI to see where things stood. The pattern of black and white and gray said that nothing had changed. How much nicer it would have been if all the sinister shadows had disappeared, if only for a little while. How, I wondered, would I tell the family this?

Kyle was in the room when his mother asked the results. "I have some good news," I told her. "The tumor has not progressed." Well, my hopeful spin was true—half true. But neither had the tumor gone away.

That evening Kyle's mother and I were guests on a local television talk-show. Kyle was there, too, sitting between us in a spiffy three-piece vested suit. At the end of the interview, his mother said directly to the camera, "I have to tell you what happened today. Today Doctor Komp told me that my baby is going to be okay. There was another doctor we called 'Doctor Gloom and Doom,' but Doctor Komp told me my son would be okay."

How could I correct her in front of her son, in front of the television audience? I smiled weakly, regretting that I had so softened the news that she had drawn that incorrect conclusion.

When Kyle died, the family did fine, even with the less euphemistic doctor they called "Gloom and Doom." But I've been thinking about my choice of words ever since.

There is so much bad news in this world that seems to beg to be softened, especially in the field of medicine. This verbal softening-up process intends to console the hearer, but more often it comforts the euphemizer rather than the "euphemizee."

Euphemizing risks the dissolution of the truth, and sometimes it covers up danger.

One morning in Chicago I set off early from my hotel to mail a package and met two friendly police officers standing on the street corner. I asked them if there was a post office nearby.

"Whew!" said one cop shaking his head. "Not around here."

"Where's the nearest post office?" I wondered aloud, looking to his partner who might be more informative.

"Not within walking distance," his partner answered. "About six blocks that way," he said, waving his hand in the direction somewhat vaguely south.

"Not within walking distance," both officers repeated. "UPS will be open at 10:00 A.M. Why don't you just wait?"

Why wait when six blocks is not too far to walk? Having the time and needing the exercise, I set off past handsome banners that proclaimed "Illinois Medical District." The flags pointed to the illuminated crisp medical towers of South Ashland's Bedpan Alley.

There were many churches along my route to the post office. Bullet-shaped holes marred the simple glass cross on a Lutheran house of worship. A sign was broken off another church, but her boarded doors still proclaimed her watchword: "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Hard to serve God on South Ashland, it would seem. Hard to come within walking distance.

My path took me down the streets of Cook County's encatchment area. *Encatchment area*—that's medspcak for the 'hood that fills the bedpans of this Chicago Hope. When I was a young doctor, Cook County had 3,000 active beds. Today fewer than 500 beds remain open for the sick of South Ashland who are sicker now than they have ever been before. I wondered whether visiting nurses need police escorts here as they do in the neighborhood that surrounds New Haven's Pill Hill where I work. It's not easy to serve those who have been managed-cared out of those 2,500 other beds.

"Not within walking distance" was the policeman's way of saying to me, "You shouldn't walk there." But the people who live on South Ashland walk there every day. As I strolled past an old brownstone house on that nippy autumn day, a young working woman in stilettoed heels and micro-miniskirt shouted final instructions to her latchkey son before moving toward a shiny new Lincoln Town Car blasting gangsta rap music at the curb. The people of South Ashland live

within walking distance of poverty and prostitution and crime.

Not within walking distance is a way we can use words to stand at a distance from truth, when truth is too uncomfortable. A euphemism is one way, but there are other wordy ways to separate ourselves from that which is truthful but painful.

With euphemisms and passive voice, it's nobody's fault. No-fault syntax, says John Leo, is crucially important when issuing vague, no-apology regrets (*Charlestown Daily Mail*, Feb. 11, 1997).

We don't slice our hospital budgets these days. We participate in patient-focused

child's life, someone interpreted my loving enthusiasm as an emblem of relationship.

Is it a lie, really, for me to perpetuate this warm, cozy myth of kinship? More a half-truth than a lie, it's a proud piece of puffery. Perhaps even literary license. Certainly not as black as sin. Surely my tender words of appreciation for a fragile young life won't poison the entire world. What difference does it make after all, I tell myself, if a childless, middle-aged woman embroiders a harmless piece of dining-room brocade?

The strangest thing about half-truths is how easy it would be most times for us simply to tell the whole truth. That day at

deepest desire of my heart. Right there, on my knees, I began to weep, but I still held back from being honest with God.

"No! No! I can't!" I insisted. Toby encouraged me to look into Jesus' eyes. "Tell Jesus about the deepest desire of your heart."

I resisted for the longest moments. Then, I told Jesus that I wanted a child.

There are those who might say that God never answered my prayer that day. I'm 58 years old and "barren," as King James English puts it. Perhaps God has never fulfilled my heart's desire in the way that I envisioned, but my prayer bore fruit at that conference when I told those

women doctors the story of my recaptured tears.

The next afternoon, other women wept and shared deeply the wounds of their own hearts. Unlike the courtroom where the judge sternly warns witnesses to

control their emotions, we gave each other permission to cry.

A beautiful young mother mourned as she told the story of her infertility, then later the crib death of her lovely, new adopted child. She and her husband were devastated by their double loss. More tears poured down her cheeks when she confessed her jealousy of that other mother whose baby stole the show at our opening dinner. Then, other women took off their smiley masks as well, and we all were healed as we listened to each other's true stories.

Back at the Chowder Pot, I should not have crossed over the line from fact to fantasy with Sasha. I'm not at all certain that he would have heard what I had to say, but I don't really know that for a fact. I should just honestly have said, "This is the child I always wished that I could have had." That is the truth. I love my little Crumb Bunny with all of my heart.

If I had told Sasha that truth instead of my charming little puffed-up lie, who knows what desires of his own heart might have had the opportunity to rise to the surface? His own longings might have been translated into healing words or reconciling tears. **CT**

Diane M. Komp is professor of pediatrics at Yale University School of Medicine. This article is taken from Anatomy of a Lie, by Diane M. Komp. Copyright © 1998 by Diane M. Komp. Used by permission of Zondervan Publishing House.

Euphemizing risks the dissolution of the truth, and sometimes it covers up danger.

operational redesign. Patients don't die in our midst. They just expire. Following their expiration, we don't send them to the morgue. We discharge them to Brady. A dead body isn't a corpse either. It is the remains.

I like what Hannah More said about precision with words. "Let us fortify our virtue by calling things by their proper names" (*Religion of the Heart*, Paraclete, 1996).

Sasha is a recent college grad who had hoped by now to have found a high-paying engineering job. Instead, he's hoisting trays at the Chowder Pot and is mighty, mighty eager to please.

"Did the Shrimp Florentine meet with your satisfaction, Ma-dam?" he purrs to me. Ma-dam beams back her approval as she reaches for her Visa Gold.

My wallet falls open, revealing the photo of a sweet-faced baby, my little Crumb Bunny. Praying for a better tip, Sasha seizes the moment and coos, "Your daughter?" (Well, not unless Sarah and Elizabeth move over for another late-life miracle!)

"No," I explain. "My granddaughter." Sasha bows respectfully from the waist, "You must be very proud."

I am proud. And in a way, I am Crumb Bunny's "grandmother"—albeit an honorary and not a biological one. At my hospital a few years back, someone who didn't know that I was her doctor mistook me for one of her grandmas. In all the excitement that day about the bone-marrow donation that was arriving from England to save the

the Chowder Pot I convinced myself that Sasha had no real interest in hearing my answer to his question. He was only making chit-chat, I concluded, just warming me up for a better tip. Does a brilliant young engineer cleverly disguised as a menial waiter really want to hear about me? Perhaps it is not Sasha but I who don't want to invest the time in the truth.

Awhile back I spoke to a group of women physicians who gathered to discuss the impact of their Christian faith on their personal and professional lives. One doctor came to that conference with her young baby. At the opening banquet, that tyke made quite a hit. Weary after a long work week, we now had a special reason to relax and smile together.

"Children are important to all of us," I told that audience of professional women, "even for those of us who will never be biological moms." Then I told these women doctors a story I had never told anyone else before.

One of the things a woman doctor learns early in her education is to put away her tears, even when the normal response would be to cry. "It's not very professional." "Big boys don't cry." "I'm tired of crying." Name your own tear-stopper. But the most important day for us can be the day that we reclaim our canceled tears. For me, that date came soon after I came back to Christian faith at the age of 40. I wanted to learn how to pray, so I asked a hospital chaplain to be my guide.

Toby caught me off guard when he encouraged me to ask God for a gift, the



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The Re-education of Jim Bakker

Back on the streets, this fallen televangelist is preaching good news to the poor and predicting an asteroid-studded Second Coming.

Jim Bakker is a mover. For years he used television to move people to Christ and to move money from their pockets into his ministry. But after being indicted for fraud by the federal government, he was forced to sit still in prison for five years. During that time, Bakker renounced his faith-equals-fortunes message and embraced the Jesus of the poor. After prison, he wasted no time writing two books and, this fall, taking a new wife. (Tammy Faye divorced him six years ago while he was in prison.) These days he does penance on the streets of Los Angeles, volunteering with the staff of the Dream Center, a large, ministry-intensive church pastored by Tommy and Matthew Barnett. CT associate editor Kevin D. Miller along with managing editor Michael G. Maudlin talked with Bakker about his journey and his latest book, *Prosperity and the Coming Apocalypse* (Nelson).

On doing time. The first months of prison were devastating. After being in a public ministry every day of your life and then finding yourself with everything gone—not only the material things but friends and reputation—and facing 45 years, you wonder, *Is God gone too?* I began to seek God, but I couldn't find him. I even prayed what I call stupid prayers—*God, wiggle a plant or something in the room.*

One night I had a dream. I was sitting next to Christ. He reached up into his eye and took out a sliver of his eye and then put it in my eye. He said, "I want you to see everything and everyone through my eyes." That was the first time I had even an inkling that maybe God might still talk to me. When I woke up, I knew immediately I had to start reading the Word of God—if I was going to look at everything through Christ's eyes, I had to know him.

I began to read and write down every word as recorded in the Gospels. I wept that I could have been so wrong, preaching another gospel and another Jesus. Jesus called riches "deceitfulness of riches." He even said, "Woe unto the rich!" He was saying things like, "You can't serve God and money." He never cast wealth and riches into a good light. How could I have spent so much time emphasizing financial blessing?

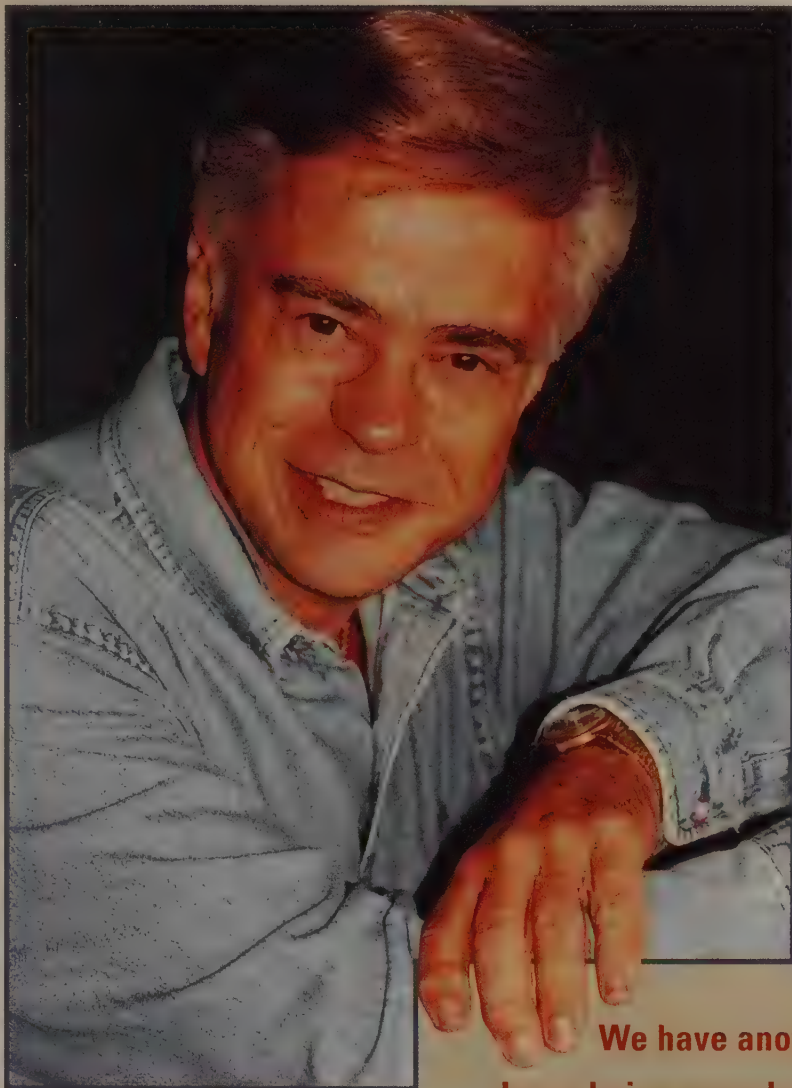
On prosperity preaching. I'd always quoted 3 John 2, saying, "Above all things God wants you to prosper." I loved that Scripture. It looks great on a TV screen when you're raising funds, and I interpreted it as God wants you to be rich. But when I got to the words of John, I said, "Now this don't make sense." So I took the word *prosper* apart in the Greek and found out it's made up of two words—the first word means *good* or *well* and the second *road*. It's a progressive word, so it's like a journey. So, here's John saying, basically, "Beloved, I want you to have a good journey through life as your soul has a good journey to heaven." It was a greeting! Building theology on that is like building the church on "Have a nice day."

I began to look up all the Scriptures used in prosperity teaching, such as "Give and it shall be given unto you." When I put that Scripture back into its context, I found Christ was teaching on forgiveness, not on money. He was teaching us that by the same measure that we forgive, we will be forgiven.

I had gotten my sermons from other people. The Bible warns about the shepherds who get their messages from each other. I think today the reason we have another gospel and another Jesus being preached is because men have gotten their sermons from each other and from motivational teaching. A lot of what's being taught today is simply motivational teaching with a few Scriptures put to it.

On E. coli and asteroids. I believe the harlot of the Book of Revelation is materialism. Our denomination [the Assemblies of God], at least, used to teach that the harlot was the Catholic church. That was escapist—we wanted to blame somebody else and never look at ourselves. If you study the attributes of the harlot, she's all about materialism. Everything is about the commerce of buying and selling and stuff. It's about loving this world and the things of this world.

I believe the four horsemen of the apocalypse are already out of the barn. They're saddled up; they're riding. The last horseman is about death and the animals. I couldn't figure out how animals could kill one-third of the population—you know, like elephants charging down our streets. Then I saw that the word *death* means *pestilence* or *disease*. And I thought, well, where does HIV come from? Where



COURTESY OF DREAM CENTER

does E. coli come from? Animals! In Africa, millions of people are infected with HIV. So the stage is set for the horse-men of the apocalypse.

You'll probably brand me a fanatic for saying this, but the Bible says 17 times that the sun will be darkened before Jesus returns. In Matthew 24:29 it says the sun will be darkened and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars—that word is *aster*—and the powers of heaven shall be shaken. I believe *aster* means asteroid. Revelation 6 says the sun shall become black as sackcloth of hair, and the stars (*asteres*) of heaven will fall unto the earth. Revelation 8:8 talks about a great mountain burning with fire that is cast into the sea. What is that? That's an asteroid. I believe that an asteroid or comet will hit the earth.

**We have another
Jesus being preached
because men have gotten
their sermons from
motivational teaching.**

I saw a science documentary called *Fire from the Sky*. They said that when an asteroid hits the earth it will cause a cloud to go around the earth and cause a nuclear winter for one year. The sun would be darkened and even look blood red. I'm seeing this documentary thinking, *These are the same things I read in the Bible!*

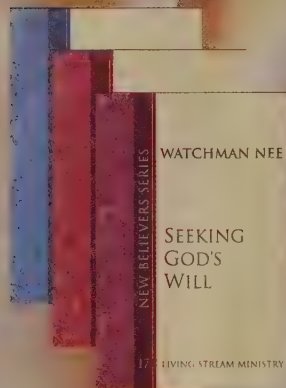
On suffering. People say, "God's not going to allow me to go through any

tribulation." I believe we have been teaching people an escapism gospel. I believe the Bible teaches clearly that the church will go through tribulation. Pretribulation rapture is fairly new theology. I know it's in the beloved Scofield Bible, but I can't find any solid Scripture except maybe a verse here and there. And as I studied the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, I couldn't find one man or woman of God who lived a charmed life. All I could find was fiery furnaces and lion's dens and deserts and pits. Jesus said John the Baptist was the greatest man to walk the earth. Not only does John end up in prison, but Jesus walks away and goes on teaching. Jesus lets John go to prison and get his head cut off! Well, that just flies in the face of modern prosperity teaching.

The whole Bible is built around knowing Christ and the fellowship of his suffering. Those kinds of things don't preach very well. But I found that through the fellowship of his suffering, my time in prison became not a time of loneliness—though it was horribly lonely—but a time of solitude. It became a time where I walked closer with Christ than I ever had.

On returning to television. I don't want to say never on anything. But with the money it takes to be on television—my budget was a million dollars every two days—the tail wags the dog. I don't want money to be my consuming force again. Now I live in the ghetto of Los Angeles, where I work under a group of men that I highly respect. There are 160 different ministries working together. It's like a New Testament church, a daily thing, where we are feeding people, working with drug addicts, and repainting whole city blocks. We have about 4,000 in our sidewalk Sunday schools, and 12 different language churches at the center.

On the Graham family. Franklin came to prison over and over again to see me. He wrote me every month. The funny thing is, when he'd come I'd ask him to teach and preach in the chapel. I didn't want to just have him to myself in the visiting room. And the chaplain always would say to him, "Now don't give an invitation to accept Christ and



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don't admit you know Jim Bakker." He broke the rules every time, both of them. You know when you're down in prison and Franklin comes and says, "Jim Bakker's my friend," it would just elevate my life for that moment. And then he'd give an invitation to accept Christ, and guys would come to the Lord.

When I was transferred to my last prison, Franklin said he wanted to help me out when I got out—with a job, a house to live in, and a car. It was my fifth Christmas in prison. I thought it over and said, "Franklin, you can't do this. It will hurt you. The Grahams don't need my baggage." He looked at me and he said, "Jim, you were my friend in the past and you are my friend now. If anyone doesn't like it, I'm looking for a fight."

So when I got out of prison the Grahams sponsored me and paid for a house for me to live in and gave me a car to drive. The first Sunday out, Ruth Graham called the halfway house I was living in at the Salvation Army and asked permission for me to go to the Montreat Presbyterian Church with her that Sunday morning. When I got there, the pastor welcomed me and sat me with the Graham family. There were like two whole rows of them—I think every Graham aunt and uncle and cousin was there. The organ began playing and the place was full except for a seat next to me. Then the doors opened and in walked Ruth Graham. She walked down that aisle and sat next to inmate 07407-058. I had only been out of prison 48 hours, but she told the world that morning that Jim Bakker was her friend.

Afterwards, she had me up to their cabin for dinner. When she asked me for some addresses, I pulled this envelope out of my pocket to look for them—in prison you're not allowed to have a wallet, so you just carry an envelope. She asked, "Don't you have a wallet?" And I said, "Well, yeah, this is my wallet." After five years of brainwashing in prison you think an envelope is a wallet. She walked into the other room and came back and said, "Here's one of Billy's wallets. He doesn't need it. You can have it." It reminded me of the time I was in prison when she took all of Billy's

Bibles in his library he wasn't using and gave them to me to give to other inmates.

On *The Apostle*. I'm not sure the film is good or bad. I think Franklin [who denounced the movie, which stars Robert Duvall as a wayward Pentecostal preacher] is coming from his perspective. He perhaps hasn't seen that side of Christianity. But talking to some of the old-timers, they told me they felt that that Southern preacher portrayed a hard reality,

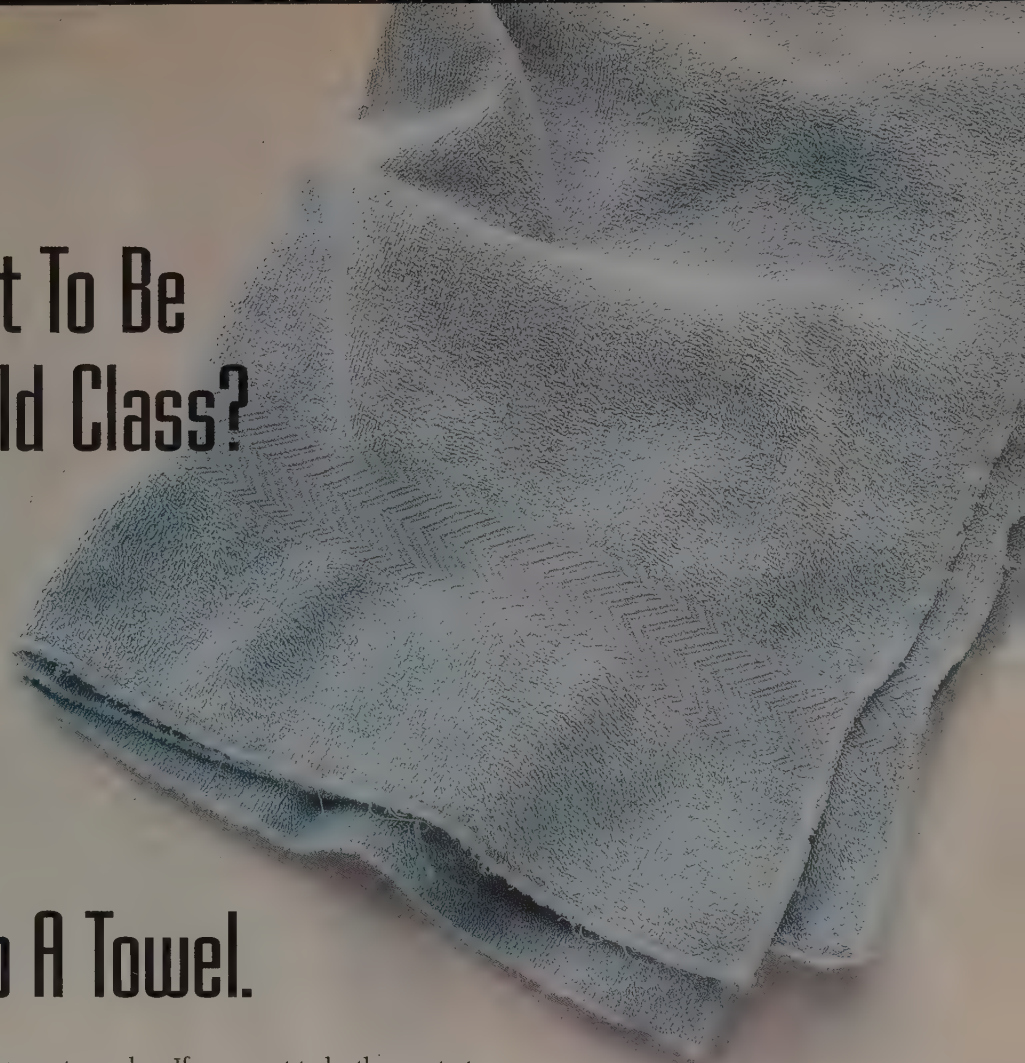
that there are people with that kind of roughness to them.

The thing that did impress me in the movie was the salvation prayer near the end. It was the most moving conversion experience that I've ever seen portrayed by Hollywood. I went to see the movie with some friends, and I was determined not to have any emotion about it. But as it got near the end and Robert Duvall—the preacher—had gotten his life somewhat together and was loving those people and that church, and then the

police came and put him in handcuffs, I began to sob in that theater. I didn't realize the pain was still deep inside of me. I tried not to cry, so it came out in loud bursts. My friends didn't know what to do. I guess I identified with the character at that point as I remembered the pain of being shackled and being taken away myself.

I grew up in an era of law. But either we believe in grace or we don't. So I have to accept the grace in that story—even though it's fictional—if I'm going to accept grace for myself. And to forgive me is the hardest thing I have to do today. I have no problems forgiving others. When I was in prison, God spoke in my heart that if I didn't forgive my enemies and pray for God to bless them, I would never leave prison. But I am still struggling with my own forgiveness. The pain of my failure is something that's hard for me to deal with. So for me *The Apostle* is the story of a man who did a terrible thing, but yet his heart, like David's, was toward God. David murdered. David committed adultery. But the thing we learn from the life of David is that he kept his heart toward God. That's why we can't judge one another, because God sees the heart.

**God spoke
 in my heart
 that if I didn't
 forgive my
 enemies,
 I would
 never leave
 prison.**



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Hollywood on Holy Ground

Michael G. Maudlin

Jeffrey Katzenberg, the ex-Disney movie exec, was sipping wine at Steven Spielberg's house along with ex-Sony music czar David Geffen, where the three were discussing the next frontier for animation. Katzenberg had shepherded the genre's renaissance at Disney with such hits as *The Little Mermaid* and *The Lion King*. He felt animation was ready to burst its fairy-tale-for-toddlers trappings. This led to a discussion about what went into a cinematic epic. When they listed the different elements, Spielberg blurted out they all added up to *The Ten Commandments*. And with that, the three of them decided to start a new studio, DreamWorks, with its first project being an animated telling of the life of Moses, *The Prince of Egypt* (to be released Dec. 18).

But Geffen added a caution: They shouldn't Disneyfy it—that is, reconfigure the ancient story in order to tell an upbeat American tale. "Moses is not our story." And because of that injunction, I got to enjoy a special preview at DreamWorks' state-of-the-art animation studio. Katzenberg took Geffen's advice to heart and made an effort to transform Hollywood's relationship to the religious community from enmity to partnership. At every stage of production—from storyboards to previewing the close-to-final film—hundreds of religious leaders have been brought in to consult, including Jerry Falwell, James Dobson, and Ralph Reed.

"Dozens and dozens of changes were made," said Katzenberg. Of the ones he is willing to comment on, he tells of the song lyric that was already recorded as "You can work miracles when you believe." "All three religious groups let us know that that line was a problem," says Katzenberg. It was rerecorded as "There can be miracles when you believe." The change was not cheap.

While DreamWorks decided to eschew crass commercialization—and so waved off opportunities to merchandise Burning Bush night-lights—they tapped Christian publisher Thomas Nelson to produce a smorgasbord of mostly children's offerings, from *The Prince of Egypt A to Z* to *The Exodus: Moses' Story from the Bible with Notes by Charles R. Swindoll*. Look for the cardboard dump in a bookstore near you. The books will be placed alongside three albums: the soundtrack and two "inspired by" productions, one called "Nashville" and the other "Inspirational."

But merchandising and networking do not a hit movie make. If the movie flows, DreamWorks' brave

attempt at a positive relationship with faith communities might backfire, making other studios less likely to pursue religion-friendly projects. Then again, Steven Spielberg's instincts were right: *The Prince of Egypt* is a great story. And Jeffrey Katzenberg was right: *MovieGuide's* Ted Baehr calls the film "a quantum leap in animation."

In fact, the movie is more entertaining than the book. To speed up the action, the role of Aaron is severely downgraded (the Val Kilmer-voiced Moses speaks for himself), and at the time of the Exodus, Moses looks more like a spry 32 than a robust octogenarian. And there are none of those awkward scenes of Hebrews grumbling in the wilderness; the movie ends at the hooray-for-our-side moment on the other shore of the Red Sea. Yes, there are certain advantages to having entertainment rather than revelation as your goal.

Still, unlike in most entertainment vehicles, God plays a major role. God's white fire in the burning bush wonderfully captures both his nurturing love and his majestic holiness. The plagues can only be interpreted as a revelation of Yahweh's supremacy over the Egyptian gods. And the parting-of-the-waters scene would cause Cecil B. DeMille to faint. There is no doubt who pulled these wonders off.

DreamWorks sought a PG rating. They thought scenes of soldiers killing Hebrew babies and God killing all of Egypt's firstborn—no matter how tastefully done—might be too much for toddlers. Still, the movie is one of those rare gifts from our consumer culture where what they are selling happens to further the work of the kingdom. My advice: Let the people go.

CI

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has a fresh
idea for
avoiding the
wrath of the
religious com-
munity. They
are working
with us.**



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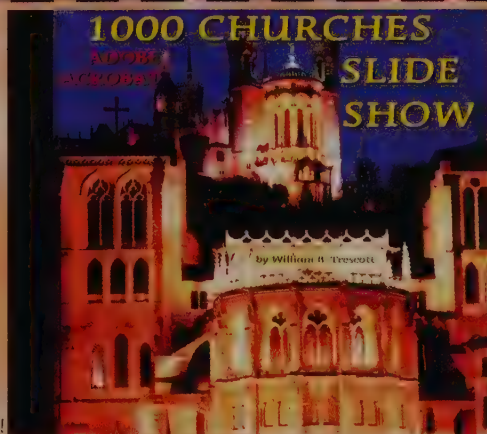
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The Jesus I'd Prefer to Know

John G. Stackhouse, Jr.



**Searching
for the
historical
Jesus
and finding
oneself
instead.**

Almost a century ago, the scholar-turned-medical-missionary Albert Schweitzer published a little bombshell of a book with the bland title of *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* (1906; reissued this year in paperback by the Johns Hopkins University Press). Schweitzer reviewed the history of critical studies of the life of Jesus, starting with the early eighteenth-century skeptic Hermann von Reimarus and concluding with the late nineteenth-century liberal theologian William Wrede. The central argument of Schweitzer's book at the opening of the twentieth century is startlingly appropriate also at its end.

Scholar after scholar, Schweitzer contended, had looked for Jesus down the deep well of history and had seen instead the scholar's own reflection. Some writers on Jesus marshaled impressive intellectual tools, from archaeological research to literary analysis, from comparative studies of Near Eastern religions to examination of talmudic materials. Others relied on personal

intuition, perhaps a journey or two to the Holy Land, and vivid imagination to construct their own "lives of Jesus." But in almost every case, Schweitzer concluded, two centuries of supposedly rigorous investigation had produced a wide range of portraits of Jesus, each of which bore a suspicious resemblance to the artist and none of which was conclusive.

Charlotte Allen has come to the same conclusion after almost another century of biblical scholarship. In her new book, *The Human Christ: The Misguided Search for the Historical Jesus* (Free Press), she begins by surveying early Christian understandings of Jesus, and then takes up her story proper with eighteenth-century Enlightenment inquiries into the "human" Jesus—that is, the "real" Jesus stripped of the superstitions and myths that had attached to him somehow over the centuries. Drawing her narrative up virtually to the present—yes, the Jesus Seminar appears, as do other contemporary scholars—Allen's rather lightly argued verdict is Schweitzer's redux: so-called critical examinations of the Gospels in search of Jesus over more than three centuries have been typically uncritical of the author's own governing biases and have resulted, time after time, in the projection of one's own ideals onto the figure of Jesus of Nazareth.

Skeptics dismiss Jesus as a lunatic, a charlatan, a troubled poet, or an impotent revolutionary—or embrace him as an ironical, detached, innocuous fellow such as they see themselves to be. Rationalists who do not discard him discover him to be logical, sensible, and practical. Liberals admire him as idealistic, brave, kind, and wise. Romantics extol him as passionate, vital, and free. Reformers revere him as bold, visionary, impatient, and forceful. Some modern Jewish scholars find Jesus to be, in fact, a pretty good Pharisee (while Paul, the ex-Pharisee, turns out to be the troublemaker who actually started the Christian religion).

The worst kind of scholarly self-indulgence is revealed in Allen's painstaking account of two centuries of "lives of Jesus" that share one damning trait: whenever the historical evidence fails to fit the preconceived theory, the evidence has to give way. Books of the New Testament are assigned earlier or later dates of composition and to this or that author in order to conform to somebody's scheme of how early Christianity developed. At the end of the nineteenth-century, the eminent scholar Martin Kähler—no friend of orthodoxy—condemned the entire life-of-Jesus movement as having contributed virtually nothing to the store of historically reliable knowledge about Jesus. And many observers of the Jesus Seminar today see a similar dynamic at work

in their deliberations: since "we" already "know" what Jesus typically said or did on the basis of our "study" of hypothetical documents such as "Q" or "proto-Luke," or our reading back of Jewish or Gnostic texts from centuries later, then we can confidently assess the veracity of this or that report of a saying or action of Jesus. Yeah, sure.

Particularly striking in Allen's account is how far back some of the purportedly "modern" and "critical" arguments go. Her earlier chapters show the second-century archcritic Celsus to have better claim on the title "first of the demythologizers" than D. F. Strauss, much less Rudolph Bultmann. So, too, Allen traces the fundamental modern critical disjunction between "the Jesus of history" and "the Christ of faith" to the second-century career of the heretic Marcion. Indeed, she asserts that "few modern skeptics about Jesus have improved on the theories of the early pagan critics." So much, then, for the breathless announcements of cutting-edge scholarship by the Elaine Pagelses and John Spongs who, in fact, offer theories that are decades, if not centuries, old.

From a more traditional point of view, Allen's account raises intriguing questions. Why, for starters, do traditional/orthodox/conservative critics get so little space in her story—and, to be fair to her, in most summaries of the history of biblical criticism? Allen notes with approval the nineteenth-century work of Konstantin von Tischendorf, who gave us a rendition of the Greek New Testament that still stands as the basis for all modern translations. And she does mention contemporary scholars such as N. T. Wright and Martin Hengel. But Tischendorf was a textual critic and thus did not work on the same problems as the life-of-Jesus scholars. Wright and Hengel barely get mentioned. And the work of previous worthies such as J. B. Lightfoot and Adolf von Schlatter receives little or no attention. This is a pity, because a survey of more conservative scholarship would have served as an important test of Allen's hypothesis.

What happens, in other words, when orthodoxy is assumed? Have evangelicals, like their heterodox counterparts, simply remade the figure of Jesus in their own image? Yale scholar Jaroslav Pelikan's book *Jesus Through the Centuries* has shown that, in fact, all Christians everywhere have tended to picture Christ according to their ethnic, economic, and political situations as well as according to their distinctive theological beliefs. And given that Jesus is

the representative for all humanity, some of that variegation of portraiture is understandable and even splendid.

But when modern North American evangelicals picture Jesus on T-shirts as a righteous Rambo (yet recall "Behold, the Lamb of God"), or archdefender of the nuclear family (but see "Who are my mother and my brothers?"), or champion of our political causes (but "my kingdom is not of this world"), then we also are guilty of—to use a Bible word—idolatry.

The biblical presentation of Jesus refuses to remain nicely confined to any of our containers. In particular, Allen shows how one picture after another of Jesus in this long line of nontraditional portraits fails before one question dear to the hearts of all faithful Christians: "What about the Cross?"

I once encountered an articulate, angry young Marxist at Speaker's Corner in Hyde Park, London. As we had come upon a small knot of people during an afternoon stroll, it had appeared that the young Communist had silenced a gentle Christian preacher by loudly proclaiming that Jesus Christ was "not a pleasant person!" As he waved a New Testament under the nose of the abashed speaker, still marooned a foot above the rest of us on his soapbox, the assailant thought he was scoring an impressive point. But then another Christian in the audience, one with a firmer grasp of the gospel, spoke up: "Of course Jesus wasn't a pleasant person. You don't crucify nice guys!"

Why would anyone crucify the reasonable Jesus of the Enlightenment? Why would anyone crucify the dreamy poet of Romanticism? Why would anyone crucify the Law-abiding, mild-mannered rabbi of revisionist Jewish scholarship? Why would anyone crucify the witty, enigmatic, and marginal figure of the Jesus Seminar?

What Jewish scholar Jacob Neusner says about revisionist Jewish views of Jesus is true of most of Allen's long line: "Theologians produced the figure they could admire most at the least cost." But the Cross stands amidst each such easy path, each attempt to avoid the heart of the matter and the cost of discipleship. The Cross remains a stumbling block for all who encounter this Jesus. He is perhaps not the person we want, but he is surely the person we still—desperately—need. **CT**

John G. Stackhouse, Jr., is Sangwoo Youtong Chee Professor of Theology at Regent College, Vancouver, and author of Can God Be Trusted? Faith and the Challenge of Evil (Oxford University Press).



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Oprah's Misery Index

Her book club's selections' recurring theme:

Sufferers who save themselves.

Susan Wise Bauer

One October morning, Dominick Birdsey's schizophrenic twin, Thomas, chops off his own right hand in the middle of the public library. And this is a good day for Dominick, the hero of Wally Lamb's bestselling novel *I Know This Much Is True*. He's almost bankrupt, his wife has left him after the crib death of their infant daughter, he's living with a dumb-as-dirt aerobics instructor who just got pregnant by someone else (her uncle, but that's a whole different subplot), his stepfather, Ray, hates him, and his mother is dying of breast cancer. "Closing in on forty," Dominick reflects, "I was wifeless, childless. Now I'd be motherless too. Left with my crazy brother and Ray."

I Know This Much Is True (900 pages of wretchedness, weighing in at \$27.50 and three-and-a-half pounds) may seem an unlikely commercial success, but Dominick's misery

has plenty of company. A sampling of past *Publishers Weekly* and *New York Times Book Review* fiction bestseller lists yields the stories of Beth, who loses her three-year-old son to kidnappers; Ruth, a penniless farm wife whose husband goes insane and beats her mother to death while her three-year-old son watches; Ninah, trapped in an abusive fundamentalist cult founded by her own grandfather; Ellen, whose drunken, violent father abandons her to the care of a cruel and distant grandmother; Ada, dying of AIDS in her decaying hometown; Frannie, the battered wife of a dangerous New York City cop,



running away to save her life; and Dolores (in Wally Lamb's previous novel, *She's Come Undone*), who eats her way up to 257 pounds after a neighbor rapes her and her mother is hit by a truck. At least Job had half a chapter of happiness before his world disintegrated. In these novels, life starts out unbearable and gets rapidly worse.

There's a one-word explanation for their bestseller status: Oprah. Each of these books was selected by Oprah Winfrey's on-air book club. Oprah's chosen authors become instant literary lions; even a hint of interest can make a writer's career. (When the news got out that Oprah saw promise in an unpublished manuscript sent to her by a first-time novelist, a publishers' bidding war erupted.) The Oprah effect—a complex mix of celebrity, media synergy, female buying power, and African-American support—can eclipse the most venerable of literary honors. "On the day that [Toni] Morrison appeared on air with Oprah," writes Paul Gray in the December 2, 1996, issue of *Time* magazine, "Barnes & Noble sold 16,070 copies of *Song of Solomon* nationwide. Oprah provided a bigger boost for Morrison's commercial clout than the 1993 Nobel Prize for Literature did."

Oprah tends to be evasive about her selection criteria ("I chose these books," she told one interviewer, "because they are readable, poignant, thought-provoking"). But the ongoing popularity of the book club—after 19 picks in two years, the Oprah effect shows no signs of weakening—suggests that Oprah's readers have consistently been satisfied with her choices. These novels resonate with a wide, book-buying American readership. Suffering sells.

The Bible we use begins, chronologically, with the creation of the world and runs in neat, linear fashion to its end. But the oldest book of the Bible is probably Job, not Genesis. The most ancient story of the Christian and Jewish traditions deals, not with origins, but with suffering, that most universal of human experiences. Thematically, Job is the first book of the Bible; Genesis explains our existence, but Job tells us why we started demanding explanations in the first place. Overwhelmed by pain, the sufferer calls up to God: "Who are you?" And God answers, "In the beginning, I made the heaven and the earth."

The Oprah novels are tied together, not merely by the theme of suffering, but by a particular method of depicting all that pain. Like the nineteenth-century sentimental novel, these books intend to connect the reader to the story by appealing to shared emotional experiences. Life with a schizophrenic identical twin is strange territory for most of us, but *I Know This Much Is True* consistently casts Dominick's anguish as common weariness. "I was just tired," Dominick decides, halfway through his saga, "just wanted to stop fighting and give in." This is an emotion that dates back at least to Job: "I am worn out," laments Job, "I despise my life, I would lie down in the dust, in peace." Beth, the mother of the kidnapped three-year-old in Jacquelyn Mitchard's *The Deep End of the Ocean*, wishes she could even summon the energy for a suicide attempt: "The best she could summon was a sort of perpetual sluggishness. . . . She would live her

threescore and ten. She was damned if she could see what she would do with it."

Sentimental novels are structured, not around rational and neatly constructed plots, but instead around highly evocative feelings and experiences. A sentimental novel is a journey (in the words of Leo Braudy) into the "tumultuous inner emotional world of the novel's main character"—a journey that pulls the reader along for the roller-coaster ride. To get the reader securely buckled into his seat, sentimental authors of the nineteenth century played relentlessly on common life experiences that evoked strong emotions: illness, separation, death, children in peril. *Little Women* pokes fun at some of the conventions of sentimentality (purple prose, high-flown diction, and gasping heroism) but falls easily within the category. "Don't weep over me," the dying Beth says, bravely placing her thin white hand on Jo's rough head; but generations of readers have done just that.

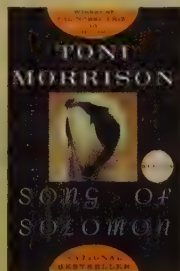
The Oprah novels are equally shameless. Illness and the loss of love are givens, but almost every book also involves a dead or abused child. *The Deep End of the Ocean* is centered on the missing three-

year-old, Ben; in Jane Hamilton's *The Book of Ruth*, the murder of Ruth's mother by her unbalanced husband is built around the trauma done to the watching toddler, Justy; the fundamentalist community in Sheri Reynolds's *The Rapture of Canaan* takes Ninah's illegitimate baby away from her; *I Know*

This Much Is True returns, over and over again, to the image of Dominick's dead baby, stiff in her crib.

Sentimental novels are traditionally directed toward a female audience, and the Oprah books are no exception. Their preoccupation with dead and missing children, and the continual exploration of difficult family ties (as opposed to job problems, say, or the frustration of ambition, or other more typically "male" concerns) reveals the crowd of women in Oprah's audience. Dreadful marriages abound; the occasional bad wife makes an appearance, but bad husbands are endemic. The wife-beating policeman Bobby Benedetto in Anna Quindlen's *Black and Blue* is the most obvious, but there's scarcely a healthy marriage to be found anywhere.

In Wally Lamb's two books, bad marriages and



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BOOKS

children in peril are fused; Dolores's troubles begin with the disintegration of her parents' marriage after the death of her baby brother, and Dominick's schizophrenic twin, Thomas, is driven deeper into his madness by his stepfather's persistent cruelty. His mother, traumatized, refuses to intervene. "Having married Ray Birdsey for better or worse," Dominick remembers, "[Ma] was determined to believe in his jolly good fellowship, no matter what the evidence said. No matter what the feeling in our stomachs." Even the Oprah books with male narrators turn continually to the lives of the female characters as they marry, divorce, bear and lose children.

To characterize the Oprah novels as "sentimental" ought not to denigrate either their power or their importance. The evangelical community—influenced, perhaps, more by the Enlightenment deification of the intellect than we often admit—has tended to scorn emotion, placing it firmly in second place to the mind. (Emotions, Christian counselor Jay Adams sternly reminds us, are "organic bodily responses that are largely involuntary and are triggered by behavior, thoughts, and attitudes.") But an evocative picture of emotion is as powerful as a well-reasoned argument. If the popularity of these books tells us anything, surely it is that a huge segment of American readers longs to hear that others have suffered as well. The Haitian-born Edwidge Danticat, author of the Oprah novel *Breath, Eyes, Memory*, confirms this: "Oprah says that when she reads about people who are going through similar experiences to her own, she feels less alone. A lot of us share that feeling."

Nineteenth-century sentimental novels were generally written with a cause in mind; the most famous, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, used the common emotion of a mother's love for her children as a tool to link upper-class white women to the suffering of slave mothers, attracting them to the abolitionist cause.

The Oprah novels are more than simple exercises in empathy. They too have a cause: to find meaning in suffering. All the books reveal a grasping for certainty, a dogged determination to find reasons for pain. In the words of an Oprah heroine (Ada Johnson in *What Looks Like Crazy on an Ordinary Day*), "Discomfort is always a necessary part of the process of enlightenment." And to that end, each book, somewhere, ends up with an enlightened conclusion: Here is

And we know that
God causes everything
to work together for
the good of those who
love God and are
called according to his
purpose for them.

ROMANS 8:28



Live It Now

what I have understood through my pain. I know this much is true.

Theology has nothing to do with this enlightenment; traditional Christian answers to pain must be abandoned by all honest thinking people. When these sufferers cry, "Where are you?" to God, a clanging silence ensues. *The Book of Ruth's* heroine gives us the news, in case we haven't attained enlightenment on our own:

It came upon me suddenly that Jesus was in the same league as the tooth fairy and the Easter rabbit, not to mention Santa himself. But with Jesus, for some mysterious reason, you had all the grownups kneeling down, praying to him. I was furious with the deacons and the Rev and the Sunday school teachers and the imaginary God who made the whole story unfold. I kept getting madder and madder, all the way to Easter. . . . The whole thing sounded very dumb to me, but mostly I felt sad, because I was sure there was going to be a child who would come to me and make the world light.

In sentimental-novel terms, this sadness is meant to link reader to narrator in common rejection of the Christian fairy tale. In unison, the Oprah novels agree with Ruth's disappointment. It's a beautiful story, but there's no light at the far end of life's tunnel, no merciful Father, no reward after the struggle. "Resurrection," Dolores muses in *She's Come Undone*. "The word made a pretty sound. . . . God and the Tooth Fairy and Jiminy Cricket." (There's the Tooth Fairy again.) "Listen to how God up there is supposed to make everything and everybody and everything's due to turn out according to his will and all," snaps Jack in Kaye Gibbons's *A Virtuous Woman*. "And we get the wars and people starving and people hurting people . . . and I'm supposed to go down there to Ephesus on a Sunday morning and say, 'Thank you, Jesus, thank you for the sunshine and the food on my table and all the birds singing and the likes of Adolf Hitler and Roland Stanley.' No thank you! I'll have no part of it!" Heaven, in Dominick's words, is "a Walt Disney ending." He sums up, near the end of *I Know This Much Is True*:

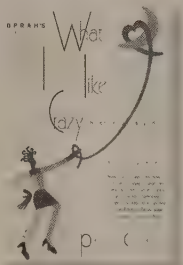
There was no God. . . . Life didn't have to make sense, I'd concluded:

that was the big joke. Get it? You could have a brother who stuck metal clips in his hair to deflect enemy signals from Cuba, and a biological father who, in 33 years, had never shown his face, and a baby dead in her bassinet . . . and none of it meant a [obscenity] thing. Life was a whoopee cushion, a chair yanked away just as you were having a seat.

The bitterness that seethes from these pages comes in part from a conscious rejection of the Creator, but it also reveals an honest loathing of pat solutions. Certainly the Bible does not offer pat solutions; God's appearance to Job in a whirlwind raises more questions than it answers. Yet God's followers have done plenty to minimize suffering's pain, protecting God's reputation by mouthing platitudes. The villains in the Oprah novels are often clergymen who use mysterious truths as clubs to beat the wounded, like the priest who assures Dominick at his brother's funeral that "God was merciful, whether we understood His ways or not." Dominick thinks (not surprisingly), "This is pap. . . . Hallmark greeting card theology."

Would Oprah pick books that make such consistently hostile statements about Judaism, or Buddhism, or even (for that matter) Scientologism? Probably not; but Christianity suffers in part from its position as a dominant cultural force. Exposure to Hallmark-quality Christian theology is, apparently, a common experience that can give rise to the common emotions the genre demands. Presumably, Oprah's viewers have all run across platitude-mouthing preachers at some point. Platitude-mouthing rabbis, or Buddhist priests, or Scientologists are likely scarcer.

But the rejection of all Christian faith is also assumed to be common, shared by reader and narrator alike. The Oprah sufferers call out to God and hear only silence. This silence, they conclude, proves that they are completely alone. In this, they go far beyond Job, who never doubts that God is in the world with him, linking him to some plan he hates and does not understand. Job stands in an incomprehensible universe, but it is full and noisy; God assails him, Satan torments him, his wife won't leave him, and his friends won't go away. "Will your



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long-winded speeches never end?" he snaps at his companions. "What ails you, that you won't quit arguing with me?"

Contrast this to the intense isolation of Ruth, who sits in church and thinks, "Despite all the talk of God and Jesus, that there's no one looking after us . . . we are alone, and each of us singular."

Sooner or later, each character comes to the knowledge that she is solitary in her suffering. Dolores of *She's Come Undone* reaches this epiphany when her neighbor assaults her. "I knew no one was coming for me," she says, "that I was by myself."

Frannie, the abused wife in Anna Quindlen's *Black and Blue*, acts this out by changing her name, her age, her very identity, concealing her true self even from the man she sleeps with. Dominick is abandoned by his mother, his wife, his baby daughter, his father, and finally his twin brother. He sums up his life, in his final psychotherapy session, in a single word. Fatherless. Alone, without hope and without God in the world. Elie Wiesel said it, in the aftermath of the Holocaust: Intense suffering makes us oblivious to anyone but ourselves. "I was alone," he says, "terribly alone in a world without God and without man. Without love or mercy."

Yet each Oprah novel ends, not with isolation, but with a brave affirmation of solidarity, a glorious decision to find meaning at the brink of the void. These sufferers are on their own, yet they are able to choose significance, to balance themselves between survival and sanity. "If you will only visualize your own beauty, you can make it real," Dolores's psychotherapist promises her. "On a symbolic level, we could say you were midwifing yourself . . . couldn't we?"

Ninah in *The Rapture of Canaan* also recreates herself, retelling her own story in her own mind: "I weave in lies, and I weave in love, and in the end, it's hard to know if one keeps me warmer than the other. . . . It is imperfect, but I could walk on it."

This willingness to connect voluntarily with the lives of others is at the heart of the sentimental novel, with its goal of shared emotions, shared experiences, shared knowledge. The sufferers, in the end, decide (entirely of their own volition) to open themselves to the rest of the human race. In this, they provide

comfort for the hundreds of thousands of Oprah readers who are searching for an answer other than the mysterious God of Job.

"And still," Ruth concludes, "all of us are miraculously the same in our aloneness, with our red blood cells streaming through our veins. . . . The only blessed way there is, I realized, is for all of us to feel deeply with a wounded, or sick, or even dead person. What the Rev meant to say, if he could ever have spoken plainly, without all the paraphernalia of the Gospel, was, 'Each man's struggle is mine.'"

There's a terrible irony in all this, of course; God himself, long before Job (before the foundations of the earth), did make man's struggle his own. The paraphernalia of the gospel makes our suffering part of God's own experience. In *I Know This Much Is True*, Dominick even calls the Crucifixion to his aid as he tries to describe the agony of watching his brother led away into a mental ward. "That's when I felt it for myself," he says, "the spike against flesh, the hammer's piercing thud."

Yet this is only a fleeting metaphor, and the Incarnation provides the Oprah sufferers only material for creative obscenities. Dominick (aided by psychotherapy) decides to break voluntarily through the isolation caused by his suffering. He agrees to raise his ex-girlfriend's baby, takes his much-hated stepfather out for lunch, and volunteers to help entertain kids at a pediatric cancer ward. He then gets his wife back, finds out that his real father is a Wequonnoc Indian, and suddenly becomes a proud possessor of Native American spirituality: "Wequonnocs pray to roundness. Wholeness. The cycles of the moon, the seasons. We thank the Great Creator for the new life and for the life it sprang from. The past and the future, cinched together."

Conveniently, this new ethnic identity also provides him with gambling revenues. "We 415 members of the Wequonnoc Nation are millionaires," he writes, at the end of his tome. "God—life—can be both merciful and ironic. . . . The evidence of God exists in the roundness of things. This much, at least, I've figured out. I know this much is true."

It's a neat and happy ending: self-created meaning, self-created prosperity,

self-created connections to the rest of humanity, even a self-created divinity. To turn from Dominick's sufferings to the concentration camps described by Elie Wiesel is jarring, but necessary. God died for Dominick when his twin brother disappeared behind the metal doors of a state hospital; Wiesel's God died on the day that a child hung on Nazi gallows:

Behind me, I heard the same man asking: "Where is God now?" And I heard a voice within me answer him: "Where is He? Here He is—He is hanging here on this gallows." . . . This day I had ceased to plead. I was no longer capable of lamentation. On the contrary, I felt very strong. I was the accuser, God the accused. My eyes were open and I was alone. . . . In the depths of my heart, I felt a great void.

Stories of suffering, to be honest, must end with one of two truths: the presence of God, or a void where he should be. God appeared to Job, not with answers, but in the overwhelming reality of his creation. Job, still puzzled, still not understanding, placed his hand over his mouth. Not all suffering will end with the epiphany of the whirlwind; not all sufferers will come face to face with the person of God. Those who do, like Job, will bow their heads and admit a riddle that cannot be solved.

Those who do not will live in a world without God.

But this godless world isn't filled with self-sufficiency and self-created meaning. Wiesel ends his chilling memoir *Night*, not with faith in himself, but with a long look in the mirror. "I had not seen myself since the ghetto," he writes. "From

the depths of the mirror, a corpse gazed back at me. The look in his eyes, as they stared into mine, has never left me." And this is why the Oprah novels are ultimately dishonest, offering false consolation that can only lead to deeper despair. For in the end, without God, the sufferer will not find community, courage, newfound love, and gambling profits. She will find instead a void; not self-renewal, but the empty eyes of a corpse. C1

Susan Wise Bauer is the author of two novels: *The Revolt (Word)* and *Though the Darkness Hide Thee (Multnomah)*. She teaches literature at the College of William and Mary.

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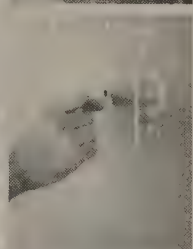
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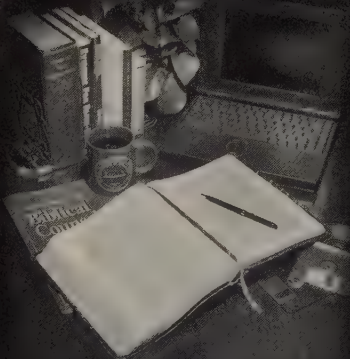


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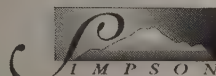


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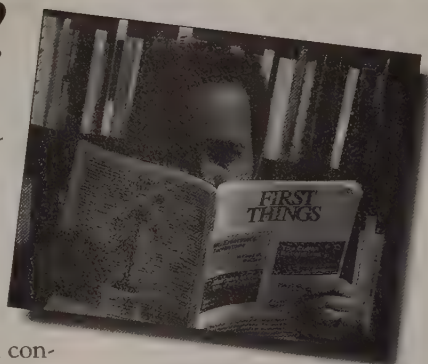
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Union University continues its search and invites nominations and applications for the position of dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. The college is the largest academic unit of the university, comprising ten departments and approximately 70 full-time faculty. In addition to responsibilities in the areas of performance evaluation, long-range planning, budget planning and administration, professional development, salary, promotion, and tenure, the dean also provides support to department chairs in recruiting and selection of new faculty and program development and evaluation. The dean is the College of Arts and Sciences' principal liaison with other academic and administrative units within the university and is the college's representative to many off-campus constituent groups. Applicants must have an earned terminal degree in one of the disciplines of the College of Arts and Sciences; a research doctorate is preferred. Those applying must have five years of full-time teaching experience, with a proven record of excellence in teaching, interdisciplinary perspective, and commitment to the objectives of Christian liberal arts education. A strong record of effective academic administration in higher education at or above the department chair level is required. The successful candidate will have a history of vibrant innovative leadership, communication skills, and openness with faculty and other groups on and off campus. In addition to evidence of professional achievement, applicants' academic background and scholarly pursuits should warrant appointment to the faculty of one of the disciplines in the college. Union University is located in Jackson, Tennessee, and has a student population of over 2,300. Now, one of Tennessee's fastest-growing colleges, Union is built on a 175-year heritage of academic excellence and Christian commitment. The undergraduate liberal arts curriculum is central to the mission of the university. All faculty and staff are professing Christians and are expected to be active members of an evangelical Christian church. Review of applications will begin fall 1998, and will be accepted until the position is filled. To apply, send a letter of application, curriculum vitae, and names of three references to: Cynthia Powell Jayne, Chair, Dean of Arts and Sciences Screening Committee, Union University, 1050 Union University Drive, Jackson, TN 38305; fax: 901-661-7175; E-mail: cjayne@uu.edu. For more information about Union University, please see our Web site at www.uu.edu. Union University is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Women and minorities are encouraged to apply.

GRAND RAPIDS BAPTIST SEMINARY
invites inquiries for a tenure-track position in the Division of Pastoral Studies. The successful candidate will possess an earned research doctorate in a relevant discipline and have significant pastoral experience. Please contact the Vice President of the seminary for a position announcement, which includes a list of qualifications. Inquiries will be received until December 31, 1998: 1001 East Beltline NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49525.

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EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

CHIEF ENGINEER—CHRISTIAN RADIO NETWORK

Chief engineer position available for quality Kansas City-based Christian radio network/group. Position requires strong background in construction, installation, and maintenance of studios, AM/FM transmitters, STLs, digital audio, DCS computer automation, satellite networks, and translators. Min. 5 years exp. desired. FCC General Class license or SBE Certification a plus. Excellent character and professional references expected. Some travel involved. Excellent compensation with full benefits. Please send cover letter, résumé, salary history, and references to: Personnel Director, Bott Radio Network, 10550 Barkley, Overland Park, KS 66212; fax: (913)-642-1319. Bott Radio Network is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

THE BILLY GRAHAM EVANGELISTIC ASSOCIATION, located in Minneapolis, MN, is seeking a qualified candidate for the position of associate producer for its new daily radio program *Decision Today*. The program is a magazine style, contemporary one-half hour show featuring reports of evangelism and Christian activity from around the world. The associate producer will be responsible for writing and producing compelling program segments for the daily program. The ideal candidate will have strong writing skills and at least two years experience in the area of radio production, along with excellent communication skills. The Billy Graham Evangelistic Association is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Send résumé to: Recruiter, B.G.E.A., 1300 Harmon Pl., Minneapolis, MN 55403.

PRESIDENTIAL SEARCH

The Agros Foundation is looking for a president. Agros is an international Christian nonprofit organization committed to breaking the cycle of poverty of the rural poor in developing countries by helping them buy land and build villages. The person will provide executive leadership and operational management in a rapidly growing international organization. Proven leadership experience necessary. Send résumé to Presidential Search, The Agros Foundation, P.O. Box 95367, Seattle, WA 98145; fax (206) 528-0393; Web site: www.agros.org/agros.

NATIONAL CHURCH PLACEMENT SERVICE

Churches and Ministers are connecting with CMPN, P.O. Box 1132, Barre, VT 05641 (802) 476-8902.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, for 35-year-old creation science ministry based in the Midwest. Ministry promotes the truth of divine creation & global flood through a daily radio program, written resources, & seminars. Successful candidate must be degreed, possess excellent communication and fund-development skills. Send résumé & cover letter to Don Otis @ Creative Resources, P.O. Box 1665, Sandpoint, ID 83864.

IN-COUNTRY COORDINATOR for Extension Ministries of Willow Creek Community Church, So. Barrington, IL, to live and work in Costa Rica developing strategic partnerships with national ministries committed to holistic ministry through the local church. Must be Spanish-speaking with experience in Latin America working in community and church development and be familiar with WCCC. Will administer short-term teams and facilitate development of ministry network. Contact David Bulger, WCCC/EM, 67 E. Algonquin Rd., So. Barrington, IL 60010; (847) 765-5000.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

SOLO PASTOR

Sierra Vista Presbyterian Church, located in the sunny Southwest, is seeking a dynamic pastor to join us in moving into the 21st century. We are an 185-member congregation of believers anticipating the discernment of that individual who will work with us to lead this congregation with enthusiasm, energy, and dedication to God's work in this world. We seek that individual who is deeply rooted in faith; has a sense of humor and adventure; is open and loving; and has a vision for the future. We are a congregation dedicated to proclaiming and studying the Word, nurturing and sustaining our spiritual life in groups and as individuals, caring for our neighbors, and working toward the reconciliation of the world to the words and examples of Jesus Christ. Send PIF to PNC, Sierra Vista Presbyterian Church, 150 W. 28th St., Yuma AZ 85364.

BIBLICAL STUDIES FACULTY POSITION

Ouachita Baptist University invites applications for two full-time, tenure-track teaching positions available September 1, 1999. Requirements: Ph.D. in OT, NT, or related field; secondary area of study, or experience in practical ministries helpful; commitment both to scholarship and to teaching/discipling undergraduates essential. OBU is a Christian liberal arts university with over 200 Christian Studies majors and total enrollment of 1,600. Our department offers majors in Biblical Studies and Ministry, as well as minors in Hebrew and Greek. Applications, including vita and references, should be addressed to Danny Hays, Chair, Faculty Search Committee, Box 3677, Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia, AR 71998.

SIMPSON COLLEGE (Redding, CA) anticipates several FACULTY POSITIONS open for August 1999 due to growing enrollment: Youth Ministries, Church History/Theology, Psychology-Clinical, Psychology-General, Mathematics. Candidates should (1) be committed to the integration of faith and academic excellence, (2) be supportive of mission and in agreement with the doctrinal statement of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, and (3) evidence a strong interest in teaching and working with students. Application forms may be requested from the Provost, Simpson College, 2211 College View Drive, Redding, CA 96003; phone: (530) 224-5600; fax: (530) 224-2051; E-mail: gbrwn@simpsonca.edu. Women and minorities are encouraged to apply.

MINISTRY PLACEMENT for pastors & associates or churches. Call (503) 357-7830 or Believer's Dynamics, POB 596, Forest Grove, OR 97116. Since 1977.

TEACH IN JAPAN: Reach Asians for Christ. Teach in English. Several K-12 & ESL teacher openings. Mission school of 400; 2-year contracts. Must raise partial support. Write Dr. Bob Greninger, Okinawa Christian School, P.O. Box 14250, Gainesville, FL 32604; (1-800) 446-6423.

ASSOCIATE PASTOR MUSIC AND WORSHIP

The First Baptist Church of White Lake, Michigan (suburban Detroit), is looking for an associate pastor in Music and Worship. He would be responsible to develop and enhance the church's overall music ministry (encompassing choral, instrumental, and praise groups; drama; and community outreach) and lead the congregation in vibrant and meaningful "blended" worship. Please send résumés to: Terry Rudd, c/o FBC, 9000 Highland Road, White Lake, MI 48386; fax: (248) 698-1399; E-mail: fbc@flash.net

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

YONGE STREET MISSION, a Christian humanitarian organization bringing God's peace, dignity, and justice to those living with need in the inner city, requires a Drop-In coordinator. This strategic role develops ministry programs to help street-involved youth access resources, meet basic needs, and move away from the street. Ideal candidate is mature, energetic, loves teens; excellent supervisory/organizational skills; able to take initiative/set priorities; strong informal counseling/group facilitation skills; crisis intervention exp.; some eve./wkend work. Degree in SW or related field; 5 yrs. exp. with marginalized youth; able to recruit/supervise volunteers. Fax résumé to D. Adcock, 416-929-7204; 270 Gerrard St. E, Toronto, ON M5A 2G4. Replies to qualified candidates only.

FULL-TIME PASTOR OF WORSHIP AND MUSIC. Evangelical, nondenominational church in suburban Chicago seeks God's man to lead and develop a thriving worship and music ministry in 1,000+ congregation. Strongly committed to traditional and contemporary worship styles. Responsibilities: service planning/leading choirs, music outreach, instrumental groups, development of lay leadership. Warm platform presence, pastor's heart, spiritual maturity, and previous worship/music ministry experience a must. Résumé to: Davis Duggins, Calvary Memorial Church, 931 Lake St., Oak Park, IL 60301; ph: (708) 386-3900; fx: (708) 386-4182; E-mail: CMCDDE@aol.com

FACULTY POSITIONS WAYNESBURG COLLEGE

- **Accounting:** Teaching tax, auditing, accounting information systems; master's (or JD) required, CPA and experience in forensic accounting or fraud investigation preferred; primarily undergraduate courses with possibility of MBA teaching.
- **Education:** Two positions: department chair and elementary education; administering and teaching in variety of content. Doctorate preferred; school experience required.
- **Graphics & Photography:** Teach imaging, computer graphics, photography, and related areas. Master's required; design experience preferred.
- **Physics:** Teaching Physics (nonmajors), some computer science or mathematics, advising pre-engineering students; doctorate preferred.

See home page at <http://waynesburg.edu>. All positions require commitment to Christian higher education, breadth of teaching skills, plus normal full-time faculty responsibilities. Send CV, copies of transcripts, letter addressing qualifications and philosophy of education, and three references to Richard Stanislaw, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Waynesburg College, Waynesburg, PA 15370 or stanislaw@waynesburg.edu

PASTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY LIFE sought for growing, evangelical community church in southwest Portland suburbs. Sunday attendance 400 adults and 200 children/youth. Contemporary, seeker-sensitive, purpose-driven ministry. Church motto: "Teamwork in Extending Christ's Love." Send résumé and cover letter to Children/Family Search Committee, Mountain Park Church, 40 McNary Parkway, Lake Oswego, OR 97035.

JSE MINISTRY AND LIFE SKILLS to reach the unreached hurting, broken, and lost through creative access to Asia/SE Asia. How? Contact: Gary Brewer, Mission to Unreached Peoples, toll free at (1-888) 847-1950 or e-mail: mupinfo@mup.org or [HTTP://www.mup.org/mupinfo/](http://www.mup.org/mupinfo/)

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

AN EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH in northwest suburban Chicago seeks pastor of Worship and Music to provide leadership in worship, to direct the music program of the entire church, and to shepherd those involved in worship and music ministries. Music degree with advanced training preferred. Previous experience in worship and music ministry required. We are a growing body of over 600 with a diverse age and interests profile. This is a senior-level staff position and compensation will include commensurate salary, health care, vacation, continuing education, and retirement benefits. For an information packet and application please reply to Worship and Music Pastor Search Committee, The Village Church of Barrington, 1600 E. Main Street, Barrington, IL 60010; phone: 847-381-5221; fax: 847-381-5288; E-mail: vcdbave@juno.com

SPECIAL EDUCATION

For fall, 1999, tenure-track asst. professor to teach general special education courses and provide supervision. Potential work in special ed. M.Ed. program. Doctorate preferred—ABD may apply. Teaching experience with special needs students required. Applicants must be committed to an evangelical Christian profession of faith and to applying that to their discipline. Inquire: Romaine Jesky-Smith, Chair Education Search Committee, Geneva College, Beaver Falls, PA 15010 or E-mail: ris@geneva.edu. Women and ethnic group members meeting the qualifications are encouraged to apply.

DIRECTOR OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Emphasis on Children & Youth Ministry Dynamic, growing church (PCUSA) of 500+ is seeking a full-time D.C.E. for expanding program for all age levels. We desire an energetic leader who loves children and can relate well to all ages. Master's degree and minimum of three years parish experience preferred. Generous compensation package. Join us in Kendall, Miami's upscale southwest suburb, for an exciting opportunity in ministry. Send résumé and cover letter to: Central Presbyterian Church, Attn: Dr. Kathryn Roach, CE Moderator, 12455 S.W. 104 Street, Miami, FL 33186; fax: (305) 598-1239.

DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN & FAMILIES MINISTRIES for thriving Baptist General Conference church, Avon, CT. Sunday worship attendance 950. Director responsible for ministry to 492 birth-5th grade children and their families. Understanding of child developmental stages and family dynamics as they relate to ministry necessary. Master's degree in Christian Education or related comparable field experience required, including supervision of staff members and volunteers. Creativity, excellent leadership, and interpersonal skills essential. Send résumé to: Nicholas Parisi, Valley Community Baptist Church, 590 W. Avon Rd., Avon, CT 06001; (860) 673-6826.

GREAT NEWS! Samaritan House for Boys in Stuart, FL, is expanding our program and is in need of another set of house parents. We are seeking a committed, married Christian couple to minister to boys ages 8 through 12 in a 5-day residential program. Along with training, we provide complete housing, living expenses, salaries, medical insurance, and an IRA contribution. Please contact Orin Linde, Director, Samaritan House for Boys, 1490 S.E. Cove Rd., Stuart, FL 34997; E-mail: linde@gate.net

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EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

UNIVERSITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (PCUSA), a 3,800+ congregation in Seattle, Washington, is seeking two positions to lead the Department of Urban and Global Mission. Senior Director/Associate Pastor of Urban and Global Mission should have a minimum of 10 years cross-cultural experience as an individual contributor and leader in urban and global mission ministry. This person will be senior member, communicator, leader, and pastor of the department. (This position will be selected first.) Assistant Director/Associate Pastor of Urban and Global Mission should have a minimum of 5 years of similar experience and will have an urban or global focus area that complements the senior director. Both candidates should have the following qualifications: deep personal love for Jesus Christ; ability to lead a department with a staff of 12, over 400 volunteers, and a substantial budget that supports over 70 career missionaries; proven team-building and pastoral skills with staff, missionaries and local, national and international partners; ability to articulate a vision of mission to equip, encourage, and work alongside lay volunteers and career missionaries; effective preacher and teacher of the Scriptures and biblical mission mandate; personal, hands-on, cross-cultural field and administrative ministry experience. Please submit résumé and references to: University Presbyterian Church, Attn: Christi Scovill, 4540 15th Ave. NE, Seattle, WA 98105; (206) 524-7300 or e-mail to: christis@upc.org. Web page: www.upc.org

GRADUATING COLLEGE SENIORS are invited to apply for the 26th annual Pulliam Journalism Fellowships. Twenty journalism or liberal arts graduates in the August 1998-June 1999 class will receive ten-week summer internships. Stipend is \$5,250. Early-admissions application postmark deadline is Nov. 15, 1998. By Dec. 15, 1998, up to five early-admissions winners will be notified. All other entries must be postmarked by March 1, 1999. For an application packet, write: Russell B. Pulliam, Pulliam Fellowship Director, The Indianapolis News, P.O. Box 145, Indianapolis, IN 46206-0145.

Marketing

Director of Marketing

Cook Communications Ministries, the leader in Sunday School curriculum publishing, is seeking a Marketing Director. Position requires a high energy level with strong marketing and organizational skills. These include strategic and tactical market planning and execution, budgeting, accurate analysis of market research, team leadership skills, and a heart for the church with experience in local church Christian education programs. Must have 5+ years' proven marketing/leadership experience and a marketing degree. A general knowledge of the publishing industry is a plus.

Send or fax resume to:

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Colorado Springs, CO 80918
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EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

CHICAGO METROPOLITAN CENTER DIRECTOR

CMC is a study and internship program for students from a coalition of six Christian liberal arts colleges in Iowa (Central, Dordt, Northwestern), Michigan (Calvin, Hope), and Illinois (Trinity Christian). The position is full-time (12 months) beginning July 1, 1999. Responsibilities include coordinating staffing, budgets, education programs, and student recruitment. Preference will be given to candidates with doctorates, experience in teaching and experiential education, and a strong commitment to the Reformed Christian faith. Apply to Burton Rozema, VPAA, Trinity Christian College, 6601 West College Drive, Palos Heights, IL 60463; (708) 239-4760; E-mail: Burt.Rozema@trnity.edu. CMC encourages applications without regard to ethnic background, disability, gender, or national origin.

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Please send your résumé in confidence to: CT Classified Ads Box 217, 465 Gundersen Dr., Carol Stream, IL 60188.

SENIOR PASTOR

Winnetka Bible Church is a strong, vibrant faith community of 600 attendees located in the beautiful Chicago/North Shore suburb of Winnetka. We're looking for a deeply committed evangelical who has a big vision, a big heart, and a willingness to lead a talented staff and committed congregation. Our new pastor needs to communicate biblical truth effectively and be capable of thinking strategically and creatively about how a regional church should do ministry. Our staff is in place, programs are in full swing, the congregation is growing in the midst of our transition, and we're financially healthy. For more information, please contact: Ray Zeiss, Chair of the Pastoral Search Committee, by writing him at WBC, 555 Birch St., Winnetka, IL 60093; E-mail: crz528@nwnu.edu. Confidentiality guaranteed.

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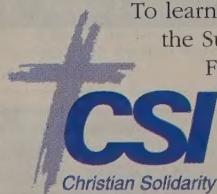
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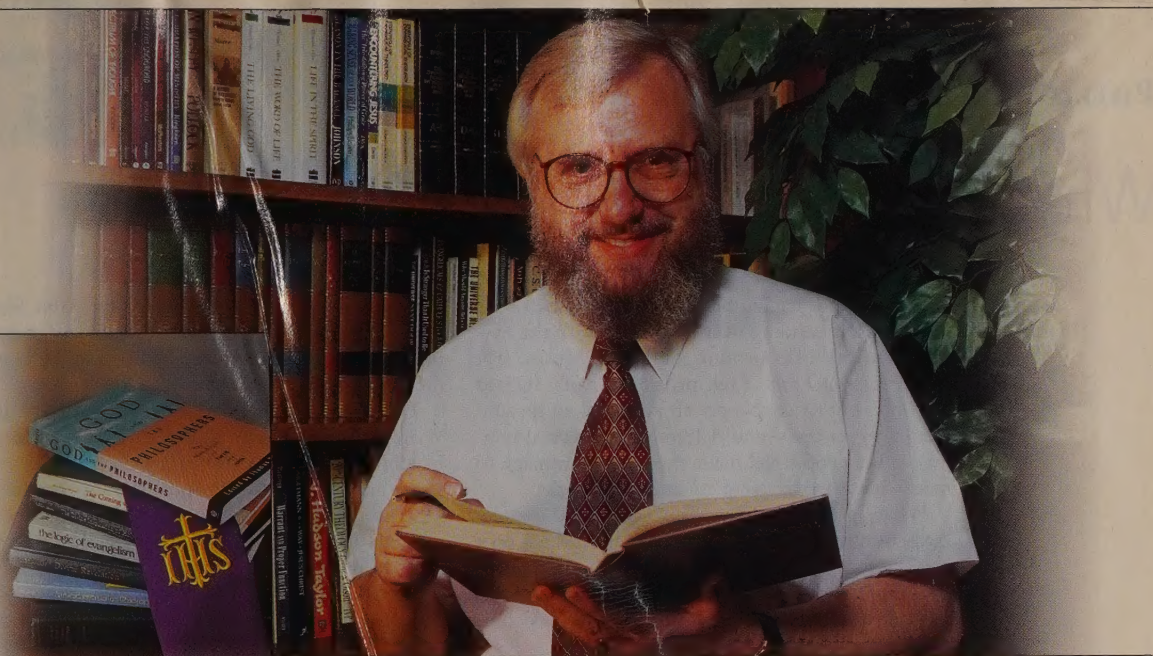


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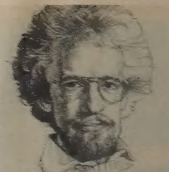
Billy went on to earn his doctorate from Oxford, studying under Basil Mitchell. Today he is a world-class philosopher with numerous books to his credit, including his recent ground-breaking work *Canon and Criterion in Christian Theology* (Oxford Press, 1998). But Billy is not only a first-rate scholar, he is also a

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What *The Prince of Egypt* Won't Tell You

Hollywood, having had its fill of religious boy-cotts, is bending over backwards with the new DreamWorks production about Moses, *The Prince of Egypt*. I felt privileged to be invited not once, but twice to a private screening of the animation in process—until I learned that several hundred other people had made the same pilgrimage to meet with Jeffrey Katzenberg at DreamWorks.

What an industry! For four years, 400 people, many of them skilled artists, have been working on a project that cost well over \$100 million. They'll know in two weekends whether it will make or lose a bundle. No wonder they want the religious community on their side.

The Prince of Egypt is a fine film by any standard and takes surprisingly few liberties with the biblical story. Impressed, I agreed to write a chapter for *Destiny and Deliverance*, the book that will serve as a companion to the film, with the proviso that I could write about Deuteronomy, the recap of Moses' life. That book, often overlooked, contains personal outpourings by Moses as poignant and heart-rending as anything in the Bible.

Consider, for example, Moses' depiction of the horrors awaiting those who disobey the covenant (Deut. 28:64-68):

Then the Lord will scatter you among all nations, from one end of the earth to the other. . . . There the Lord will give you an anxious mind, eyes weary with longing, and a despairing heart. You will live in constant suspense, filled with dread both night and day, never sure of your life. In the morning you will say, "If only it were evening!" and in the evening, "If only it were morning!"—because of the terror that will fill your hearts and the sights that your eyes will see. The Lord will send you back in ships to Egypt on a journey I said you should never make again. There you will offer yourselves for sale to your enemies as male and female slaves, but no one will buy you.

As the Israelites stepped across the Jordan River, curses like these rained down on them from a choir standing on a mountaintop. Antiphonally, another choir shouted out potential blessings. In this natural amphitheater, the two choirs loudly vocalized the stark alternatives of obeying or disobeying the covenant with God.

In addition, Moses set up large stones coated with plaster on which were written the words of the law. God longed for the covenant to succeed: "Oh, that their hearts would be inclined to fear me and keep all my commands always, so that it might go well with them and their children forever!" Repeated rebellions in the

wilderness had taken a toll, however. After Sinai, even God spoke of the future with a tone of resignation, like the parent of a drug addict helpless to stop his own child from self-destructing.

Two staged memory lessons were not enough. Write down a song, God said, and teach it to the Israelites as a witness to history. Laws written on stone and plaster, curses and blessings broadcast from the mountaintops—these sights and sounds will fade away. Make them learn my words by heart. Drill the message inside them.

Thus, at the birth of their nation, euphoric over the crossing of the Jordan River, the Israelites premiered a kind of national anthem, the strangest national anthem that has ever been sung. It had virtually no words of pride or hope, only doom.

When I submitted my chapter to the readers at DreamWorks, they were scandalized. Why this pessimism, this fatalism, this latent anti-Semitism in a book celebrating the grand miracle of the Exodus? In the margin beside some of the strongest passages, a Jewish proofreader wrote, "Where is this from?" I pointed out that each questionable quotation came directly from Deuteronomy, part of the sacred Torah.

Modern readers, excited by the thrill of the Exodus, pay little attention to the 400 years of misery that preceded it, or the abysmal failures that followed. Which is why the Bible includes Deuteronomy in the first place, and why we optimistic Americans ought to pay it more mind.

Others have borrowed parts of Moses' message, but no one has quite got it right. Liberationists of all stripes have appropriated the language of Exodus, yet all lack Moses' unstinting realism. They drift into utopian promises of a Promised Land that has never been—and will never be—realized this side of eternity. Often these utopians end up creating a political system more tyrannical than the one they sought liberation from.

Likewise, pietist Christians have borrowed Moses' vision to describe a Victorious Christian Life on the other side of Jordan. The last seven chapters of Deuteronomy should forever disabuse us of that notion. Life with God is never so easy, so settled. Not for the Hebrews then, and not for us living today. The pilgrim must ever progress, uphill, meeting new enemies around every bend.

The Old Testament should come with a warning: Don't read Exodus without also reading Deuteronomy. It would save a lot of disillusionment—for moviemakers, for politicians, and also for preachers.

The Old Testament should come with a warning: Don't read Exodus without also reading Deuteronomy.